

# The Appalachian VOICE

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April/ May 2012

## POLLUTING OUR DEMOCRACY

How Dirty Energy Dollars  
Influence Appalachian Politics

ALSO INSIDE: Breaking Appalachia's Job Barriers • Return of the Fox Squirrels • Building with Nature's Shingles

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### A Note from our Executive Director



Frustration with government bureaucracy sometimes feels like as much of an American tradition as apple pie and baseball, though it's considerably less fun. Given the audacity of what many are calling the most anti-environmental Congress on record, it can be hard to retain faith in the system. Those who value clean air and clean water are working against an onslaught of polluter-friendly actions that threaten hard-won environmental protections.

In these challenging times, we need to remember that everyday citizens have tremendous power to hold politicians accountable. By working together we can ensure that industry special interests are not put above the welfare of the people. Whether it's Virginia residents voicing their opposition to a proposed coal-fired power plant at local hearings or hundreds of Tennesseans converging on the state General Assembly asking for a ban on mountaintop removal, the best tool we have to fight injustice is a united voice.

For over 15 years people have been coming together under the Appalachian Voices banner to protect our region's citizens and their fundamental rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. On June 21, please join us to celebrate the 15th anniversary of Appalachian Voices in Charlottesville, Va., with music, revelry, and special guests honoring members and allies. Appalachian Voices is you, and people like you, who share a vision and are making a difference.

Thank you!  
*Willa Mays*

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

### POLLUTING OUR DEMOCRACY

The 112th Congress is responsible for an onslaught of anti-environmental legislation, suggesting that this could be the dirtiest Congress on record. We follow the fossil fuel money.

**The Dirtiest Congress Money Could Buy:** The fossil fuel industry — and today's members of Congress — are setting records for dirty energy money..... **p. 12**

**Dirty Money Dozen:** Appalachia's top 12 legislative recipients of fossil fuel funds..... **p. 14**

**"Art" of Influence:** Art Pope and the super PAC generation are spending their way to the top..... **p. 16**

**The Emerging Efficiency Lobby:** Proponents of doing more with less (energy) are making headway..... **p. 18**

### Appalachia's Economic Outlook

The challenges facing Appalachia's job market are real, but some are working for change and finding success. **p. 20**

### Regulars

- Hiking the Highlands ..... 4
- AV Book Club ..... 7
- Across Appalachia ..... 8
- Coal Update ..... 22
- Opinions and Editorials ..... 24
- This Green House ..... 25
- Inside AV ..... 26
- Get Involved! ..... 28

ON THE COVER: Composite illustration by AV Staff

#### Capturing Appalachia

Take a peek at some of the visually pleasing finalists — and winners — of the Appalachian State University 2011 Appalachian Mountain Photography Competition. **p. 10**



#### It's a Fox. No, It's a ... Squirrel?

The fascinatingly large fox squirrel is expanding its range in Appalachia, and edging closer to a reunion with its eastern cousin. **p. 6**



# Artists for Appalachia

Appalachian Voices' 15th Anniversary & Membership Meeting





**Robert F. Kennedy Jr.**  
*President of the Waterkeeper Alliance®*

Help us celebrate 15 years of protecting the land, air, water and communities of Central and Southern Appalachia!

Join us for this very special annual membership meeting that will include Appalachian music, readings and revelry as we come together to celebrate our past, present and future work for the health and betterment of our region. Proceeds from this event will help us continue our work to protect Appalachia for the next 15 years!

*Where:* The Jefferson Theater on the downtown mall in Charlottesville, Va.  
*When:* June 21, 2012 (doors open at 7 p.m. show at 8 p.m.)



**The Honey Dewdrops**  
*Charlottesville's folk favorites*



**Kathy Mattea**  
*Grammy-winning singer*



**Daniel Martin Moore**  
*Kentucky-based singer/songwriter*



**Michael Johnathon**  
*American folksinger, singer-songwriter, author, and playwright*



**Bill Haney and Clara Bingham**  
*The director and producer of the award-winning film "The Last Mountain"*

### Event & Membership RSVP Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_  
 State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Current Members: Must RSVP by May 25th**

I am a current member and would like to attend FREE in the general admission area

I am a current member and would like reserved seating for \$15

I am a current member and would like to make an extra gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for the fundraiser

I would like to become a Mountain Protector at \$ \_\_\_\_\_/month (\$10 minimum) and attend the event in reserved seating

**Become a New Member: Must RSVP by May 25th**

Become a member at \$35 (minimum) and attend the event in general admission area

Become a member at \$50 and attend the event in reserved seating

I would like to become a member and support Appalachian Voices but will not be attending the event \_\_\_ \$35 \_\_\_ \$50 \_\_\_ \$100 \_\_\_ other

MC or Visa Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

**For information on VIP table seating, please call our Charlottesville office at (434)293-6373**      **Mail to: 171 Grand Blvd, Boone, NC 28607 · Make Checks Payable to Appalachian Voices**  
**Sign up online at: AppalachianVoices.org/ArtistsForAppalachia**

# Hiking the Highlands

## Perusing Kentucky's Pine Mountain Park

By Joe Tennis

High above Pineville, Ky., near the start of the challenging Laurel Cove Trail, an old joke straddles a rock at Pine Mountain State Resort Park.

Local lore suggests that the people of Pineville were worried about the menacing-looking boulder coming loose and rolling off Pine Mountain. In the 1930s, shortly after Pine Mountain opened as Kentucky's first state park, members of the Kiwanis Club of Pineville devised an unusual safety strategy and fastened a comically large chain to the boulder so residents could see the reassuring chain from town.

The so-called "Chained Rock" makes an intriguing first stop on the Laurel Cove Trail at Pine Mountain State Resort Park – a site named "resort," according to park naturalist Dean

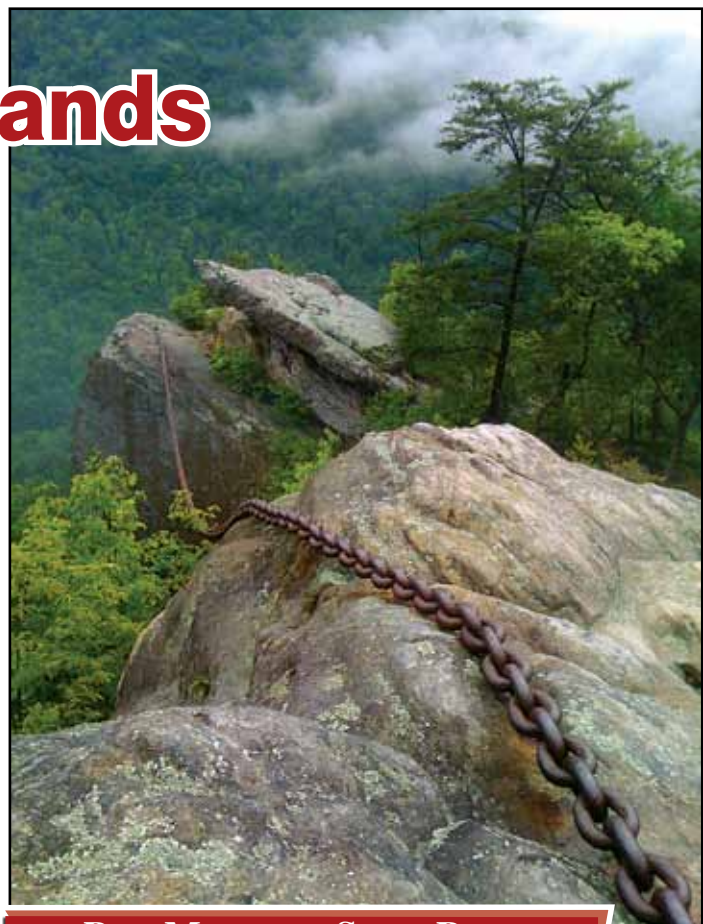
Henson, simply for boasting both a restaurant and lodge. Despite the name and amenities, this is a wild place, as anyone exploring the rock houses, mossy boulders and trickling streams of Pine Mountain will see.

"This park is primarily a natural and cultural history park," Henson says. "In many ways, it's a time capsule. It's a chance to go back and see the landscape as it was in the time of Daniel Boone."

A famed frontiersman, Boone marched through these woods in the late 1700s, marking a road through the nearby Cumberland Gap and into Kentucky. From 1769 to 1810, Henson says, more than 300,000 settlers passed through this region as they slipped past what is now the state park.

Today, the 1,700-acre park is home to white-tailed deer, bobcats, skunks, raccoons, red and gray foxes, black bears, a variety of snakes, around 130 year-round bird species, 6,000 plant species and perhaps as many as 40 types of trees, Henson says.

*Left: The Laurel Cove Trail winds its way through a range of plant communities. Photo credit: Helen Gulgun Bukulmez*



### PINE MOUNTAIN STATE PARK

**LENGTH & DIFFICULTY** — Laurel Cove Trail, connected to Chained Rock Trail is about four miles (round-trip) and includes steep, challenging sections (some choose to go only down and ride a shuttle back to the top). Other trails include The Honeymoon Falls Trail, a loop spanning 1.5 miles.

**WEBSITE:** parks.ky.gov

**FOR MORE INFO:** (606) 337-3066

"I refer to it as one of Kentucky's last, great natural places," Henson says. "I call it scenic geology — vistas, views and overlooks where you can see the Cumberland Mountains."

Starting near a natural rock shelter, Laurel Cove Trail slides away from the well-worn path leading to the Chained Rock. The trail marches down a narrow set of rock steps, beside rock walls and, at times, challenges hikers to navigate an obstacle course of fallen trees. "Trail work is never done," Henson says. "It's always ongoing."

With an elevation drop of 1,100 feet, the Laurel Cove Trail ranks as the most challenging and diverse path in the park, especially for those who skip the shuttle and choose to walk down and back up. "Most people walk that trail in one direction," Henson says, noting that the uphill walk is steep.

The top of the mountain boasts oak and hickory trees. At the midway

*Left: Reassuringly secured by a hefty chain, Chained Rock looms over the town of Pineville, Ky. Photo credit: Helen Gulgun Bukulmez*

point, the trail passes beneath a natural rock bridge called the Powderhorn Arch, which stands about eight feet high and stretches 40 feet across the trail. "If you look at it, it resembles a powderhorn from the flintlock rifle days," Henson says.

Below that arch, the trail descends through a wider mix of trees, including beech, tulip poplar, hemlock and maple.

"From there on down is what I consider the transition zone," Henson says. "Going from the top to the base of the mountain is the equivalent of walking from Southern Canada to Northern Georgia, in terms of the zones that you find for plants and animal species."

Thickets of rhododendron, mountain laurel and azalea bloom near the lower end of the trail at the Laurel Cove Amphitheater, outlined by stones and used in the 1970s for an outdoor drama called "The Book of Job." Today, that World War II-era amphitheater is a popular site for weddings. It is also used each year, during the last full weekend of May, for the queen's coronation during the park's annual Kentucky Mountain Laurel Festival Pageant.

Park-goers who come for special events can also find hikes less challenging than the Laurel Cove Trail among the park's dozen miles of trails. The Honeymoon Falls Trail might be the park's most popular walk in the woods. This 1.5 loop passes a 25-foot-tall — but sometimes nearly dry — waterfall. Other paths include the Rock Hotel Trail, named for a natural rock shelter, and the Living Stairway Trail, which once traversed steps carved into the side of a tree.

For more information on Pine Mountain, visit: parks.ky.gov.



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## Fox Squirrels Making a Comeback in N.C.

By Madison Hinshaw

If you've ever seen what you thought was a gray squirrel on steroids, what you actually saw was most likely a fox squirrel.

While this bushy-tailed, colossal squirrel is common throughout most of Appalachia, it has not been seen in the North Carolina mountains in several decades. But now these furry creatures are on a path to making an incredible comeback in the northwestern region of the state.

Already abundant in Virginia and further north, data provided by hunters in North Carolina counties — including Ashe, Alleghany and Watauga — during the last several years shows that more and more fox squirrels are expanding into areas of the state near the Virginia border, says Chris Kreh, district wildlife biologist for the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission.

"The \$64,000 question is why they are migrating to these counties," says Kreh. "But the bigger question is why they weren't there historically."

Kreh says that changes to the forests in the northwest part of North Carolina in the last decades could be the reason that the picture is different now than it was

20 or 30 years ago. Because they do not have the agility of the gray squirrel, fox squirrels prefer less-dense forests, including those of the Appalachian Mountains thinned by human activity since the 1800s.

Adult fox squirrels are much larger than the gray squirrel. They are typically about 20 to 26 inches long and can weigh one-and-a-half to two-and-a-half pounds. Abundant throughout much of the U.S., the fox squirrel has two main subspecies: the Midwestern and the Southeastern. The Southeastern subspecies are dark and sometimes almost black in color, while the Midwestern fox squirrel has a wide variety of looks including red, blonde, brown and even orangish, and sport dark faces or backs and sometimes even a striking white face, tail and feet.

Habitats of the two subspecies of fox squirrel are also different. The Southeastern fox squirrel prefers less-dense, long-leaf pine forests found in the Pied-



Left: While fox squirrels can sometimes resemble gray squirrels in coloration, there are noticeable differences. In eastern regions such as the Appalachians, the squirrels can sport more of a reddish coat than gray squirrels, with dark brown and even black faces and backs (left). The most distinguishable have striking white patches on the nose, feet and tail (below). Photos credit: Jeffrey S. Pippen

suit the fox squirrel more than the gray squirrel, adding to the expansion. Property owners in those counties can assist the fox squirrel's transition by planting walnut trees and other hardwoods.

Kreh also mentioned that, as the Midwestern subspecies expands south and eastward, their frisky cousin from the east is venturing westward, setting the stage for what could be a intriguing future for the fox squirrel.

"When you have the rapidly expanding numbers in this part of the state, and the expanding populations of the Southeastern variety in the eastern part of the state, they are going to meet in the middle," Kreh says. "It's going to be interesting to see what happens when they do meet."

### Foxy Facts

- Fox squirrels typically breed in mid-December and again in June and produce two litters a year starting as a yearling.
- There are usually one to five fox squirrels in a litter. Young fox squirrels are born blind and hairless and only develop vision four weeks after birth. They are weaned at eight to 10 weeks, but may remain with their mother for another month.
- In captivity, fox squirrels are known to live about 18 years, but in the wild their maximum life expectancy is about 12 years for females and eight years for males.

mont and coastal plains of Eastern North Carolina. Using their greater size and strength, they are able to manipulate the large longleaf pine cones and thrive in the state's longleaf pine forests.

The subspecies of fox squirrel that is migrating into the mountains of North Carolina, however, is more likely the Midwestern fox squirrel. Unlike their eastern cousins that are more at home in longleaf pines, the Midwestern subspecies prefers hardwood forests with open canopies — commonly found in the Appalachian mountain landscape. The Midwestern fox squirrel is expanding its ranges on the border of Virginia and North Carolina. Fox squirrel populations are abundant in Carroll and Grayson counties in Virginia, and those numbers are starting to trickle down into some counties in North Carolina, such as Ashe, Alleghany and Watauga. The North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission gets most of its data from sportsmen's reports, including live observations, road kill finds and photos. They also have a system for logging and reporting wildlife, which helps create a census on the population of the fox squirrel.

According to Kreh, the more open forests adjacent to human development

## Under the Same Sun: Pen pals introduce young readers to social justice

By Molly Moore

While on a class field trip to a New York City supermarket, Meena Joshi spies a box of okra, one of her favorite foods in her native India. Emblazoned with the word "KENTUCKY," the box displays mountains that remind her of her childhood home. When her teacher offers the class a list of potential penpals, Meena selects an address from Kentucky, unintentionally finding a kindred soul.

"Same Sun Here," by Silas House and Neela Vaswani, chronicles the coming-of-age correspondence between a pair of observant, reflective 12-year-old penpals. Letter by letter, River Dean Justice, a coal-miner's son from the eastern Kentucky town of Black Banks, and Meena, an Indian immigrant living with her family in the tight confines of New York City's Chinatown, open their worlds to each other.



House, an award-winning Appalachian author, associate professor at Berea College and Appalachian Voices board member, pens River's letters, and Vaswani, an author and education activist in India and the U.S., voices Meena's messages.

Meena and River write with bold honesty, honoring a pact to "be our true selves to each other." River and Meena both have close ties with older women, and the pen pals share the wisdom they glean from these relationships. They talk about the effect on their families as their fathers, unable to find work near home, leave for weeks or months at a time. The distance from loved ones in India rests heavily on Meena, and as the pair grow close, they open up about their families in poignant, relatable anecdotes.

Soon after they build their friendship, larger societal forces shake their realities. River watches in outraged dis-

belief as mountaintop removal coal mining encroaches on his home and school. Shocked by the divide in his community, he learns the value of activism through his sage grandmother.

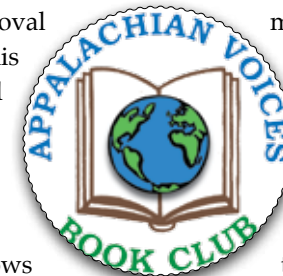
Meanwhile, tension grows in Chinatown as Meena's hard-working family struggles with the questionable legal status of their rent-controlled apartment and tries to live under the radar of their calculating landlord. Diligently helping her parents prepare for their citizenship exam, Meena recognizes the joys and contradictions of their chosen home.

The mix of surprise, sadness and just determination that rises from these incidents tenderly portrays the adolescent journey from innocence to awareness. As times get tough, the two lean on each other and their dialogue evolves. Through frank, misconception-busting discussions about cultural stereotypes, River and Meena realize that, despite their differences, both of their com-

munities are marginalized by larger society.

Bringing River and Meena to life, House and Vaswani write with an attention to detail and ear for the poetic that draws the reader into the crowded subway stations and libraries of New York City and the shaded woods of Appalachia. At times, the details and words chosen by the 12-year-old characters strain credulity, but these are nuances that also hook adult readers.

Written for grades 5 and up, "Same Sun Here" tackles complex societal ills in a thoughtful, uplifting story frame that will captivate readers regardless of age. Released in February, it is on best-seller lists in the South and Midwest.



### Book Club Mini Review: "Kentucky Folktales: Revealing Stories, Truths, and Outright Lies"

By Brian Sewell

Even before opening Mary Hamilton's ode to storytelling, the rust-colored cover, adorned with a rocking chair and the kind of rustic text that might be carved in a tree, invites the reader into a world of oral traditions shared among Kentuckians for years before being captured on the page.

Hamilton is a professional storyteller, which is evident in her collection of original and traditional stories,

"Kentucky Folktales: Revealing Stories, Truths, and Outright Lies." Her writing exudes a love for the art as she advises the reader to "read the stories frozen in print; then thaw them out and bring them to life again."

The tales inside range from campfire-friendly scary stories, many short enough to remember after a few readings, to tales of for-

tunate farmers and real-life folk heroes such as Daniel Boone. Some are fact, some only fable and some are outright lies.

More than just a collection of stories, Hamilton adds her own commentary on each tale's origin. Her diligent notes increase the collection's quality, ensuring many hours enjoyed in the chair of your choice.



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## Study Weighs Risks, Benefits of Fracking in North Carolina

By Brian Sewell

A series of public hearings in March concluded that, with proper regulation, hydraulic fracturing, the controversial natural gas drilling method can be done safely in North Carolina.

The hearings, held in Sanford, Chapel Hill and Pittsboro, received public comment on a draft report of the state's Department of Environment and Natural Resources' shale gas study.

Large crowds turned out in opposition to the practice, known widely as "fracking," citing social concerns and threats to human and environmental health documented in states where the practice currently occurs. Supporters of the method claimed that fracking would create jobs, further the state's energy independence and provide eco-

nomie benefits for landowners who own property above the shale gas deposits of the Sanford sub-basin, located in the Piedmont region of the state.

By looking at other states where fracking occurs, the DENR report investigated the risks associated with fracking and possible economic benefits that could come from the practice, which is currently illegal in North Carolina. The study found that some risks are more prevalent in the Tarheel state. The distance between natural gas deposits and underground aquifers in North Carolina is significantly less than in Central Appalachia's Marcellus Shale, presenting an increased threat to water quality. Also, the state does not have suitable geologic formations for underground disposal of wastewater created during the drilling process. Instead, it would

have to be stored in above-ground pits or transported by road.

Despite the risks involved, the draft report concluded that fracking can be done safely in the state and provided initial recommendations, including that state officials record baseline air, ground and surface water data to use for future monitoring on how fracking impacts future air and water quality. The study also advises that the state require gas companies to fully disclose chemicals used during the process to regulatory agencies and to the public, a measure not required in other states. Funding sources for damage to roads and highways from the increase in large truck traffic would also need to be determined due to North Carolina's lack of pipeline infrastructure found in states with developed oil and gas industries.

At this stage, the report says, economic benefits to the state and individuals from fracking are difficult to determine. However, because North Carolina does not currently have a natural gas extraction industry, a large portion of the jobs and specialized equipment needed would come from out-of-state. Due to low prices and high production in the Marcellus Shale and Western states, development of a natural gas industry in North Carolina seems unlikely in the near future. The Energy Information Administration predicts that natural gas prices will remain below \$5 per thousand cubic feet through 2023, making it less likely that the industry will move from productive areas.

Feedback received during the hearings will be incorporated into the final report due to the state legislature May 1.

## N.C. Attorney General Appeals Duke Energy Rate Hike

North Carolina Attorney General Roy Cooper is appealing a seven percent rate increase for Duke Energy customers that was approved in January. Cooper cited concerns that the rate

hike will give Duke shareholders a 10.5 percent return on their investment at the expense of customers struggling in a bad economy. The appeal claims that the N.C. Utilities Commission's decision to approve the increase was not supported by evidence presented during public hearings and that testimony

supporting the increase did not consider the impacts on small businesses, schools and consumers with fixed incomes. Duke Energy initially requested a 17 percent increase that was reduced by the utilities commission before the seven percent increase was approved.

## Mild Winter Could Result in Disease Uptick

Health reports predict that 2012 might be one of the worst-ever years for Lyme disease. There are more than 40,000 cases of Lyme disease in the U.S. each year, and with this year's warmer winter boosting the tick population, those numbers could increase. Here are some tips to keep your family and pets safe this summer:

**The Yard:** Ticks are not out in the middle of your lawn, they live where yards border wooded areas, or anywhere it is shaded and there are leaves with high humidity. Place a layer of wood chips between your grass yard and the forest's edge. Ticks are attracted to the wood chips because of the shade and moisture they provide.

**Tick Checks:** Do periodic tick checks and carefully remove any found. Wear light-colored clothing so ticks are easier to find.

**Outdoor Pursuits:** When on a hike, bike, or walk try to remain in the center of a trail to minimize your exposure.

For more information on tick control and Lyme disease, visit: [cdc.gov/ticks](http://cdc.gov/ticks).

## Getting Dirty With The 'Red, White and Blue Potato Garden'

Bristol Virginia Public Schools recently approved a pilot program to help first-graders learn the importance of education, nutrition and exercise. In the "Red, White and Blue Potato Garden," built by the Appalachian Sustainable Development Learning Landscapes program, each first-grade student receives a Potato Journal to record their findings as they describe, weigh and plant a potato in the school garden, and then harvest the potatoes in their second-grade year. ASD now has eight Learning Landscapes garden models to teach different subjects in a curriculum

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## A Golden Wing and a Prayer: Restoring Warbler Habitat

By Brian Sewell

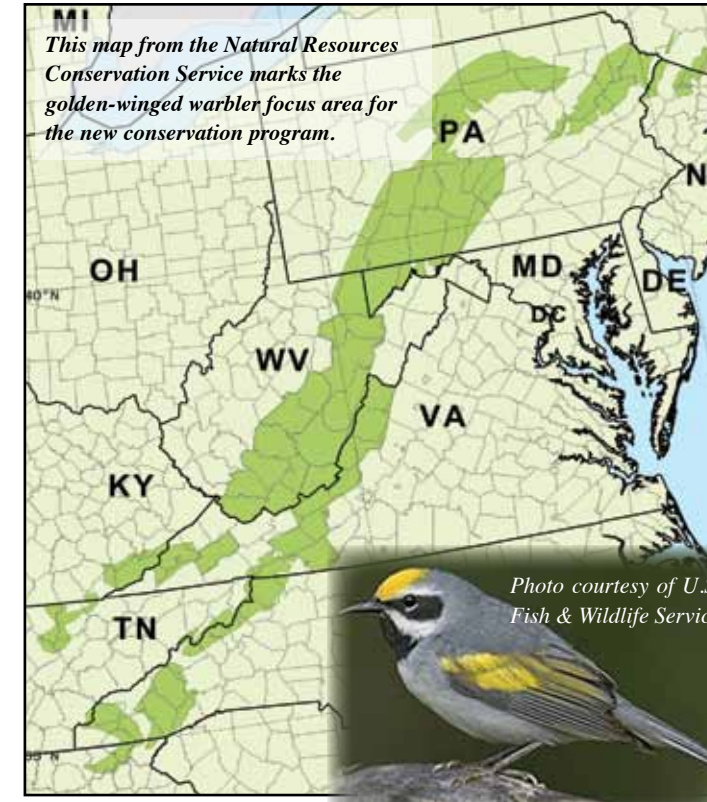
Appalachia's favorite bird, the golden-winged warbler, has been selected as one of seven focus species by a new partnership between the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that aims to reverse population decline through habitat restoration. The "Working Lands for Wildlife" program will collaborate with private landowners and farmers to restore species populations while boosting rural economies by protecting working lands.

According to the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, the habitat of nearly two-thirds of all species federally listed as threatened or endangered exists on private lands. With \$33 million in funding from the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program, the partnership selected

seven species, including the golden-winged warbler and the bog turtle, whose preservation will also benefit wildlife with similar habitat needs.

Traditionally, the golden-winged warbler has thrived in the forested hills and grasslands of the Appalachian Mountains. But land lost to development and changes in forestry and agricultural practices have caused populations to decrease. The species is currently under review listing under the Endangered Species Act.

The "Working Lands for Wildlife" partnership aims to rebuild habitat on private lands necessary for the warbler's spring breeding, by managing and maintaining forested landscapes near active agriculture or pastureland. By cooperating with landowners and local communities, the federal partnership can help the golden-winged warbler population remain at home in the region and off the Endangered Species list.



built for students from kindergarten to 12th grade. For more information about the "Red, White and Blue Potato Garden" visit: [asdevelop.org](http://asdevelop.org)

## Tennessee PBS Harnesses the Sun

East Tennessee PBS announced that a 38-kilowatt solar system mounted to their building's rooftop is now operating and generating electricity. The 162-solar panel system can power four houses for up to 40 years. Funded in part by a grant from the Tennessee Solar Institute and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, PBS says that the system will never cost the station or its members anything, but will decrease the station's power bill by 20 percent. All engineering and installation work on the rooftop system was sourced by contractors in eastern Tennessee.

## Appalachia to Furnish Asian Homes

Home-furnishings and wood products businesses in Appalachia are seeking to expand export sales from Asia to the Pacific Rim at the Furniture Manufacturing and Supply China 2012 trade fair in Shanghai. Qualified Appalachian businesses can apply to join the Appalachia USA delegation traveling from Sept. 11-14. For information on the trade fair, visit: [expo.fmcchina.com.cn](http://expo.fmcchina.com.cn)

## Saving Our Rivers (and Kids!) from Drugs

Organizers of the annual prescription drug take-back day in Watauga County, N.C., are stepping it up a notch this spring, aiming to collect one million pills in this year's May 19 Operation Medicine Cabinet. The twice-yearly

event, sponsored by the Upper Watauga Riverkeeper and area groups, is designed to keep prescription drugs from being flushed into the water stream as well as out of the hands of kids. For more information visit: [drugtakebackday.com](http://drugtakebackday.com)

## By The Numbers

**8** Companies vying to develop offshore wind energy in Virginia.

**18 of 22** State races won in North Carolina with the support of multi-millionaire Art Pope. See page 16

**77,300** New jobs that could be created in Appalachia by 2030 if the region adopted a set of 15 energy-efficiency policies. See page 18

**750,000** Jobs lost in Appalachian counties between the fourth quarters of 2007 and 2009. See page 20

**1,000 lbs.** Maximum CO2 emissions per megawatt-hour allowed by new EPA rules affecting new coal-fired power plants. Power plants can produce as much as 1,800 lbs. See page 23

**\$64,800,000** Federal funding requested for the Appalachian Regional Commission in 2013, a five percent reduction from last year.

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**"Windpower" by Cameron Baskin**  
Winner, Our Ecological Footprint

# Capturing Appalachia

Finalists From the Appalachian Mtn Photography Competition

By Jamie Goodman

It took three judges almost a full day to narrow 1,156 entries down to 49 finalists. The results were stunning.

This year's Appalachian Mountain Photography Competition, currently on display



**"Cardinal" by Dot Griffith**  
Finalist, Flora and Fauna

at Appalachian State University Turchin Center for the Visual Arts, features works by photographers from around the Southeast, and a diverse and artistic representation of the six categories.

Categories represented include: Adventure, Blue Ridge Parkway - A Ribbon of Road, Culture, Our Ecological Footprint (sponsored by Appalachian Voices and Mast General Store), Flora and Fauna and Landscape.

The images will be on display through Sat., June 2 at the Turchin Center in Boone, N.C. Visit [turchincenter.org](http://turchincenter.org) for more information. Can't see the show in person? Click to [appmntphotocomp.org](http://appmntphotocomp.org) to view the finalists and winners in each category.



**"Caught in Flight" by Amanda Prince**  
Finalist, Flora & Fauna



**"Mount LeConte Winter" by Scott Hotaling**  
People's Choice Award



**"The Family Business" by Toril Lavendar**  
Finalist, Culture



**"Rocky Knob P.O.V." by Eric Heistand**  
Finalist, Adventure



**"Stars Over Cades Cove" by Spencer Black**  
Finalist, Landscape



**"Roadside Attraction" by Andi Gelsthorpe**  
Finalist, Culture



**"Muskrat with Ranger" by Banister Pope**  
Winner, Flora and Fauna



**"These Eyes" by Lonnie Crofts**  
Finalist, Culture

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Western North Carolina Alliance • North Carolina Conservation Network • Environmental Defense Fund • North Carolina League of Conservation Voters Foundation • Environment North Carolina • Western North Carolina Sierra Club • North Carolina Interfaith Power & Light • Clean Air Carolina • Sierra Club • Appalachian Voices • Southern Environmental Law Center

Paid for by the Southern Environmental Law Center

# The Dirtiest Congress Money Could Buy

By Matt Wasson

According to a report released at the end of 2011, the 112th Congress had achieved, in just its first year, the dubious distinction of running the most anti-environmental legislative session in history.

The report, conducted by Representatives Henry Waxman, Edward Markey and Howard Berman, showed that, in 2011, the House voted 191 times to weaken environmental protections, averaging more than one anti-environmental vote for every day the House was in session.

All told, more than one in five of the legislative roll call votes in 2011 were on bills to undermine environmental protections, including 27 attempts to block action on climate change, 77 votes to undermine Clean Air Act protections, eight efforts to undermine Clean Water Act protections and 47 attempts to weaken protection of public lands and coastal waters.

A look at campaign contributions to members of Congress elected in 2010 paints a fairly clear portrait of how that came to pass — oil, gas and other energy industries contributed record amounts of money to congressional campaigns in the run-up to the 2010 elections.

According to the Center for Responsive Politics, contributions from the coal industry alone skyrocketed to more than \$8 million in 2009-2010 — more than twice what the industry had contributed in any previous election cycle. One of the top recipients of coal mining industry dollars — receiving \$228,000 during that time period — was Senator Joe Manchin of West Virginia, who took a rifle and famously shot a hole through a cap-and-trade climate bill in a campaign ad.

Based on the most recent data for the 2012 cycle, the coal industry appears set to surpass the record it set in

2010. The biggest recipient to date has been freshman Representative David McKinley of West Virginia, who has introduced some of the highest-profile bills to roll back the EPA's authority to enforce clean water laws that impact the coal industry — and has received \$186,878 in money from fossil fuel sources.

Rep. McKinley's contributions are closely followed by contributions to House Speaker John Boehner (\$171,505), with likely Republican presidential nominee Mitt Romney rounding out the top three (\$135,500). Not surprisingly, the majority of the increase in dirty energy contributions are being funneled through outside groups called Super PACs, a new type of political action committee made possible by the 2010 U.S. Supreme Court's "Citizens United" ruling, a controversial decision that President Obama presciently warned at the time would, "... open the floodgates for special interests to spend without limit in our elections." (see "The 'Art' of Influence" on p.16).

But polluting industries' surge in political spending is not limited to political fundraising — expenditures



## POLLUTING OUR DEMOCRACY

and Patriot Coal Corporation, spending more than \$3.3 million lobbying Congress in 2011. By comparison, these two companies reported no lobbying expenses in 2007 and 2008.

Research shows that money spent on lobbying can have a significant return on investment. A study published by three researchers in Kansas in 2009, examining the return on lobbying investments relating to a tax holiday on certain repatriated earnings, found that, "Firms lobbying for this provision have a return in excess of \$220 for every \$1 spent on lobbying, or 22,000 percent."

Although it is difficult to prove a direct connection between lobbying, campaign contributions and the actions of legislators, the correlation between the unprecedented number of anti-environmental bills pushed by the 112th Congress and the unparalleled political spending by the fossil fuel industry is hard to ignore.

### Some Things Money Can't Buy

Given the increasingly powerful and unregulated influence of money in politics, the question is raised — how does the average person's voice or vote even matter?

Representative Barney Frank of Massachusetts provided a compelling answer to that question in a recent episode of the National Public Radio program, "This American Life," that focused on the role of money in cam-

paigns. According to Frank, "If the voters have a position, the votes will kick money's rear end every time."

In his 40 years in politics, Frank says, "I've never met a politician who, choosing between a significant opinion in his or her district and the number of campaign contributors, doesn't go with the district."

That's not to say that all of the special interest money has no effect. The defensive view of campaign finance offered by some lobbyists and politicians — that money has no effect because both sides are giving — is equally inaccurate, according to Frank. "If that were the case, we would be the only human beings in the history of the world who, on a regular basis, took significant amounts of money from perfect strangers and make sure it had no effect on our behavior — that is not human nature."

One of the primary problems is that a large portion of constituents either don't know, or don't care about most legislation passing through government — resulting in the bottom line that the majority of members of Congress aren't hearing from their constituents on important issues that affect them. But what donor money does do is buy access for special interests to tell their side of the story; it doesn't guarantee a vote, but if constituents are silent, then special interests will be the only voices that legislators hear.

There are only two ways for citizens to truly counter the influence of special interest money on politics — shining a light on who is giving the money, and holding their recipients accountable.

## DIRTY ENERGY MONEY (2009-PRESENT)

The charts below compare spending by the fossil fuel industry to legislation introduced during the 112th Congress that would reduce environmental protections, and how much money was spent on a pro-environment or anti-environment vote. Campaign contribution amounts include totals donated to representatives of districts in the Central and Southern Appalachian region since 2009 and senators of those states (WV, VA, TN, KY, NC). Monetary figures courtesy of Oil Change International / dirtyenergymoney.org.

### U.S. HOUSE LEGISLATION

	\$ Contributed to Reps Casting Yea Votes	\$ Contributed to Reps Casting Nay Votes
<b>#1 - Cutting the Land and Water Conservation Fund:</b> An amendment to the 2011 House Budget proposed by Wyoming Rep. Cynthia Lummis to cut 90 percent of the funding allocated for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Failed in the House.	\$1,356,952	\$123,250
<b>#2 - Weakening EPA's Clean Water Act Authority:</b> An amendment to the 2011 House Budget by West Virginia Rep. David McKinley proposing significant changes to reduce the EPA's authority to enforce the Clean Water Act. Passed the House, excluded from Senate final bill.	\$1,400,552	\$79,650
<b>#3 - Reducing Water Quality Standards:</b> H.R. 2018 -- A bill sponsored by Florida Rep. John Mica to challenge the EPA's ability to set minimum water quality standards. Passed the House, no action in Senate.	\$1,400,552	\$79,650
<b>#4 - Preventing Coal Ash Regulations:</b> H.R. 2273 -- A bill sponsored by West Virginia Rep. David McKinley to prevent federal regulation of coal ash by the EPA. Passed the House, no action in Senate.	\$1,450,852	\$29,350
<b>#5 - Altering the Clean Air Act:</b> H.R. 2401 -- A bill offered by Oklahoma Rep. John Sullivan, often called the TRAIN Act, that would reduce standards for human health set by the Clean Air Act. Passed the House, no action in Senate on similar legislation. * one Appalachian representative absent for vote	\$1,450,892	\$0

**\$1,480,202**  
Total \$ Contributed to Appalachian Congressional Representatives by the Energy Industry Since 2009



### U.S. SENATE LEGISLATION

	\$ Contributed to Senators Casting Yea Votes	\$ Contributed to Senators Casting Nay Votes
<b>#1 - Push Against Environmental Programs:</b> The 2011 budget bill that passed the House included extensive funding cuts and policy restrictions to environmental protections. The Senate eliminated most anti-environment riders before finalizing a compromise bill with the House. Did not pass Senate.	\$1,060,476	\$1,125,971
<b>#2 - Tying the EPA's Hands on Global Warming:</b> An amendment by Kentucky Sen. Mitch McConnell to repeal greenhouse gas health effects findings by the EPA and block the agency from reducing carbon emissions and promoting fuel efficiency. Did not pass Senate.	\$2,028,577	\$157,870
<b>#3 - Voiding the Cross-State Air Pollution Rule:</b> A resolution (S.J. Res. 27) sponsored by Kentucky Sen. Rand Paul to void the EPA's proposed Cross-State Air Pollution Rule to reduce smog and hazardous pollutants that travel across state lines. Did not pass Senate.	\$2,028,577	\$157,870
<b>#4 - Attempt to Block Boiler MACT:</b> An amendment by Maine Sen. Susan Collins to block the EPA's proposed changes to strengthen the Boiler MACT (maximum achievable control technology) rule, which regulates toxic emissions like mercury from certain industrial boilers and incinerators. Did not pass Senate.	\$2,028,577	\$157,870
<b>#5 - Rushed Approval of Keystone XL Pipeline:</b> An amendment by North Dakota Sen. John Hoeven to rush approval for the Keystone XL pipeline, which would transport crude oil from Canadian tar sands to Texas for refining and export, by circumventing the permitting process. Did not pass Senate.	\$2,109,177	\$77,270

**\$2,186,447**  
Total \$ Contributed to Appalachian Senators by the Energy Industry Since 2009

### Top Fossil Fuel Industry Donors Since 1999

Natural Rural Electric Company (Coal)	\$8,873,111
Koch Industries (Oil)	\$5,890,004
Exxon Mobil (Oil)	\$5,319,590
Southern Co. (Coal)	\$4,660,127
American Electric Power (Coal)	\$3,320,644
Chevron Corp. (Oil)	\$3,172,347

on lobbying for anti-environmental legislation are also reaching record highs. Lobbying expenditures by the coal mining industry grew from less than \$3 million per year in 2004 to more than \$18 million in 2011 — with the two largest mountaintop removal coal mining companies, Alpha Natural Resources

# The Dirty Money Dozen

According to both the Center for Responsive Politics and Oil Change International, contributions from oil, gas and other energy industries skyrocketed in the past five years, with the coal industry alone contributing more than \$8 million in 2009-2010 — more than twice what the industry had contributed in any previous election cycle. And during 2011, an unprecedented amount of legislation was introduced to undermine environmental protections and undo existing laws (see “The Dirtiest Congress Money Could Buy” on page 13). We took a look at Appalachian legislators from Virginia, West Virginia, Tennessee, Kentucky and North Carolina to see where



## POLLUTING OUR DEMOCRACY

they stacked up on the energy contribution spectrum. Here are the top three senators and nine representatives who received the highest contributions from the fossil fuel industry thus far in the 112th Congress.



### Rep. Geoff Davis (R-KY)

Rep. Davis received \$38,500 from fossil fuel industries in the 112th Congress, which is just a fraction of the \$427,500 energy companies have contributed to his coffers since 2005. He's held a firm position against environmental interests, siding with industry on the majority of bills to weaken clean air and water protections this Congress. Davis' anti-regulation stance isn't limited to environmental issues — he introduced the REINS Act, which would require Congress to pass any major regulation. The Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index ranked Davis' district as one of the bottom 5 percent nationally for physical and emotional well-being.

### Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-KY)

The current U.S. Senate Minority Leader and the longest-serving U.S. senator in Kentucky history, McConnell has received \$1.6 million dollars in fossil fuel industry donations since 1999, including large contributions from energy giants such as Exxon Mobil and Koch Industries. According to Oil Change International, during his tenure McConnell has sided with fossil fuel interests and against the environment on nearly every occasion. In 2011, along with fellow Kentucky Sen. Rand Paul, McConnell introduced S. 468, a bill that would amend the Clean Water Act to ensure that coal mines and some of the nation's largest polluters are immune to meaningful regulatory scrutiny.



### Rep. Hal Rogers (R-KY)

There is more mountaintop removal mining in Kentucky Congressman Hal Rogers' district than any other district in the United States. Unfortunately, his district also has the seventh highest poverty rate in the nation, with more than 37 percent of the children living below the poverty line, and his constituents ranked dead last in physical and emotional well-being in Gallup's 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011 well-being surveys of all 435 congressional districts in the country. Since 1999, Rogers has received more than \$430,000 of industry contributions, including significant sums from some of the nation's largest polluters such as Alpha Natural Resources and Arch Coal. In 2010, he sponsored a bill to defund the EPA's efforts to protect Appalachian citizens from the toxic valley fills associated with mountaintop removal.



### Sen. Rand Paul (R-KY)

A self-described “constitutional conservative,” Paul is ideologically opposed to government regulation of business; the freshman senator has also received over \$226,500 from the energy industry. During his 2010 campaign, Paul notoriously said of mountaintop removal, “I don't think anyone's going to be missing a hill or two here and there.” He recently introduced a bill to significantly restrict the EPA's ability to stop even the most egregious mountaintop removal mines from moving forward, and shows no signs of changing his ardent anti-regulation stance through the remaining four years of his term.



### Rep. Nick Rahall (D-WV)

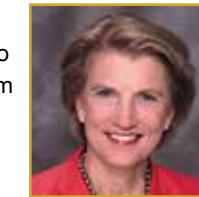


Congressman Nick Rahall has represented southern West Virginia in Congress since 1977. Although he has received more than \$250,000 in industry donations, he casts pro-environment votes nearly half the time, according to Oil Change International. As a freshman, he helped draft and pass the 1977 Surface Mine Control and Reclamation Act, and rose through the ranks to become chairman of the Natural Resources Committee. Additionally, Rahall is the ranking Democrat on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, which has jurisdiction over the Clean Water Act. But, during the 112th session, Rahall sided against clean water legislation more than a dozen times, including attempts to defund citizen protection programs, weaken mountaintop removal regulations and block meaningful legislation on coal ash.

the ranks to become chairman of the Natural Resources Committee. Additionally, Rahall is the ranking Democrat on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, which has jurisdiction over the Clean Water Act. But, during the 112th session, Rahall sided against clean water legislation more than a dozen times, including attempts to defund citizen protection programs, weaken mountaintop removal regulations and block meaningful legislation on coal ash.

### Rep. Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV)

Representing West Virginia's 2nd District, Rep. Shelley Moore Capito has received more than \$850,000 over her congressional career from energy giants such as Dominion Resources, Chesapeake Energy and CONSOL Energy. Capito sided with polluters on nearly every piece of legislation during the first session of the 112th Congress, voting significantly worse on environmental legislation than in previous terms. At the beginning of 2011, she joined Reps. Nick Rahall and David McKinley in sponsoring H.R. 199, a bill that would have suspended any action taken by the EPA under the Clean Air Act to regulate carbon dioxide for two additional years.



### Rep. David McKinley (R-WV)



Freshman Rep. McKinley has received more fossil fuel money than almost any other representative or senator from Central and Southern Appalachia, accepting nearly \$400,000 from fossil fuel industries. In McKinley's district, Little Blue Run, the nation's largest coal ash pond, has been leaking for years. While McKinley has announced plans to visit the site with the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection, he introduced a bill last fall to prevent the EPA from regulating coal ash. McKinley also introduced an amendment to another bill that would have prevented the EPA from using its Clean Water Act authority to prohibit or restrict projects that would have an “unacceptable adverse effect” on water, fish and wildlife. But environmental advocates might have reason for hope — McKinley sponsored bipartisan legislation to provide rebates to homeowners who invest in energy efficiency improvements.

### Rep. Robert Hurt (R-VA)



A freshman representative in Virginia's 5th congressional district, Hurt received \$78,600 from the energy sector before he was even elected, including substantial contributions from utilities such as Richmond, Va.-based Dominion Resources. In 2011, the House of Representatives passed a bill co-sponsored by Hurt to prevent the EPA from regulating farm dust, a pollution the agency had not intended to regulate in the first place. Including his pre-term contributions, Hurt has received \$102,300 from fossil fuel industries during the 112th Congress.

### Rep. Scott DesJarlais (R-TN)

In terms of political contributions from the fossil fuel industry, Tennessee Representative Scott DesJarlais is last on our list of top recipients. Including pre-term contributions before the 2010 election, DesJarlais brought in \$29,000, including \$16,000 from Pilot Oil Corp. However, when it comes to anti-environmental votes, DesJarlais fits right in. According to Oil Change International, Rep. DesJarlais has voted against the environment 100 percent of the time, including key votes that would undermine the EPA's authority to enforce the Clean Water Act and deny the science related to global warming.



### Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (R-TN)

Fleischmann gained the support of a number of coal and oil companies during his freshman run for the 112th Congress, to the tune of \$46,900. He represents Tennessee's 3rd district, which made national headlines when the Tennessee Valley Authority's Kingston Fossil Plant spilled more than 1 billion gallons of toxic coal ash into the Emory and Clinch rivers. Fleischmann took an uncharacteristically pro-environment stance on an amendment to the House budget bill that would prohibit the EPA from spending money on regulations that identify fossil fuel combustion waste (like coal ash) as hazardous. Yet Fleischmann sided in favor of another anti-environmental coal ash bill introduced by West Virginia Rep. David McKinley and sponsored his own bill to repeal weatherization assistance that improves the energy-efficiency of low-income residents' homes.



### Sen. Joe Manchin (D-WV)

A self-described “friend of coal,” the former West Virginia governor has received more than \$740,000 from the energy industry since he took office in 2009 — second only to Kentucky Senator Mitch McConnell in total amount of fossil fuel contributions received by senators in Southern Appalachian states. At his first congressional committee hearing, Senator Manchin erroneously claimed that the coal industry receives “not one penny of taxpayer subsidies,” and shortly after the 112th began he sponsored S. 272, a bill that would amend the Clean Water Act and remove the authority of the EPA to prohibit discharges of materials into U.S. waters at sites designated for waste disposal.



### Rep. Morgan Griffith (R-VA)



This freshman representative from southwest Virginia is well-known in energy industry circles, receiving the second-highest amount (\$152,300) of fossil fuel money of any Appalachian representative. Griffith has also made a name for himself as one of the EPA's most aggressive foes — he introduced a bill to shelter polluters by stalling the EPA's proposed limits on the amount of mercury and other pollutants released by boilers and incinerators. Griffith also sponsored an amendment to the 2011 budget bill to block the EPA and other agencies from protecting navigable waters from mountaintop removal coal mining waste. A member of the House Subcommittee on Energy and Environment, he took an anti-environmental stance on 100 percent of bills evaluated by Oil Change International.

## Additional Mentions

Although North Carolina does not have the environmental issues that mountaintop removal coal mining and other resource extraction brings to the other four Appalachian states profiled here, congressional representatives from the Tarheel State still receive substantial contributions from the fossil fuel industry and energy corporations — with two Congressmen coming in just below the top 12 energy money earners from coal-bearing states to earn a mention on the Dirty Money Dozen list.

### Rep. Patrick McHenry (R-NC)

Coming in at 13th on the list, Representative Patrick McHenry represents North Carolina's 10th district in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. He ranks first in campaign contributions from the fossil fuel industry for federal representatives in North Carolina during



the 112th Congress, receiving \$17,500, including \$10,000 from Koch Industries.

### Sen. Richard Burr (R-NC)

While Burr, a member of the Senate Subcommittee on Energy, received only \$1,000 in fossil fuel money in the 112th Congress (less than almost all of his peers), he received an estimated \$452,000 during the 111th Congress — second



only to Senator Manchin of West Virginia — and has collected a total of \$1.1 million in contributions since 1999 from sources like Duke Energy and Dominion Resources. An opponent of offshore drilling regulation, Burr pushed to reopen the Gulf to oil drilling only months after the Deepwater Horizon spill, and in 2011 introduced a bill that sought to eliminate the EPA by folding it into the Department of Energy.



# The “Art” of Influence

## A Story of Strategy in the Post-Citizens United Political Terrain

By Brian Sewell

On March 15, when a campaign called N.C. Real Solutions launched, it came with a 30 second television spot aimed at North Carolina Governor Bev Perdue. The ad claimed that the new state legislature’s budget, which Perdue vetoed out of concern for its effect on education before being overridden, actually added funding for 2,000 more teachers.

Progressives took to the blogs, where they lashed out claiming the ad and the campaign distort the facts. Gov. Perdue, a first-term Democrat, publicly asked for the ad to be taken off the air, calling it “misleading.” When the state’s second-largest newspaper, *The News & Observer*, fact-checked the ad, they found it to be half-true. What N.C. Real Solutions failed to mention is that North Carolina lost 915 teachers in 2011.

Created by a partnership between the Raleigh, N.C.-based John William Pope Civitas Institute and the North Carolina chapter of the national group

Americans for Prosperity, N.C. Real Solutions represents the latest strategic move by a network of think tanks, nonprofits and foundations advocating for low taxes and limited government. What binds them is that they are all either funded, founded or otherwise supported by one man, James Arthur “Art” Pope. The multimillionaire CEO and board chairman of Variety Wholesalers Inc., Pope has been dubbed the “Knight of the Right” by *The News & Observer* for his support of conservative principles and candidates.

It’s no secret that the influence of money has altered the political playing field. Running for political office is more expensive than ever and in many races, no matter how small, establishing a war chest is practically a prerequisite. Two years after *Citizens United vs. Federal Election Commission*, the 2010 U.S. Supreme Court decision that equated money with speech, Pope and his peers are more than just wealthy individuals resolute in their ideals. They’ve emerged as trailblazers of the post-Citizens United political terrain.

### Off to the Races

With the Supreme Court’s landmark ruling in *Citizens United*, the floodgates regulating campaign finance were opened. Two months later, the less dramatic *Speechnow.org v. FEC*, the Federal Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit ruled that the Federal Elections Campaign Act — the same law amended by *Citizens United* — could not restrict individuals’ freedom of speech by limiting the amount that an individual can

contribute and thus the amount an organization may spend.

In the lead-up to the 2010 midterm election, Pope and groups he supports poured \$2.2 million selectively into small races across North Carolina, using methods made possible by changes to the state’s constitution to reflect the *Citizens United* ruling. Much of those dollars ended up as attack ads and incendiary mailers. In one, Margaret Dickson, who ran for reelection in the State Senate, is portrayed as prostituting herself. Another, accused Chris Heagarty, a lawyer running in Wake County, of voting to “raise taxes over a billion dollars,” even though he had not yet served in the legislature. Of the 22 races that Pope and these groups contributed to, they won 18. For the first time in more than a century, Republicans gained control of both chambers of the state General Assembly.

“Who gets elected and who makes decisions affects all of us,” says Bob Hall, the executive director of Democracy North Carolina, a group focused on money’s influence in politics. “Too often the money in campaigns is a determining factor in who gets to win and who gets to even run.”

Since *Citizens United*, a new breed of political action committee, known as the super PAC, has set the standard for political fundraising. So far during this year’s presidential primary, \$159 million has been raised by super PACs on both sides, most of that coming from a small number of wealthy individuals — a troubling precedent to Hall, who says, even after policymakers are elected, they’re constantly looking over their shoulder and wondering where the next buck will come from.

Raleigh, N.C., businessman Art Pope emerged as a key political figure during the 2010 midterm elections. Ever since, he has been a lightning rod in the debate of money’s role in politics and the consequences of the Supreme Court’s *Citizens United* ruling. Illustration by V.C. Rogers, originally appeared in the *Independent Weekly* on March 9, 2011. (vcrogers.com)



Looking back on the numbers from 2010 is even more revealing. Altogether, the midterm election cost nearly \$4 billion, passing the previous midterm election record, set in 2006, by more than a billion dollars. About \$500 million was spent by outside groups to influence the election.

Without spending limits, super PACs are waging a political war where no one is safe. When President Obama recently gave the green light to PACs supporting his reelection, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi expressed her relief. Not accepting PAC donations, according to Pelosi, would be to “unilaterally disarm and leave the field to the Koch brothers to decide who would be president of the United States and who would control the Congress.”

Officially known as “independent-expenditure only committees,” super PACs are technically prohibited from coordinating with campaigns, and instead focus their efforts on electioneering communication for and against candidates. The tsunami of television ads unleashed by super PACs this year alone is expected to reach \$3 billion, making the \$2.2 million linked to Pope in 2010 seem like spare change, and his strategy all the more deft.

Although Pope has been politically active in North Carolina for decades — he served four terms in the state House of Representatives and ran for lieutenant governor in 1992 — many were exposed to the 55-year-old’s influence for the first time by an October 2011 investigative feature in *The New Yorker*. In “State for Sale,” writer Jane Mayer navigates the web of Pope’s influence and the donations during the 2010 election cycle that led back to the mogul — 75 percent of all contributions to far-right candidates. In an NPR interview, Mayer said that “[Pope] sees this whole operation as beneficial to voters.

Continued on next page

## The “Art” of Influence

It gives them more choices and it helps them understand the records of the officeholders. He has many rationales for why more money is just better.”

Engaged in their own battles, North Carolina media organizations on the left and right have used Pope as either the exemplar of everything wrong with the state of campaign finance or a fighter for first amendment rights.

In the *Independent Weekly*, the executive director of the Institute for Southern Studies, Chris Kromm, described how the Pope strategy — much like that of his friends and political allies, the billionaire Koch brothers — is not to just see his side win, but to “shift public opinion and the entire political debate toward a pro-business, anti-government agenda.” He accomplishes this, Kromm says, by sustaining the network of groups that make up the backbone of North Carolina’s conservative movement, including the Civitas Institute, the John Locke Foundation and Americans for Prosperity.

The John Locke Foundation, a far-right conservative think-tank, and Americans for Prosperity N.C., founded by Pope, advocate for the repeal of modest legislation promoting clean energy and promote school privatization among other positions that Kromm says “are really outside where the public stands on the issues.”

Pope hasn’t backed away from his critics and publicly maintains that he supports first amendment rights to freedom of speech, for individuals and corporations, and seeks only to educate voters on the issues. Responding to Mayer’s story in *The National Review*, Pope called *The New Yorker* story “bilge” and an attempt at character assassination, and asked, “What makes me different from George Soros or George Clooney?” He pointed out — as he has on numerous occasions — that, unknown to most who demonize his role in the 2010 election, Democrats in North Carolina actually outspent Republicans by more than \$3 million.

### The New Map

Even as the shared policy goals of North Carolina’s conservative network and its donating power were raising eyebrows, a project of the Republican State Legislature Committee, the Redis-



N.C. Senator Richard Burr (left) and Art Pope attend an Americans for Prosperity anti-union rally in Raleigh, N.C. Pope founded the North Carolina chapter and is one of four national directors of the political advocacy group that was instrumental in the 2010 election on the state and national level.

tricting Majority Project, or REDMAP, had much larger aspirations.

Shortly after Barack Obama won the presidency by running on the theme of “change,” conservative strategists decided it was time to rethink their own approach. REDMAP was created to take control of state legislatures in time to steer the redistricting process that occurs each decade. Deemed a massive success, not only did Republicans win big in North Carolina, they gained majorities in 21 state Houses and Senates. The GOP gained 680 seats overall in state legislative races, breaking the Democrats’ record of 628 during the post-Watergate 1974 election and making 2010 one of the party’s most successful elections in history.

When asked if the Democrats would have an answer to REDMAP in 2012, Mayer said she is “sure the Democrats are watching and trying to learn.”

On Nov. 1, 2011, redrawn maps created primarily by the new majority in the North Carolina state legislature, that likely would not have been possible without Pope’s backing, were approved by the U.S. Department of Justice. Lawsuits from the NAACP and the N.C. League of Women voters were filed almost simultaneously, accusing conservatives of gerrymandering for a decade of partisan advantage. In the fallout, several state Democrats — including Gov. Perdue — and Republicans have

North Carolina propose voter-owned, publicly-funded elections and grassroots voter education. On the other side, the John Locke Foundation and Americans for Prosperity advocate for protecting “free and political speech rights by deregulating campaign finance.”

As opposition to *Citizens United* grows, there is a push for campaign reform. The DISCLOSE act, introduced in April 2010, would prohibit foreign corporations from influencing elections and given the public access to information regarding corporate donors and their campaign expenditures. More recently, Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders introduced a bill to overturn *Citizens United*, which he called “one of the worst decisions ever handed down by the Supreme Court.”

As the nation catches its breath after the 2010 elections, another wave is reaching its crest. And even if Pope’s purchasing power changes in the future, he’ll remain the “Knight of the Right,” having contributed to a political conquest that changed the way races are run — and won.

bowed out of the upcoming primaries. When money equals speech, people as wealthy as Art Pope, the Koch brothers and even George Clooney have loud voices. To remedy this, groups like Democracy

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# The Emerging Efficiency Lobby

## Diverse Interests Find Common Ground

By Molly Moore

Conversations about blowing up mountains for easier access to coal or risking offshore oil spills to boost a corporation's bottom line spark passions in a way that those about financing energy efficiency retrofits don't. But wherever national energy dialogue goes, talk of energy efficiency and minimizing our energy consumption is sure to follow.

Even in the polarized 112th Congress, energy efficiency has bipartisan support. Cutting costs is a dominant theme of the current Congress, as is job creation. Rob Mosher, director of government relations at the nonprofit Alliance to Save Energy, says that Congress should be looking for ways to address the nation's present challenges — economic and otherwise — in ways that help financially struggling Americans.

Efficiency advocates like Mosher say that nominal investments in particular energy efficiency programs result in exponentially larger savings for consumers, businesses and government. Conserving energy, whether it comes from the sun or a nuclear reactor, benefits society as a whole through enhanced energy security, more construction and manufacturing jobs, and a lighter environmental footprint.

Although the Southeast still lags behind the rest of the country in realizing its energy efficiency potential, efficiency bills have moved forward in several of the region's statehouses.

According to a 2009 report by

the Southeast Energy Efficiency Alliance and the Appalachian Regional Commission, the implementation of a set of energy efficiency policies in Appalachia could cut energy demand by 7.3 billion kilowatt hours by 2030 — enough energy savings to offset 40 new coal-fired power plants and 182 million barrels of oil. The same study anticipated the creation of 77,300 jobs by 2030 if the region adopted the proposed efficiency policies.

The rewards of investing in energy efficiency are diverse, and so are its proponents. The Alliance to Save Energy's associate organizations include commercial heavyweights like AT&T, energy providers such as Tennessee Valley Authority, research centers like Oak Ridge National Laboratory and nonprofits such as Habitat for Humanity. Rodney Sobin, senior policy manager at ASE, cites the chemical industry as one of the environmental community's unlikely allies. "It's not altruism," Sobin says. "I think there are a lot of people who want to do the right thing, but it's to [the chemical industry's] own interest that energy be used efficiently across the economy because it affects the cost of their inputs."

Often, the market encourages energy efficiency. Tennessee Valley Authority, a government-owned utility that operates in seven states, says efficiency is the cheapest way to meet energy demand. TVA delivers its energy efficiency programs at a cost

of less than two cents per kilowatt hour. "No one is really in favor of wasting energy," says Mosher. "The cheapest fuel is the one you don't use."

### The Feds Step In

In addition to purely market-driven motives, government can encourage efficiency. Federally, efficiency policies range from tax incentives and loans for retrofitting buildings to financing that calculates a building's efficiency into its mortgage value.

Federal appliance standards are perhaps the government's highest-profile efficiency tool. The poorly understood Energy Information Security Act, signed by then-President George W. Bush, requires light bulbs to produce more light per watt of electricity used. The lighting standards do not ban incandescent bulbs or force people to buy compact-fluorescents. But, as the date for enforcing the lighting standards drew closer, proponents of limited government claimed that the regulations were forcing draconian rules on the marketplace.

Mosher and Sobin disagree with the notion that the lighting standards stifle the free market, and say that the light bulb rules were crafted with the lighting industry's cooperation and have spurred innovation and increased consumer choice. Still, the backlash has made the national conversation about energy efficiency more divisive.

Possibly the most effective and least contentious way for the government to influence efficiency is by reducing its own power bill. "The federal government is the largest energy consumer in the U.S.; within the federal government the Department of Defense is the 800-ton gorilla," Sobin says, adding that many in the defense and intelligence communities see energy as both a threat to and opportunity for maintaining national security.

Sobin says "defense hawks" have been concerned about conserving



energy since World War II, when generals were running out of gas in North Africa.

More recently, energy efficiency has saved lives in Afghanistan.

"If you can run your facility off of solar [energy], and you can recharge your batteries, and your generator uses less fuel and your truck uses less fuel, then you have less of a vulnerability to someone blowing up fuel trucks trying to get to you," he says. Energy efficiency strategies developed by the Department of Energy and field-tested by the Department of Defense can lead to spin-offs in the marketplace.

### Energizing States

Given all the federal government can do to promote energy efficiency, much is left to the states. Traditionally, Southeastern states have implemented fewer and less aggressive efficiency policies than the rest of the country — but that may be changing.

Twenty-four states, including North Carolina and Florida, have Energy-Efficiency Resource Standards. In states that require utilities to use a certain amount of renewable energy, Energy-Efficiency Resource Standards allow utilities to count increases in ratepayer energy efficiency toward their renewable energy goals.

An even more popular route is Property Assessed Clean Energy, a financing technique that helps homeowners manage the upfront cost of energy-efficiency upgrades by paying it back incrementally in conjunction with their yearly property taxes. PACE programs are run through state and local governments. Twenty-seven states, including Virginia, North Carolina, Ohio, Georgia and Florida have PACE programs.

Efficiency proposals are also more likely to pass when a state's big energy utilities are supportive, or at least neutral. One way to eliminate a utility's incentive to sell more energy is to "decouple," or separate, a utility's income from the amount of energy it sells. That

*Continued on next page*

## Efficiency Lobby

allows a utility to cover its costs, please its investors and still be indifferent toward the amount of coal or gas that goes through its doors. Half of the U.S. has programs like this for electricity, gas or both. Tennessee, Virginia and North Carolina decouple gas.

By promoting energy efficiency in utility regulations, states can put more money in the pockets of ratepayers and reduce the amount of pollution the state generates.

### Virginia — Open For (Efficiency) Business

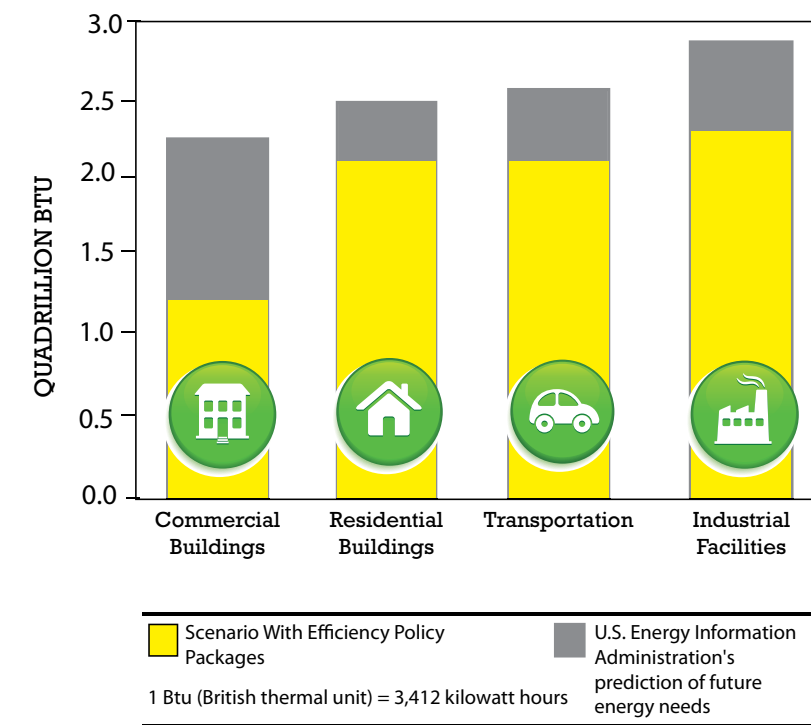
In many ways, Virginia typifies the Southeast's slow acceptance of energy efficiency as a resource. The American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy's 2011 state scorecard ranked the Commonwealth 34th in the nation for overall efficiency policies and 41st for utility policies alone.

Bill Greenleaf, now the executive director of the Richmond Region Energy Alliance, served on Virginia's 2008 Commission on Climate Change. While on the Commission, Greenleaf read an ACEEE report detailing Virginia's energy-efficiency potential and realized that increasing efficiency would be a low-cost, effective means to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Commission recommended that Virginia adopt a plan to increase energy efficiency, but in 2009 state legislators rejected the proposal and its goal of 19 percent energy savings by 2025.

"In 2009 there was no trade association for the energy efficiency industry," Greenleaf says. "There's an emerging business voice for the energy efficiency industry now."

Greenleaf's organization is one of four regional alliances in the Commonwealth that represent business contractors in fields such as heating and air conditioning, insulation and mechanics. Companies like Siemens and Johnson Controls, which provide efficiency retrofits and essentially sell energy savings to local governments, and Virginia-based energy efficiency software company OPower, also have a stake in energy policy. In July 2011, these and other businesses formed the Virginia Energy Efficiency Council,

Energy Efficiency in Appalachia Spans All Sectors



Graph information courtesy of the Southeast Energy Efficiency Alliance and Appalachian Regional Commission's March 2009 report, "Energy Efficiency in Appalachia"

a trade organization that encourages energy conservation.

The coalition's first challenge was to reform the way the State Corporation Commission approved energy efficiency programs. Because of the commission's policies, the rapidly growing software company OPower — possibly the loudest pro-efficiency business voice in Virginia — couldn't do business in its home state, even though it worked with over a dozen utilities in other states.

OPower and members of the fledgling efficiency council began simultaneously working with legislators and lobbyists to change the SCC's approval process. The SCC had relied on a single measure, the ratepayer impact test, to determine whether to approve an energy-efficiency program. But the pro-efficiency bill that OPower and the Virginia Energy Efficiency Council favored would allow the SCC to approve programs that are able to pass three out of four cost-benefit tests instead.

The bill gained the support of the governor's office, passed the General Assembly and was signed into law this spring. Greenleaf says the fact that utilities didn't object helped. Their neutrality came from Virginia's decoupled regulation that allows utilities like

Dominion Power to earn money on efficiency in addition to new electricity generation.

Changing the SCC's decision-making process is significant in Virginia — and according to Greenleaf, the Virginia Energy Efficiency Council is just getting started.

"We can create jobs in every city and county in Virginia if we deploy energy efficiency," he says. Efficiency upgrades demand local labor, which helps keep jobs and taxpayer money within state borders. And by reducing homeowner utility bills, efficiency also puts money in residents' pockets that will often be spent in-state.

"The biggest challenge is trying to get the SCC and legislature to see energy efficiency as a real resource," Greenleaf says. "Is it more cost effective to spend \$1 billion on a new power plant or is it more effective to spend \$1 billion on an energy-efficiency program? ... This year the Virginia Energy Efficiency Council is going to start asking that question."

To learn more about energy efficiency bills currently in Congress, view this story online at: [apvoices.org/thevoice](http://apvoices.org/thevoice).

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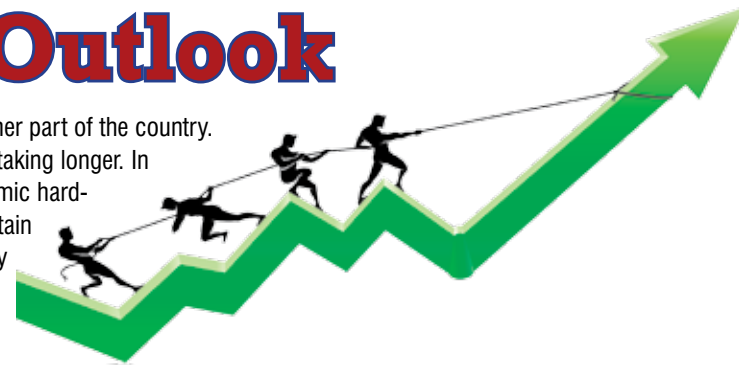
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# Appalachia's Economic Outlook

In the wake of the economic recession, high unemployment has affected Appalachia more than almost any other part of the country. Although the labor force in Appalachia is about same size as in other regions, recovery and job creation are taking longer. In areas with coal mining, a mono-economy based on the coal industry limits job options and intensifies economic hardship. In non-coal bearing areas, other challenges have added to an atmosphere where it's already difficult to retain employment. Today in Appalachia, groups and enterprising individuals striving to diversify the region's economy and energy sources are taking steps to build a more prosperous future, helping people overcome the barriers to long-term employment and inventing unique ways to pursue their own entrepreneurial dreams.



## Breaking Down Job Barriers

By Paige Campbell

Nearly three-quarters of a million jobs were lost in Appalachia between 2007 and 2009. All but 35 of the region's 420 counties, as designated by the Appalachian Regional Commission, saw negative employment trends during that lowest low of the current recession, and the slow crawl back out has been slower here than across the nation as a whole.

Of course, high unemployment doesn't mean the total absence of available jobs. In West Virginia, which saw the region's sharpest decline in employment rates with a 3.3 percent drop, some employers are still seeking workers. One community college's job placement board posts a few new positions each week; in Logan County alone, employers are seeking truck drivers, home health aides, warehouse loaders and receptionists.

The existence of such jobs, even in small numbers and offering comparatively low wages — over half of those positions pay \$10 an hour or less — may perpetuate the “pull-yourself-up-from-your-bootstraps” sentiment shared by many opponents of public investment in job creation. But what sort of bootstrap does a low-wage job offer the average person in a region plagued by long-term economic distress? And what happens when physically getting to such a job is its own hurdle? These are the questions that Occupational Enterprises, Inc. of Lebanon, Va., an organization working to help Southwest Virginians become self-sufficient, is tackling.

“There are jobs here and there,” says OEI's Doug Meade. “But what we're missing are manufacturing jobs, jobs where

the masses can get some training and go to work.”

Early OEI caseworkers encountered a variety of barriers to employment among their clients, beyond the problem of fewer jobs. Undiagnosed learning disabilities were common, as were struggles with substance abuse.

“Another big [problem] was transportation,” Meade explains. With almost no public transportation in many counties, he says, a few agencies offer van services to certain populations. “But even those can't get into all the nooks and crannies of Southwest Virginia.”

In 2002, OEI launched a program to help low-income people purchase affordable vehicles. The Cars for Work program now partners with Vehicles for Change, a Baltimore agency that distributes donated cars and helps coordinate the low-interest, 12-month loans that enable participants to purchase their cars, tags and warranties. The partici-

pants also attend vehicle maintenance and budgeting courses.

Denise Leftwich, who oversees Cars for Work and runs trainings in 13 counties, says credit problems can make traditional financing impossible. Without a loan, “you can't get a reliable vehicle,” she says. “And in a rural place ... it might take 30 minutes just to get to the end of the hollow. If you can't get your kids to daycare and yourself to work, [you can't] be self-sufficient.”

Daycare costs, too, can hinder financial stability even in communities where jobs exist. In Kentucky, the Hazard-Perry County Community Ministries program has offered childcare since 1981 as a crucial part of its workforce development strategy.

“When the organization was founded, they wanted to focus on two things,” says Adrienne Bush, interim executive director. “First, basic crisis assistance for families who were hungry or just needed help. But they also quickly realized that lack of

childcare was becoming a huge issue.”

New Beginnings, the agency's daycare, helps low-income families navigate the process of applying for subsidized childcare tuition through a state-administered federal grant. About 70 percent of its clients receive subsidies.

“We see child development and early childhood education as critical pieces of educating our workforce,” says Bush. “And in terms of economics, you can't have a stable workforce on a macro level or individual economic stability on a micro level if workers are worried about where their kids are staying.”

To receive the reduced rate, low-income families must be employed or attending school; many are doing both, Bush says. “Our mission is to serve people who are struggling to get ahead,” she adds. “We believe that they deserve just as high quality care as those who can afford to pay for it.”

## Chickens, Internet & Entrepreneurs

By Willie Davis

The chickens on Mark Hamilton and Anna Hess' farm in Scott County, Va., don't fear humans. “We've spoiled them,” Hess says. Not long after they first bought their 58-acre farm, a friend gave them chickens. What followed — thanks to innovative thinking and high-speed internet access — is an invention that has sold worldwide and is a model for rural economic development.

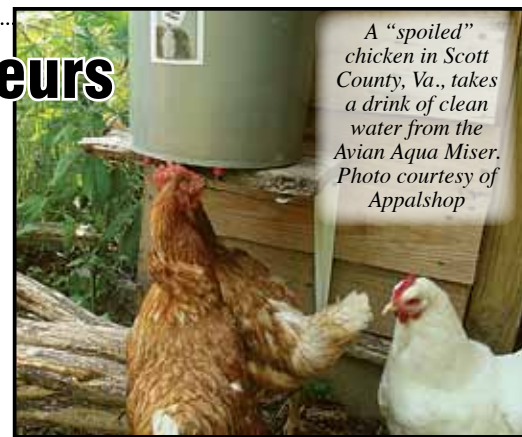
Scott County was once a hub for big tobacco farms, and its location — nestled between two coal-rich areas — provided an opportunity for residents to work in the mines. Once the income from the tobacco industry and the coal companies dried up, however, the county suffered. Filling the void these tobacco farms left are small, self-sustaining farms. But with small farms

come small farm problems.

Like many small farmers, Hamilton and Hess had a problem leaving out water for their chickens. Leave too much water and it becomes dirty and unsanitary, leave too little and they can practically never leave the farm because they have to constantly replace the water.

Hamilton creatively solved this dilemma with an invention he calls the Avian Aqua Miser, a nipple on a plastic container that allows chickens to drink the water only as they need it, a drop at a time.

They knew they had a winning idea, but the problem was selling it. Hess saw the time needed to set up and staff a farmers market booth as a hindrance. “But the internet is at the booth all day,” she says.



A “spoiled” chicken in Scott County, Va., takes a drink of clean water from the Avian Aqua Miser. Photo courtesy of Appalshop

By selling their ideas online, “We were able to pay ourselves a living wage, not just minimum wage. That's hard for a lot of people around here to do.”

Because the Scott County Telephone Cooperative provides high-speed internet access to the Hamilton/Hess farm, they have been able to sell the Avian Aqua Miser

*Continued on next page*

## Creating Opportunities in the Green-Collar Economy

By Paige Campbell

“We meet people where they are.”

That's how Sarah Carter describes the philosophy of Asheville, N.C.'s Green Opportunities, a training institute for the growing green-collar jobs sector. Just how substantially that sector is growing is the subject of a Bureau of Labor Statistics report due for release this year. But in communities including Asheville, sustainability-driven fields already represent a new set of opportunities for job seekers. GO, in particular, strives to offer training to those who might not qualify for other programs.

Carter says the program targets participants who face challenges such as being low income, having a criminal record, facing homelessness or lacking a driver's license.

As GO's home performance services coordinator, Carter inspects construction projects city-wide to assess energy efficiency. But she's also recently taken on her first apprentice, a GO participant named Ed Holloman who was so motivated that he completed every program the organization offered and still wanted to learn more.

When Holloman first learned about Green Opportunities' trainings, he saw an opportunity to take serious steps toward a rewarding profession after time in prison eliminated his hope of becoming a teacher. Holloman thrived as a member of the Training Team, GO's flagship program, which guides a small crew of young adults through training in sustainable construction. He completed further GO training programs and soon earned the

credentials (including certifications in weatherization and energy auditing) to lead a crew himself.

“GO has definitely opened a door for me,” says Holloman, adding that the experience will increase his long-term earning potential.

### Building on the Basics

Other programs in Appalachia offer different training models for green jobs. In western Virginia, the CREATES program (Construction, Retrofitting, and Energy-Efficient Assessment Training and Employment Systems) has put 400 people through trainings at regional community colleges. Funded by the 2009 federal stimulus package, by the end of this year CREATES will have sent participants back to 21 counties with new skills.

Dale Hedrick enrolled in CREATES after deciding to transition away from a career in web development to learn a more hands-on trade installing solar panels. He began with basic electrical courses and completed his training in about two years.

CREATES helped finance his training and assured his placement in the courses required for certification; it also connected him to a regional trade show, which helped hone his business plan. Now Hedrick runs his own business, Blue Ridge Solar. “It gave me the experience of ... actually testing the marketability of what I want to do and adjust my plan.”

Still, short-term, grant-funded training works best “when there is a vibrant market for that workforce to go out into,” and many Appalachian communities lack such a market, says Eric Mathis of Williamson, W.Va.'s JOBS Project. The JOBS



By providing introductory training and certifications, groups like Green Opportunities unlock doors to long-term employment for participants such as Ed Holloman (above). Photo by Natalie Abbassi

Project's mission, through a collaboration with the Williamson Redevelopment Authority in an initiative called Sustainable Williamson, is to work within existing construction, energy and food systems industries to tackle those market-level challenges.

To illustrate the JOBS Project vision, Mathis points to the experience of Matthew Gilliam, a third-generation coal mine electrician who now runs Gilliam

Solar. Gilliam's work demonstrates a shift towards sustainability while providing a marketable product, and also offers an example to an emerging workforce.

The forthcoming Bureau of Labor Statistics report promises to shed light on the extent to which examples like Gilliam's reflect the green-collar industry's overall growth. In Appalachian communities that have taken green jobs training seriously, it could make for a very bright light indeed.

## Chickens, Internet & Entrepreneurs *Continued from previous page*

around the country and overseas. Access to high-speed internet also enabled Hess and Hamilton to start their business with just five hundred dollars.

Hess and Hamilton hope to act as models for Appalachian youths who have good ideas but few resources and think they have to leave home to be successful. Their invention has offered them the economic freedom to devote their time to what they really love — their farm. “We think it's paradise here,” Hess says, waving her arm around to indicate either

the farm, Appalachia or both. “The people who leave the mountains, they still think it's paradise, but they don't think there are any jobs or opportunities.”

With innovative ideas, and the right tools in place, maybe local residents won't have to separate their paradise from their daily bread.

**Editor's note:** A longer version of this article was originally published in June 2011 by WMMT/Making Connections News and is available online at: [makingconnectionsnews.org](http://makingconnectionsnews.org).

## State Legislature Kills Mountaintop Removal Ban Through Delays

By Molly Moore

The Scenic Vistas Protection Act, a bill to end mountaintop removal coal mining in Tennessee, was killed by a state House subcommittee after the bill was heard by the state's Senate this March.

The Tennessee hearing marked the first time that a bill to ban moun-

taintop removal was heard by a full legislative chamber in a state with active mountaintop removal mining. The bill would have protected Tennessee's virgin ridgelines above 2,000 feet from the destructive mining practice.

The state Senate delayed an up-or-down vote on the bill, which sent the bill to a House subcommittee. That subcom-

mittee then delayed a vote on the bill by sending it to a summer study session. Rep. Richard Floyd, who proposed the motion, said the summer session would give the subcommittee more time to study the issue. The Scenic Vistas Protection Act, active in the Tennessee legislature for the past five years, also languished in summer study in 2011, with no action and no result.

Rep. Mike McDonald, the bill's House sponsor, told the subcommittee, "We have lost eight mountains since

2008 by delaying. If we don't vote this year, we will lose more mountains."

Prominent Tennesseans, such as former Knoxville mayor Victor Ashe and Rev. Gradye Parsons, the highest elected official in the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA), supported the legislation.

An editorial in one of the state's primary newspapers, *The Tennessean*, stated, "Whoever votes 'no' to passage of HB 0291/SB 0577 will be on record as supporting this wanton destruction."

## Private Property Rights Transferred to Coal Industry

A bill that transfers property rights to empty underground mine chambers from private landowners to coal companies was signed by Virginia Governor Bob McDonnell in April. The bill allows companies to dispose of toxic waste in these chambers against the property owners' wishes, even if the waste would endanger the quality of a property owner's drinking water.

A hastily written amendment to the

bill says that, in some cases, companies must get landowners' consent. But the bill also says, "such consent shall not be unreasonably withheld if the owner has been offered reasonable compensation for such use." This provision would leave it up to the courts to decide whether a landowner who refused to allow waste disposal on his or her land for a fee was being unreasonable.

### Fly Ash Lawsuit Refiled Against Dominion Virginia Power

More than 400 residents near the Battlefield Golf Club in Chesapeake, Va., refiled a lawsuit this February asking for \$2 billion in damages related to water contamination from the coal ash on which the course was built. *The Virginian-Pilot* reported that court records show well-water testing with elevated levels of toxic substances — including lead, vanadium, cobalt and cadmium.

### Coal Plant Shutdowns

GenOn Energy will shut down seven coal-fired power plants in Pennsylvania and Ohio after a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency ruling forced the utility to greatly reduce the plants' sulfur dioxide emissions. In Chicago, Midwest Generation agreed to shut down its two plants in exchange for community groups dropping lawsuits against the company.

### Coal's Share of U.S. Electricity Generation Falls to 35-Year Low

Competition from natural gas and mild weather contributed to a 35-year low in the share of U.S. power generated from coal. Although coal still generates the largest share of electricity in the country, its share of monthly power generation dropped below 40 percent in November and December, 2011, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.

### Premium Coal Fined For New River Damage

In response to a Jan. 1 coal slurry spill into Tennessee's New River, the state Department of Environment and Conservation has levied a fine of up to \$196,000 against Premium Coal. The company has until April 21 to appeal the fine.

### OSM/BLM Merger Moves Ahead

On March 12, the U.S. Department of Interior announced it would move forward with the consolidation of the Office of Surface Mining into the Bureau of Land Management. Proponents say the move will generate savings, while critics say OSM needs to remain an independent agency to be effective.

### Alpha Named Most Controversial Mining Company

Alpha Natural Resources took the top spot recently when RepRisk, a firm specializing in environmental and social risk, released a report ranking the world's most controversial mining companies. The report was released just days after Alpha Chairman Michael J. Quillen announced he was stepping down.

### Penn Students Pass Resolution Against Mountaintop Removal

The University of Pennsylvania Undergraduate Assembly passed a resolution on Feb. 21, urging the university to reevaluate its relationship with longtime partner and coal supporter PNC Bank. The resolution by the Penn Community Against Mountaintop Removal, passed with a vote of 20-4.

### UBB Mine Manager Charged

Massey mine superintendent Carl May was charged with conspiracy in February for violating mine safety laws in the 2010 explosion that killed 29 miners at the Upper Big Branch facility in Raleigh County, W.Va. Federal prosecutors allege that May and others knowingly put coal production ahead of worker safety on numerous occasions.

## D.C. District Court Overrules EPA's Spruce Mine No. 1 Permit Veto

By Brian Sewell

On March 23, a District of Columbia District Court ruled in favor of Arch Coal and overturned a 2011 veto by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, restoring the permit of the Logan County, W.Va., Spruce No. 1 mountaintop removal mine. U.S. District Judge Amy Berman Jackson ruled that the EPA had overstepped its authority by revoking a permit already granted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The ruling that the original Corps

of Engineers permit is valid makes Arch's Spruce Mine, which would span 2,278 acres, the largest permitted mountaintop removal mine in West Virginia history.

The EPA first vetoed the Spruce Mine permit in January 2011 largely because the permit allowed coal operators to bury seven miles of streams. At the time, the agency said the mine would "jeopardize the health of Appalachian communities and clean water on which they depend ... We have responsibility

under the law to protect water quality and safeguard the people who rely on clean water."

The ruling sets a precedent restricting the authority of the EPA under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, and represents a victory for the coal industry and politicians who have accused the current administration of waging a war on coal by delaying or denying mountaintop removal permits. Environmental groups are urging the EPA to appeal the decision in hopes that the

permit will again be revoked, and are concerned about the ruling's possible significance for future mountaintop removal mines.

The ruling came a month after the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers lifted a suspension on a streamlined permitting process for surface mines known as Nationwide Permit 21. Under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, the revised NWP 21 places restrictions on valley fills associated with mountaintop removal to half an acre and 300 linear feet.

## EPA Issues Long-awaited Rules on Greenhouse Gas Emissions

By Brian Sewell

After several years of planning and public comment, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency released the first-ever proposed rules regulating carbon pollution from power plants on March 27. The rule is the result of a 2007 U.S. Supreme Court ruling that gave the EPA authority to regulate greenhouse gases under the Clean Air Act.

The proposal will require new power plants to limit their carbon dioxide emissions to 1,000 pounds per megawatt-hour of electricity generated; some plants operating today produce as much as 1,800 pounds per megawatt-hour. To be in compliance, any new coal-fired plants would be required to use carbon capture and storage technology. Natural gas plants would not need any additional pollution controls to meet the requirement.

The rule will apply only to coal-fired power plants that will not begin construction in the next 12 months. Power plants


that have been permitted or are currently under construction will be exempt from the rule. However, if utilities build new plants once the rule goes into effect, it will cost significantly more and possibly require carbon capture and sequestration technology. Anticipating this shift, the U.S. Energy Information Administration forecasts that no new conventional coal plants will come online after 2012.

While the rule will not affect permitted plants, it could derail some projects that have not been approved. In Surry County, Va., Old Dominion Electric Cooperative had originally received zoning permission from the Dendron town council and planned to break ground on a 1,500-megawatt coal-fired plant this year. But aggressive community organizing that disputed the zoning succeeded in delaying the permitting process, pushing the proposed plant into qualifying for the EPA's new regulations and creating an economic liability for

ODEC that makes construction unlikely.

Although there are currently no laws limiting the amount of carbon pollution power plants can emit, the agency has determined that emissions threaten human health and contribute to global climate change. The new

requirements are likely to become law before the end of the year. The EPA is expected to announce a separate rule after the presidential election that will apply to existing coal plants, which are responsible for nearly 40 percent of the country's carbon emissions.



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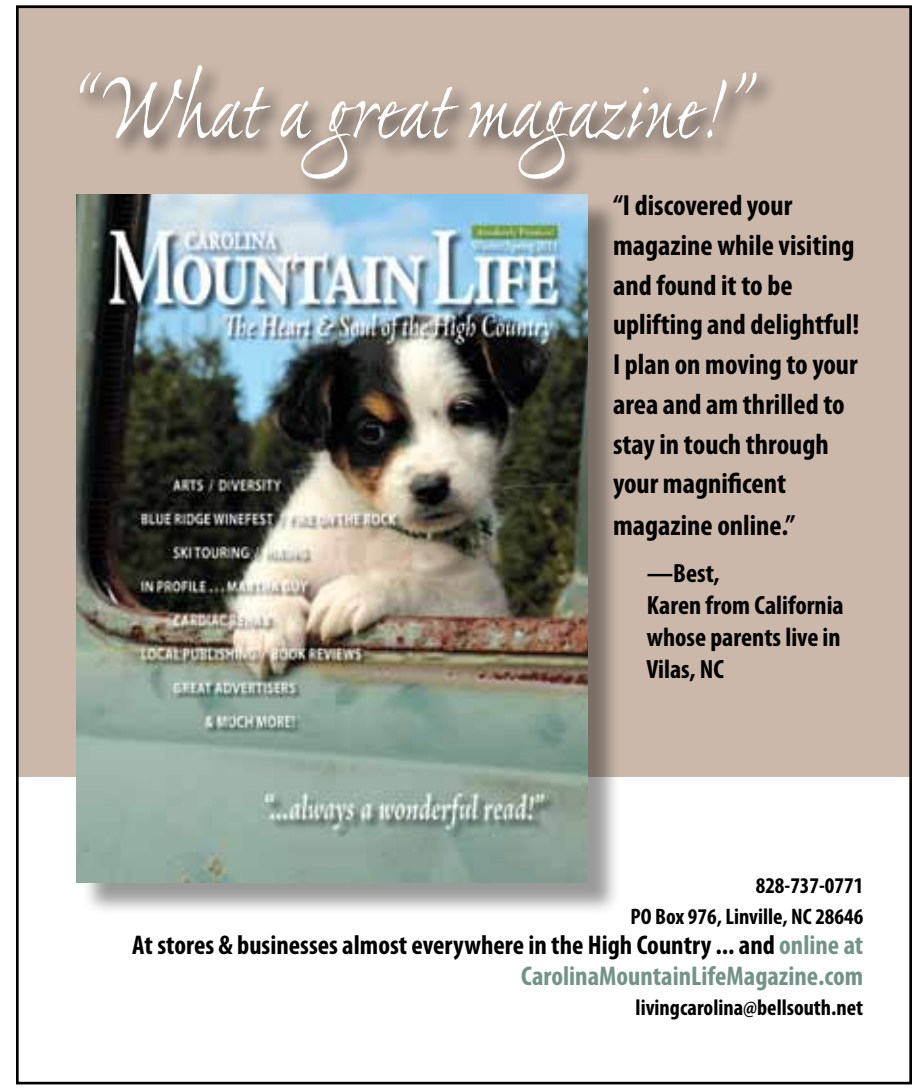
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# Editorial

## Too Big to Fail, But Not to Change

When “pink slime” hit the headlines in March, Americans were rightfully disgusted. The thought of being poisoned for profit by beef-product filler treated with ammonia sparked national outrage. Grocery stores and even mega-fast food restaurants such as McDonalds and Taco Bell were quick to publicly shun the slimy substance. Over the course of just a few days, and a lot of bad publicity pointed at the beef industry, business practices radically changed.

However, there are even more toxic industries that are continuing business as usual. The fossil fuel interests and the financial institutions that help fund them don't need our consent to poison our bodies and contribute to the growing curse of climate change. They don't respond to scrutiny the way Taco Bell might either. They don't need to — they're the most profitable entities on Earth.

Names like J.P. Morgan Chase, Goldman Sachs and Bank of America might not have the negative connotations that Massey Energy or Exxon Mobil bring to mind, but in some ways they're one and the same. Without these financial institutions mobilizing capital funding for electric utilities and fossil fuel companies, multi-billion dollar power plants would never be built.

The “too big to fail” institutions operate under the guise of corporate responsibility. J.P. Morgan Chase, the largest investor in coal-fired electricity, claims on its website that they are “Helping the world transition to a low-carbon economy.” Bank of America, the third-largest investor, hypocritically acknowledges that “The most formidable challenge we face is global climate change.”

Both the financial and fossil fuel industries continue to victimize Americans. One fraudulently forecloses on families and even got off scot-free after creating a global financial crisis in a futile attempt to satisfy its insatiable greed. The other enjoys unnecessary subsidies in times of record profit while polluting the air and water. These corporations and their political allies support cuts to essential social programs but complain that closing tax loopholes is “socialism” and “un-American.”

The bottom line is that, while the financial and energy sectors are essential to a functioning economy, they've irresponsibly wielded the power we've given them by believing that we work for them, not the other way around.

Whether it's “pink slime,” the financial crash of 2008, the BP oil spill of 2010 or the ongoing destruction of Appalachia by mountaintop removal, millions are voicing their disgust at the lack of corporate responsibility, accountability and foresight. Yet somehow, in a severe case of cognitive dissonance, energy giants and the monoliths of Wall Street think that less government oversight and “self-regulation” is the solution.

In our society's hunger for endless economic growth, we're beginning to forget who we really work for — future generations and their inalienable right to every opportunity afforded to us.



Lieutenant Governor Ron Ramsey recently helped kill a bipartisan bill in the Tennessee state senate that would have banned mountaintop removal coal mining in the state. Ramsey received more than \$195,000 in contributions from coal interests during his 2010 campaign.

## Viewpoint

### Rebuilding The American Dream

Excerpts from “Rebuild the Dream” by Van Jones

The time has come to turn things right side up again and declare that America's honest, hard-working middle class is too big to fail. The aspirations of our low-income, struggling, and marginalized communities are too big and important to fail. The hopes of our children are too big to fail. The American Dream itself is too big to fail.

And we are not going to let these things fail.

Of course, it will not be easy to stop the dream killers. Tax policy that burdens working families and gives the biggest breaks to the super-rich has helped to keep more and more of our national wealth locked in the private safes of the top one percent. This alarming economic polarization, combined with the constant flow of good-paying jobs overseas, threatens to end our status as a middle

class nation. Too many of our big banks and largest corporations are behaving in a manner that is both irresponsible and unpatriotic. Their conduct makes it that much worse for the many patriotic and responsible businesses — especially small businesses — that follow the rules and provide good jobs to their employees. . . .

There is reason for hope. The United States remains a rich nation—the wealthiest and most inventive in the history of the world. Global competition and technological advances pose challenges for American workers, but we should always remember that the proverbial pie is bigger than ever today—and still growing. As a nation, we are getting richer; our GDP is still greater than it has ever been. The problem is not that the pie is shrinking; it is that working families are taking home smaller slices of it, as wealth and income are concentrated upward. It will

take smart policy, better business practices, and community-driven innovation, but we still have the power to reclaim, reinvent, and renew the American Dream. . . .

America is still the best idea in the world. The American middle class is still her greatest invention. This book is dedicated to the proposition that—with the right strategy and a little bit of luck—the movement of the 99% can preserve and strengthen them both.

“Rebuild the Dream” (Nation Books, 2012) is the latest book by Van Jones, a former Obama White House advisor and member of Appalachian Voices' advisory board. In it, Jones shares his journey from grassroots outsider to White House insider and proposes ways to get the U.S. economy working for everyday citizens. Published in April 2012, the book is on The New York Times bestseller list and is available at Rebuildthedream.com and bookstores nationwide.

## This GREEN House

# Bark Houses: Built With Nature's Shingles

By Nan Chase

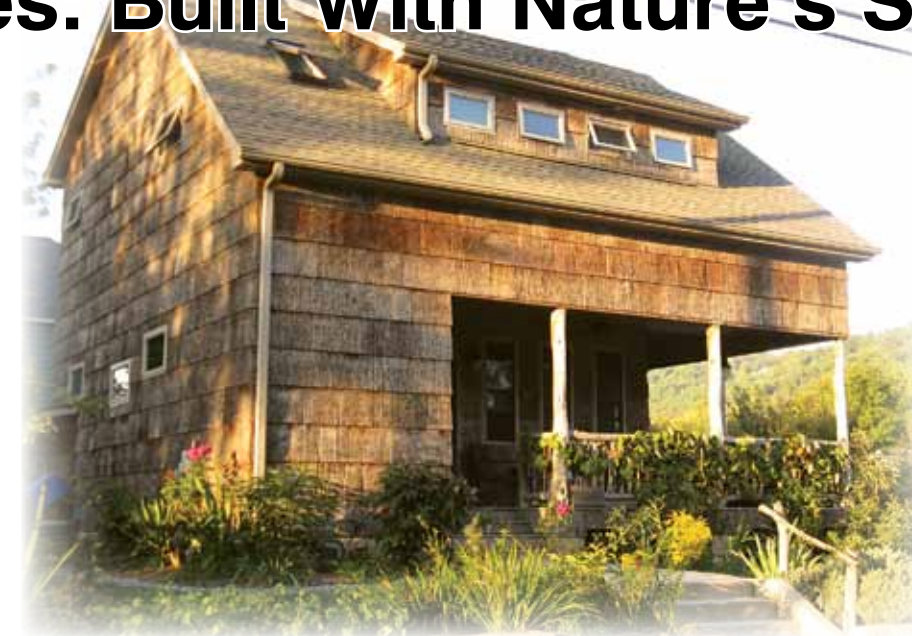
Four years after completion, the rustic bungalow near downtown Asheville, N.C., is a local landmark. Covered in big overlapping shingles of tree bark — rather than the usual wood, brick or stone — it looks odd, a bit like a square tree.

Although the unusual house appears antique and rooted in the past, it was built only in 2008. Bark may look old-fashioned, but as a recently rediscovered and re-engineered building material, it fits the profile of a modern, environmentally sustainable choice for new construction — residential or commercial.

The shingles are crafted from popular bark that is salvaged from timber operations, and otherwise would be burned, mulched or left to rot. Bark shingles contain no chemicals, and are processed solely with sanitizing kiln heat. Bark's insulating heft keeps utility bills low, bark requires no paint or stain, and shingles can last 75 years or more without maintenance.

I've learned all this because that Asheville house is mine. What began simply as a way for my husband, Saul, and me to have a house that never needs painting has grown into a living laboratory experiment.

Although bark-covered structures date back millennia, the first



Writer Nan Chase and her husband have found that the cost of heating their bark-clad, two-story house is surprisingly low. Although the house has southeastern exposure, they seldom use air conditioning because the thick bark — in conjunction with covered porches and indoor ceiling fans — usually keeps the temperature well below 80 degrees. Photos by Nan Chase

appearance of a neatly squared bark building shingle — from American chestnut trees — dates back to 1895 in the Southern Appalachian Mountains. Architect Henry Bacon invented the style in Linville, N.C., where he used hand-trimmed slabs of two-inch-thick chestnut bark to cover homes. Some of those summer homes are still occupied today, the exteriors still untreated.

When the chestnut blight wiped out the main source of bark in the early 20th century, bark houses were no longer built. But in the past two decades, bark shingles have made a comeback, now almost exclusively in poplar.

“It's fantastic, it's local, it's durable, it's cool,” says Matt Siegel, green building director at the Western North Carolina Green Building Council in Asheville. But he cites the shingles' price as a possible deterrent to increased use and says that installation takes more time. Bark shingles can cost twice as much as conventional cedar siding, but the upfront costs even out over time, experts say.

“Twice the cost upfront sounds like a lot,” says Brent Sim-

mons, manager of green programs and sustainable product sales at Mountain Lumber Company in Banner Elk, N.C. “But if you spread it over many years, the increase is less than one percent for the whole cost of the house. It's a minimal up-charge for something maintenance-free.”

When buying bark shingles, consumers need to make sure they're getting a product that lives up to its potential. Practice has shown that bark's longevity depends on three things: how well it's dried by the manufacturer to kill any microorganisms and stabilize the product, how well it's stored before installation and how well it's installed.

Consumers should make certain

that suppliers guarantee that they use bark only from managed forestlands, with certification from such organizations as the Forest Stewardship Council, the Sustainable Forestry Initiative or the American Tree Farm System. Buyers should also use builders who have been trained in bark installation.

“It's not rocket science to put it on,” explains builder Daniel Hemp, “but you have to learn how to do it right.”

My own interest in building a bark house came while I was helping to write a book on the subject, “Bark House Style: Sustainable Designs From Nature,” with Chris McCurry. By the time Saul and I had the opportunity to build on a vacant lot in Asheville, the research had convinced me that there was no other material so tough or interesting for the price.

Each shingle is unique, with lovely patterns and bits of moss and lichen. Occasionally a squirrel pops its head over the porch railing, looking for nuts on this curious “tree.” Blogging rumors to the contrary, these houses do not attract woodpeckers searching for bugs. Kiln-drying kills any insects and the sugary layer insects may inhabit in living trees.

The bark house sparked a mini-building boom around us. Saul and I have bought a second vacant lot and hope to build another bark house.

**Editor's note:** An earlier version of this article ran in the Christian Science Monitor in 2009.



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### Appalachian Voices Celebrates 15 Years — And You're Invited!

Join us on Sat., June 21 for Artists for Appalachia — a celebration of our 15th anniversary, our annual membership meeting and a special fundraising event.

The venue for the evening will be the renowned Jefferson Theater in in Charlottesville, Va. Artists for Appalachia will include traditional mountain music, readings and revelry as we come together to celebrate our past and present work to protect the air, water, land and people of Appalachia and to raise funds to continue our work for years to come.

Special guests will include Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., Kathy Mattea, Michael Johnathon, Daniel Martin

Moore, Clara Bingham and Bill Haney, producer and director of the award winning film "The Last Mountain," and local Charlottesville folk band favorites, The Honey Dewdrops.

The event is free for current Appalachian Voices members. New and renewing members can join for as little as \$35 and receive a ticket to the event and a membership. Reserved seating is available for an extra \$15 donation, and VIP seating is available but limited and expected to go quickly — call our Charlottesville office at (434) 293-6373 for details.

We look forward to seeing you in Charlottesville

to kick off another 15 years of protecting the region we all love.

Tickets to Artists for Appalachia are limited, so be sure to RSVP online or call our office today! Visit [appvoices.org/ArtistsForAppalachia](http://appvoices.org/ArtistsForAppalachia) to reserve your seats and to become a member. Can't attend but want to help our work? Visit [appvoices.org/Donate](http://appvoices.org/Donate) today.



### Appalachian Voices Moves to New Headquarters



If you ever visited our office at 191 Howard Street in downtown Boone, N.C., you knew how "cozily" we worked together in a small open space with no windows and no individual offices. To accommodate our growing family of staff, interns and volunteers, Appalachian Voices recently moved the Boone headquarters to a new home at 171 Grand Boulevard. Located in an old Georgian-style house-turned-office-space in downtown Boone, the building has lots of windows, separate offices for each team and is also shared with two excellent non-profit organizations, Blue Ridge Women in Agriculture and Legal Aid of North Carolina. We are super excited about our new space, and hope you stop by if you're in the area!

these hearings have included heated verbal onslaughts against administrators from the EPA and the Office of Surface Mining.

### Appalachian Treasures Tour "On the Road"

The Appalachian Treasures tour is out West this spring! Lenny Kohm, Appalachian Voices' campaign director, has been on the road in New Mexico, Nevada, Arizona and California speaking about mountaintop removal coal mining and its effects on communities in Appalachia. In the Los Angeles area, he was joined by Beverly Walkup of Fayette County, W.Va. This month, our Washington, D.C. Program Director Kate Rooth is headed to Washington state with Amber Whittington of Ameagle, W.Va. to share our passionate views on mountaintop removal with audiences in Seattle, Bellingham, Olympia and the Olympic Peninsula. For upcoming tour dates please check out our schedule at: [appvoices.org/apptreasures](http://appvoices.org/apptreasures).

### Citizen Water Monitoring Season Begins

The Appalachian Water Watch citizen monitoring program is gearing up for more stream monitoring, citizen trainings and an expanding program. Our first training of the year will be hosted by Kentuckians for the Commonwealth on May 12 as part of a larger KFTC meeting on ways to protect Kentucky's water.

We are working with other organizations in The Alliance for Appalachia on a joint clean water protection effort by increasing participation, expanding to new locations, improving the public database and increasing equipment availability.

Continued on next page

### Protecting The Volunteer State's Scenic Vistas

J.W. Randolph, director of Appalachian Voices' Tennessee office, has been working up a storm in sunny Tennessee, helping other coalitions and State Senator Eric Stewart promote movement on the Tennessee

Scenic Vistas Protection Act in the state's Senate and House. The bill, which would ban mountaintop removal coal mining in the state, reached the Senate floor before it was sent back to committee — unprecedented in any state with active mountaintop removal coal mining. Read all about the Scenic Vistas Protection Act on page 22.

### Dr. Wasson, I Presume

In the latest round of congressional attacks on mountaintop removal coal mining regulations, Appalachian Voices' Director of Programs Dr. Matt Wasson was called to testify on a panel examining the effect of the Office of Surface Mining's mountaintop removal regulations on jobs and the economy in Appalachia.

Dr. Wasson refuted claims by coal-friendly representatives that surface mining regulations are "job killers" by providing government data showing that Appalachian mining jobs have actually increased by 10 percent since the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency enacted regulatory guidance on mountaintop removal coal mining in 2010. In 2011, Appalachian coal mining employment reached its highest level in 15 years.

Congress has held a number of hearings addressing the current administration's agency oversight of surface coal mining;

## Appalachian Voices BUSINESS LEAGUE

New & Renewing Members — Feb 2012 / March 2012

Morris West, Inc., Greensboro, NC  
Mast General Store, Valle Crucis, NC  
Earth Fare, Boone, NC

To become a business member visit [AppalachianVoices.org](http://AppalachianVoices.org) or call us at 877-APP-VOICE



### Kicking Coal Ash in Carolina

Over the past months, Appalachian Voices and our Red, White and Water campaign have continued the fight against toxic coal ash in North Carolina.

In Charlotte, Appalachian Voices teamed up with the local Greenpeace chapter to host a coal ash tour, led by award-winning reporter Rhiannon Fionn, who has covered issues related to Duke Energy's Riverbend coal plant. Over 50 people attended the event.

More than 200 residents from Asheville and surrounding areas came out to support that message at our "Clean Water Not Coal Ash" rally on March 22 at Lake Julian Park in Arden, N.C. Held in conjunction with the nineteenth annual World Water Day, the event was co-sponsored by Appalachian Voices, the Western North Carolina Alliance and other organizations to call attention to the threat posed by coal ash to drinking water and the nation's rivers.

Attendees listened to educational speakers including French Broad Riverkeeper Hartwell Carson, Richard Fireman of N.C. Interfaith Power and Light, Terry Clark of Physicians for Social Responsibility and affected community members like Donna Keiser discuss the negative effects of the coal cycle in their communities and what it is like to live near coal ash ponds.

In January, North Carolina's Department of Environment and Natural Resources confirmed that coal ash ponds in North Carolina are leaching toxic heavy metals into groundwater. Despite the mounting evidence of

the dangers, coal ash is treated as no more toxic than regular household garbage and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has delayed enacting any guidance on the substance.

To combat the EPA's delays, Earthjustice, on behalf of Appalachian Voices and other groups, is proceeding with a lawsuit against the agency to force the release of long-awaited public health safeguards against toxic coal ash. According to the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, which is meant to protect human health and the environment from the potential hazards of waste disposal, the EPA is required to review and revise RCRA regulations at least every three years.

To learn more and to sign a petition asking for protection from the dangers of coal ash in North Carolina, visit: [appvoices.org/nc-cant-wait](http://appvoices.org/nc-cant-wait).



Photo Credit: Western North Carolina Alliance

Continued from previous page

Kara Dodson, a familiar face for many of our volunteers, will return this summer to run trainings and provide on-the-ground support in Kentucky and Virginia. Pallavi Podaparti, a long-time KFTC member, will also be joining the Appalachian Water Watch team for the season to help with our growing demand for trainings and volunteer support.

If you know a group that would be interested in taking part in the citizen water monitoring program, please contact [aww-admin@appalachianwaterwatch.org](mailto:aww-admin@appalachianwaterwatch.org).

### A Kentucky Water Check-Up

Appalachian Water Watch met with members of Kentuckians for the Commonwealth throughout Harlan, Letcher,

and Floyd counties in March, giving our team an opportunity to see the good and the bad in Kentucky streams.

In Harlan County, the communities of Benham and Lynch are working hard to protect their streams and city water from harm caused by proposed surface mines. By monitoring water quality before the mines begin work, the existing high water quality is documented.

The proposed mines are owned by Nally & Hamilton and A&G Coal Corp. Both companies have dubious environmental and safety records, and Nally & Hamilton is the defendant in one of Appalachian Voices' ongoing Clean Water Act cases.

In Floyd County, we were alerted to acid mine drainage outside Prestonsburg. Samples taken from the site indicate an iron level of 183 milligrams per liter — more than 45 times the amount Kentucky allows active mines to discharge. KFTC staff met with the Kentucky Department of Natural Resources and will continue to monitor the site.



Photo Credit: KFTC



Appalachian Voices is committed to protecting the land, air and water of the central and southern Appalachian region. Our mission is to empower people to defend our region's rich natural and cultural heritage by providing them with tools and strategies for successful grassroots campaigns.

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### “Bertha’s Love”

Finalist, Culture  
Photographer: Clayton Joe Young

Spring means lambing season in Appalachia, and many farmers are awake into the wee hours tending to their flocks as the young are born. Photographer Clayton Joe Young’s touching portrait of “Bertha’s Love” is one of 49 finalists in the 2011 Appalachian Mountain Photography Competition, currently on exhibit in Boone, N.C. See more images from the competition on pages 10-11.

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## GET INVOLVED environmental & cultural events in the region

### Earth Day Red Spruce Planting

April 21-22, 10 a.m.: Join the WV Highlands Conservancy to plant red spruce trees at the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge. Dress for the weather, wear sturdy shoes or boots and bring water. Lunch provided. Email: marquette\_crockett@fws.gov

### Spring Wildflower Pilgrimage

April 25-28: Annual event at Great Smoky Mountains National Park features educational walks, motorcades, art classes and seminars. Gatlinburg, Tenn. Visit: springwildflowerpilgrimage.org

### Merlefest 2012

April 26-29: An international bluegrass festival established in memory of Eddy Merle Watson to support Wilkes Community College and celebrate “traditional plus” music. This year’s lineup includes Doc Watson, Allison Krauss, Los Lobos and more. Visit: merlefest.org

### 5th Annual Early Bird Wildflower Walk & Plant Sale

April 28, 8 a.m. to noon: Vendors will sell native plants in the parking lot and events will be scheduled in the Daniel Boone Native Gardens. Boone, N.C. Visit: danielboonenativegardens.org

### The 28th Exchange Place Spring Garden Fair

April 28-29, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.: Plant sale features natives, herbs, perennials and heirlooms, garden accessories and related crafts. Fair also features garden talks, children’s activities, music, traditional foods and historical farm demos. Kingsport, Tenn. Call 423-288-6071

### Green Walk for Jobs and Justice

April 30-May 16: Join the Earth Quaker Action Team in a 16-day, 200-mile walk from Philadelphia to PNC Bank’s headquarters in Pittsburgh to get PNC out of the business of mountaintop removal coal mining. Or join in Pittsburgh May 16 for a day of action. Visit: greenPNC.org

### Sierra Club No Nukes Activist Summit

May 4-6: Sierra Club Chapters and activists invite Club members to gather in Washington, D.C., to develop a strategic plan for the Club’s anti-nuclear work and create a national network. Visit: sierraclub.org

### The Critter Crawl

May 5, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.: This 5k race starts in MacRae Meadows and ends at the top of Grandfather Mountain. Proceeds benefit the Mountain’s eagle habitat renovation fund. Online registration began March 1 with 500 spaces. \$30/ participant. Visit: grandfather.com

### Full Moon Backpack in Tennessee

May 5-6: Join Tennessee Wild for a four mile hike and full moon camp out at Bob Stratton Bald. Optional night hike up to The Hangover overlooking Citico Creek and Joyce Kilmer wil-

derness areas. Participants must bring all camping gear. Cherokee National Forest, Tenn. Visit: tnwild.org

### Music of the Coal Fields

May 7: Traditional musicians Tom and Michelle Warner present a concert of Appalachian music of the coalfields as part of the 2012 Coal Heritage Public Lecture Series. Free. Beckley, W. Va. Email: karen@wventerprises.com

### Central Appalachian Women’s Tribunal on Climate Justice

May 10, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Expose the impacts of mountaintop removal at the Charleston Women’s Club in Charleston, W. Va. Findings from this Tribunal will be presented in June at Rio+20 U.N. Conference on Sustainable Development. \$20, scholarships available, registration ends May 3. Visit: ohvec.org

### Grandfather Mountain Naturalist Weekend

May 11-13: A weekend of programs and guided walks for those who would like to explore the diversity of life at Grandfather Mountain. All programs included in admission prices to the park. Call 800-468-7325

### 43rd Annual Appalachian Festival

May 11-13: Join Kentuckians for the Commonwealth, Ohio Citizen Action and Food & Water Watch at Coney Island amusement park in Cincinnati, Ohio to raise awareness of environmental devastation in eastern Kentucky. Visit: appalachianfestival.org

Email [voice@appvoices.org](mailto:voice@appvoices.org) to be included in our Get Involved listing. Deadline for the next issue will be Monday, May 15, at 5 p.m. for events taking place between June 10 and August 5, 2012.

### Heartwood Music Festival

May 17-20: Enjoy live music, dancers, art, camp along the stream and eat some jambalaya while raising funds for the Heartwood network. Tickets \$10, \$15 with camping pass. Children under 12 are free. S. Pittsburg, Tenn. Visit: heartwoodbattleofthebandsandfest.com

### Mountain Justice Summer Action Camp

May 18-26: A weeklong program teaching the effects of mountaintop removal through workshops, entertainment, sustainable living techniques and action. Registration \$150, includes meals and sleeping quarters. Appalachian South Folklife Center near Pipestem, W.Va. Visit: mountainjustice.org

### Mountain Safari

May 31, 6-9 p.m.: Join the Friends of the WNC Nature Center in your safari gear for a one-of-a-kind safari adventure with the animals. Advance tickets \$45 for non-members and \$40 for members, \$50 at the door. Asheville, N.C. Visit: wildwnc.org

### National Trails Day

June 3, 10:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.: Early morning kids fishing rodeo is followed by chance to participate in trail maintenance and guided hikes. \$5 parking. Amicalola Falls State Park, Dawsonville, Ga. Visit: gastateparks.org

### Environmental Summer Camps 2012

Spring is here and that means it’s almost time for summer camp fun! From the coast of North Carolina to the mountains of West Virginia, there are camps tailored to young nature lovers. We’ve compiled a list of summer camps to get your kids outside, where they can meet lifelong friends and learn about protecting ecosystems and enjoying the great outdoors. Visit [appvoices.org/thevoice](http://appvoices.org/thevoice).

