



Huntington, WV

Winds of Change

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OVEC

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Growing a Better Future: Project Plant

For the past four years, OVEC has partnered with the Huntington Boys and Girls Club on Project Plant, teaching kids to grow organic vegetables and to prepare and eat healthy food.

From the get-go, Project Plant and our partnership with the club has been about so much more than gardening. An essay written by Boys and Girls Club member, Daevion Wilson, exemplifies what our partnership is about. Daevion, a fourth grader at Spring Hill Elementary, wrote his article for a "What I Want to be When I Grow Up" essay contest sponsored by the *Huntington Herald-Dispatch*. Here is his winning essay for the 4th-5th-grade age group:

When I grow up I want to be an environmental scientist. An environmental scientist works to protect our environment and tests the water, soil, and air to find the source of pollution. These scientists study how people affect the environment.

I want to be an environmental scientist because I like gardening and helping the environment. I like gardening because I like learning how plants form and how they grow. If there is too much pollution in the air, the plants won't be able to grow how they are supposed to. I want to help reduce pollution because the more pollution the less plants there will be, and plants are a food source. Without plants, we would have less food.

My favorite thing about gardening is being able to make food out of the fruits and vegetables that I grow. At my school and at the Boys and Girls Club, we learn to cook meals with our plants from the garden. My favorite food we've ever made from our garden was kale chips. They were so good!



Project Plant yields carrots and much more. Daevion wants to be an environmental scientist when he grows up. Photo by Nathan Luton.

I've been gardening since I was in second grade and it really is one of my favorite things to do. The reason I want to be an environmental scientist is because I am so interested in gardening, and I read a lot of books about plants and animals to help me learn more. I learned a lot about environmental scientists from one of my books at home.

Once I am an environmental scientist I will help the world from pollution, I will travel and study, then go back to the lab and figure out what the cause of the pollution is.

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Sense of Place Gives Sense of Purpose

Excerpt from a blog by OVEC member Dr. Randi Pokladnik. Read the full blog on our website.

It took moving halfway across the country in the late 1990s to make me realize I had an intense “sense of place.” If you Google that phrase, you’ll find that psychologists and geographers describe it as “a strong personal identification for a particular geographical place.”

During the year and a half I lived in Iowa, I made many trips back home to Ohio, and it became obvious that I couldn’t stay away. My family knew it and I knew it. The landscape of Iowa was not familiar; it was not comforting. I longed for the Appalachian foothills, the lush green forest, the smells of woodland earth, and the comfort of being tucked away in the coves and valleys.

It is fairly common for folks from Appalachia, especially West Virginia, to move back to the region after being away for many years or after retirement. The landscape calls them back, as it did me. For some residents, the land means everything. It is the glue that holds families together through several generations. Its resources nurture their bodies, its beauty soothes their souls, and its soil becomes their final resting place.

However, some people will never be able to see the intrinsic beauty and value of Appalachia, aside from the money they can make by destroying it. The CEOs of the fossil fuel industries sit in their offices in skyscrapers located in places like New York City or Dallas, Texas. In many cases, some will never set eyes on the regions they target for destruction.

They didn’t skinny dip in that pond in rural West

Virginia. They didn’t build a treehouse in that huge oak tree in Virginia. They didn’t camp out beside that bubbling stream in North Carolina. They have no connection to or love for Appalachia.

These billionaires and absentee landowners have been raping the region for decades. They treat the Appalachian landscape and its local residents as a third-world mineral colony. They mine coal, frack for oil and gas, and build pipelines with no thought to the ecosystems and culture they are obliterating.

Given the intense feelings that many Appalachian residents have for the beautiful landscape, it is not surprising that many throughout the years have felt the need to stand up to the big corporations assaulting the region and the residents. Mary Harris Jones, known as “Mother Jones,” was an Irish schoolteacher. During the early 1900s, she came to the region to help organize mine workers and communities in West Virginia. She battled corporate presidents and politicians and became known as the “Johnny Appleseed of activists.”

West Virginia is home to modern-day “Mother Joneses,” people with a deep passion for the landscape, culture, and communities that they call home. It is hard to love a place, a mountain, a forest, or a stream, and stand back and watch while corporations negligently annihilate that place.

More today than at any time in history, people are speaking up to save the landscapes that they call home. Join the resistance! Get active with OVEC to help defend our homeplace! 🍁

Global Earth Exchange: Honoring the Ohio River

by Janet Keating

On June 9, members of the Marshall University Native American Student Organization (MU-NASO) and OVEC gathered on the banks of the Ohio River in Huntington, WV, as part of the Global Earth Exchange, a project of Radical Joy For Hard Times.

The threats to the Ohio River (see related blog on OVEC's website for details) are why we chose to create beauty on the banks of this river, as an act of gratitude for all the river has given us.

Our event had two distinct parts, and nine participants took part in both actions. Prior to sunset, we laid many different flowers in the shape of a spiral on the ground beside the river. We know that without life-giving water, we would not enjoy the beauty of flowers. We chose the spiral to represent our growth and evolution as humans—a symbol of an evolutionary journey that begins with each of us. Children were invited to help us place the flowers since they will be impacted by our future efforts on behalf of the Ohio River.

Once our spiral was completed (though a spiral is never *really* finished), we sat in a circle around it. Each of us told a story of connection to the river,



either from childhood or the present. We talked about why we love the river and about our current concerns. After everyone had shared, we moved closer to the river for the second event—a Native American Water Ceremony.

Before the Water Ceremony began, elders told each of us what was expected during the ceremony. No negative words or thoughts were to be expressed. Once the ceremony for the Ohio River began, no one was to leave the circle. We would follow the lead of the elders.

To begin, we were purified as Vikki Lee, an elder, smudged us with sage. Each of us was given a small amount of ceremonial tobacco in our left hand, to hold throughout the ceremony until we were directed to offer it to the river. Native American drums or rattles were used to accompany each of the four water songs that were offered up to the river; our voices, appropriately, were joined by the murmurs, honks, and quacks of Canada geese and mallards.

Other people enjoying the river came closer, watching and listening with curiosity. The sky turned beautiful hues of pink, orchid, and blue as sundown approached. When the singing ended, one by one, we each lifted our hand toward the four directions and then walked toward the river to offer a prayer where we sprinkled the sacred tobacco. To conclude this ceremony, we sang another Native American water song, and then a jar of pure water from a mountain stream was added to the Ohio River, as a hope for its future status.

We lingered and pledged to return and grow our numbers for a monthly Water Ceremony for the Ohio River. Before we left, we hugged and thanked each other, feeling grateful for one another and the river. 🍁

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When you're finished with this newsletter - **PASS IT ON!**

It's Not a Done Deal: Say "No!" to Appalachian Storage Hub



Proposed Chemical Monstrosity Would Bring Skyrocketing Climate Emissions, Public Health Dangers

The nation's largest petrochemical hub is located in southern Louisiana along the Mississippi River. This area is known as Cancer Alley, because its neighbors suffer very high illness rates.

This Gulf Coast region is increasingly beset with hurricanes, floods, and other storms that endanger the reliability of chemical production there. Meanwhile, there's been a recent increase in Gulf Coast export markets for natural gas liquids and the chemicals derived from them. So, industry and government are now planning to create a **second major petrochemical region** here in our Appalachian Ohio River Valley.

According to a March 3, 2017 Shale Daily article, "The Appalachian Basin's shale formations helped to birth the natural gas renaissance in North America, and the region now is poised to join the Gulf Coast as a major petrochemical hub."

Petrochemicals have been stored underground for a long time, but not without some serious problems.

For example, a salt deposit dug out for multiple underground storage caves for natural gas liquids and other chemicals became the site of a catastrophe that destroyed most of a small town in Louisiana in 2012.

A drill bit pierced the side of one chemical storage cavern. Toxic chemicals oozed up and most of an entire community was forced to move out. We also remember a huge and long-lasting problem with leaking underground petrochemical storage in southern CA.

Central to these plans is the establishment of an **Appalachian Storage Hub**, which would consist of **underground storage facilities for natural gas liquids extracted from the Marcellus, Utica, and Rogersville shales across West Virginia, Kentucky, Ohio, and Pennsylvania**, as well as a vast network of new pipelines.

As part of the Appalachian Storage Hub, one hundred million barrels of natural gas liquids would be stored in a to-be-built system of "underground caverns, salt caves, and areas where natural gas has been extracted," according to a January 23 *Kallanish Energy* article.

The hub would transport natural gas liquids and their constituent chemicals by means of **six big pipelines running 386 miles along the Ohio River** from Monaca, PA, to Catlettsburg, KY, right through Huntington, WV. Unless the plan is to blow up steep hills, there is nowhere these six mammoth pipelines could run other than virtually adjacent to the banks of the Ohio River, the source of drinking water for millions of people.

Monaca is where Royal Dutch Shell has permits to build a multibillion-dollar ethane cracker plant; Catlettsburg is where Marathon Petroleum has a refinery. A major expansion of Marathon Petroleum's refinery is now underway. A 68-mile hub pipeline spur would go from Point Pleasant, WV, to Charleston, WV. Also planned are an additional **three**

thousand miles of smaller pipelines to transport chemicals to industrial plants along a 454-mile corridor in the four states.

No Surprise, American Chemistry Council Says Bring It On

In a May 18, 2017 press release, the American Chemistry Council (ACC) opines: “The Appalachian region is an ideal location for the emergence of a second major petrochemical manufacturing hub in the United States, offering benefits such as proximity to abundant NGL (natural gas liquids) resources from the Marcellus/Utica and Rogersville Shale formations.” ACC reckons these shale gas deposits “could feed at least half a dozen world-scale petrochemical complexes in addition to a number of smaller facilities.”

The ACC press release says that at least *five* natural gas liquids cracker complexes would be needed to fully realize the petrochemical potential in the four-state Ohio River Valley region. ACC’s analysis assumes that 90 percent of the plastic resin products from the five hoped-for crackers would be shipped outside of the Appalachian region, including for export.

The cracker complex in Monaca, PA, is already permitted. Two other crackers are proposed but not yet permitted. A Thai company wants to build a cracker complex in Belmont County, OH, and two Brazilian companies want to build one near Parkersburg, WV. (We at OVEC are painfully aware of how difficult it is to force U.S.-based companies to comply with coal mining pollution laws; trying to influence foreign companies would be even harder!)

But We Need Your Money and Your Acquiescence to Bring It On

Before this “world class” Ohio River Valley petrochemical complex could come to fruition, several things are necessary. Construction of the Appalachian Storage Hub would cost around \$10 billion, which ACC says would require a public-private partnership, with the financial backing of the private sector, as well as funding from federal and

Fracking has begun in the deep Rogersville Shale that underlies Wayne County, WV and adjoining eastern KY, here in the Huntington Tri-State area. The Rogersville extends into other WV counties as well. Marathon Petroleum and Mark-West have already committed a billion dollars to develop Rogersville Shale infrastructure. Dozens of oil and gas companies have leased land in the Rogersville Shale. See OVEC’s *Renew WV* newspaper: ohvec.org/renew-wv.

state governments. **This means that our tax dollars would be necessary for these developments that would bring huge increases in global warming emissions, as well as all kinds of dangers to public health, from chemical emissions to potential pipeline explosions.**

The Appalachian Storage Hub would also necessitate that government develop “appropriate policies and permitting practices,” according to the ACC report.

Plus, we would expect a behind-the-scenes agreement with state and federal regulators that pollution enforcement would *not* be a priority. WV and other states have widely ignored pollution laws in their “oversight” of mountaintop removal coal mining, leaving some counties in southwestern WV and eastern KY as some of the poorest and sickest in the nation. Surely fracking and pipeline industry officials expect the same degree of cooperation from government officials.

A Conference on Your Future, Held Without You

Promotional material for a June 15, 2017, regional Appalachian Storage Hub Conference promised attendees networking opportunities with key regional governmental decision makers. There has been no networking opportunity with regular citizens whose taxes pay the salaries of these key governmental decision makers. One can assume that the “all” who are supposed to support the rapid development of and benefit from the hub—Cancer Alley Two—are not the people who actually live here, because we were *not* invited.

The sold-out conference fee ranged from \$495 to \$2,500. So far, we have been unable to find online information as to who said what at the conference. Call us cynical, but, thanks to experience, we bet that those who truly stand to profit from the hub, at our expense, wish to hide all the details until plans, permits, and greased palms are all firmly in place.

Massive Fracking Increases Planned

WV Senate President Mitch Carmichael (R-Jackson) says, “We have a moral imperative to provide low-cost energy, not only to West Virginia, but to the world.” Clearly, the same moral imperative does not apply to protecting the health of West Virginia’s people. Extensive fracking increases here would be necessary to make Cancer Alley Two, the proposed

continued on next page

Appalachian Storage Hub, a reality. But fracking is already wreaking havoc in West Virginia. (See ohvec.org/renew-wv.)

Hundreds of West Virginians living close to Marcellus drilling operations have already sued fracking companies over how miserable it is to live near these sites that make *other people* rich. Many have had to resort to having water trucked in after their well water has been contaminated. And in Pennsylvania, the DEP has said that more than 200 private wells have been contaminated as a result of fracking operations. Nevertheless, we've been told repeatedly that fracking activities are safe and do not contaminate the groundwater.

Politicians: Appalachian Storage Hub Cheerleaders

In October, top politicians from three states signed an agreement promising cooperation in securing the cracker complexes for the region: then-WV Governor Earl Ray Tomblin, OH Lieutenant Governor Mary Taylor, and PA Governor Tom Wolf.

Over the past few years, industry and political officials from these states have been working to plan and find financing for Cancer Alley Two. Senator Manchin (D-WV) says he is urging all of these states to invest more taxpayer dollars to attract the hub. The Benedum Foundation has primed the pump by providing \$100,000 for initial planning.

Senators Manchin, Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV), and Rob Portman (R-OH), introduced a Senate bill that would direct federal agencies to study the feasibility of the Appalachian Storage Hub. Congressman David McKinley (R-WV) plans to introduce similar legislation in the House.

The Appalachian Storage Hub is not a done deal. Don't take the lies lying down!

Please join in our efforts to resist. Contact OVEC today at 304-522-0246 or info@ohvec.org.

This article is an excerpt from a series of blogs available on OVEC's website.



When Fracking, Pipeline Spokespeople Say Industry is Strictly Regulated, They Lie

OVEC, WV Highlands Conservancy, and Sierra Club, represented by Appalachian Mountain Advocates and Public Justice, have had dozens of legal wins relating to illegal water pollution at mountaintop removal mines.

It has taken millions of dollars to make our lawsuits happen. As large-scale fracking was beginning in the United States, the George W. Bush administration made sure that fracking activities were free from some of the laws that govern other polluting industries, including coal mining. So, in addition to the money challenges in any potential large legal strategy against fracking activities, citizens and lawyers also have to contend with weaker laws.

Mountaintop removal continues in West Virginia and “our” state government continues to grant new permits and push for more new mountaintop removal mines. When you hear fracking proponents say that this unconventional gas production is governed by strictly enforced laws, please know that **they are lying**. 🍌

Air Inversions: Toxic Pollution in Our Ohio Valley

The major cluster of petrochemical plants and refineries in southern Louisiana is located in a flat area where the wind blows. The proposed petrochemical hub here in the narrow Ohio Valley would be surrounded by steep hills that often block the wind. Our region is known to have frequent air inversions where pollution settles in the valleys instead of blowing away more quickly. So we would expect that toxic air pollution would have even more of a health impact here than in a flat area. It's hard to think of a worse area for a large concentration of new huge cracker complexes, chemical plants, and refineries.

There is no longer any doubt that the toxic emissions from the petrochemical plants in Louisiana's Cancer Alley are causing serious health effects to its neighbors. But in Louisiana, as in West Virginia, these industries are politically powerful, and industries' wishes are politically more important than people's health.

(The sociologist author Arlie Russell Hochschild examines the ways conservatives and Tea Party members in Louisiana justify the severe pollution inherent in living near petrochemical industries in her 2016 book, *Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right*.)

Proposed Gas Storage Hub a Field of Nightmares

Excerpt from a June 6 Charleston Gazette-Mail op-ed by OVEC's Robin Blakeman and Vivian Stockman

For more than a century, we've been promised jobs and prosperity by one fossil fuel or chemical industry after another, and yet where are we? We are consistently one of the poorest and unhealthiest states in the nation.

Can we learn our lesson? Or, are we really going to use taxpayer money to study the prospect of an Appalachian Gas Storage Hub? Senators Manchin and Capito are lauding this monstrosity as the next great thing for our state. (See details about the proposed hub on pages 4-6.)

Such a project would endanger the drinking water for millions of people whose tap water source is the Ohio River or one of the major tributaries of the Ohio. The proposed project would also lead to an exponential increase in deep shale gas fracking, including under the Ohio River and near its borders and major tributaries.

Do we really want to accelerate deep shale hydraulic fracturing and related activities, when those activities have already driven at least one community to the brink of extinction (Mobley, in Wetzel County) and when neighbors to these operations are already facing threats to their air and water? Do we really want to subject neighbors of the storage hub to all the pollution and dangers such a facility would create?



Do we want to continue being a fossil-fuel colony, when all around the world, truly cleaner energy and more sustainable practices are burgeoning?

One might wonder why "our" politicians want to remake West Virginia into something akin to Louisiana's Cancer Alley, but all we have to do is follow the money.

These politicians ignore their constituents when we try to tell them that industry is polluting our water. These politicians are apparently more beholden to the fossil-fuel industries and lobbyists that fund their campaigns than to the average person in WV.

Surely, we can come up with a better vision for West Virginia's future! We could invest in solar projects on our already-ruined lands (but not use that as an excuse for one more square inch of mountaintop-removal coal mining!).

Or, thinking creatively, could we take all that money that would prop up the toxic Appalachian Gas Storage Hub and set up small business incubators, giving out microloans to entrepreneurial West Virginians?

It's time to end the slaving over the fossil-fuel industries and their false promises of prosperity! 🍌



Switching from Coal to Fracked Gas Will Not Save Our Planet

excerpt from an August 8 op-ed by Bill McKibben published in the Seattle Times. Read the full article here: bit.ly/2uFRauB

Most magic tricks and confidence games mostly work the same way—a little bit of misdirection to get the audience looking in the wrong direction. And some of the finest magicians at large in America today are its natural-gas salesmen, who have worked hard to reassure us that they're part of the solution to the global warming crisis. To understand why that's a ploy—to understand why they're in fact helping drive the heating of the planet—you have to pay close attention.

The basic move is to insist that natural gas helps cut carbon emissions. This is true on the surface. As America's power plants have replaced coal with

fracked gas, carbon emissions have fallen because natural gas produces half as much CO₂ as coal when you burn it. The problem is, carbon emissions are not the only thing that drives global warming. There's another gas that does the job even more powerfully: CH₄, or methane, which is the scientific name for natural gas. If it leaks unburned into the atmosphere, then methane traps heat about 80 times more effectively, molecule for molecule, than CO₂. The point of this chemistry lesson is: If as little as 3 percent of natural gas leaks in the course of fracking and delivering it to the power plant through a pipe, then it's worse than coal.

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NAS Study on MTR and Human Health Suspended

On August 21, we received some outrageous and distressing news: Pending an “agency-wide review” the DOI had instructed the National Academies of Sciences to “cease all work on a study of the potential health risks for people living near surface coal mine sites in Central Appalachia.”

The Trump Administration’s budget proposals and department cuts, many of which are an attack on science, are a slap in the face to the people of Appalachia, as well as to poor and middle class folks nationwide.

For years, community members living near mountaintop removal sites have been pushing government agencies to acknowledge the dozens of studies by scientific researchers on mountaintop removal’s human health impacts and to conduct their own official studies.

It is important to note that, although we had hoped the scrutiny of the NAS would finally lift up all the peer-reviewed studies to the point of government action, we were conscious that this could become just another delaying tactic. We do hope the NAS will be permitted to resume the study, but we believe there is more than ample reason to end mountaintop removal—once and for all—right now.



The studies are already out there; the health effects of mountaintop removal on people living nearby are devastating. Mountaintop removal is causing premature death, birth defects, heart disease, respiratory problems, and more. It’s unfathomable that our government can green-light a practice that is so devastating to human health. It’s downright insane to blow up mountains and bury streams in order to get to coal, and it’s even worse to allow when you see what it does to communities. 🍌

OVEC Versus Pruitt

States must set “total maximum daily loads” (TMDLs) for pollutants entering the state’s waterways and streams. The U.S. EPA has a duty to force any state to set TMDLs if that state fails to do so.

No surprise: For years, WV DEP has failed to set TMDLs for many of the state’s streams.

By 2015, DEP had identified 179 streams as impaired by “ionic toxicity,” often measured as conductivity pollution, much of which is the result of mountaintop removal coal mining. But, DEP was not setting TMDLs for these streams, and EPA was not forcing DEP to set those TMDLs.

So, in 2015, we filed a Clean Water Act lawsuit against the EPA for its failure to force DEP to set those pollution limits. OVEC, WV Highlands Conservancy, WV Rivers Coalition, and Sierra Club filed the lawsuit, represented by attorneys with Appalachian Mountain Advocates (AppalMAD).

In February of this year, U.S. District Judge Robert C. Chambers ruled that EPA must carry out

its role as a regulator. The judge gave EPA 30 days to approve or reject all of the WV DEP’s attempts to avoid setting TMDLs for streams and waterways in the state.

Again, no surprise: EPA appealed that ruling and requested a stay pending appeal. By the end of May, the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that it would not stay Judge Chamber’s ruling while it considered the appeal. EPA then had 14 days to act.

Finally forced to take action, in mid-June, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt decided to approve the state of West Virginia’s attempt to delay by as much as an additional nine years its duty to set TMDLs. Some of the streams have been waiting for TMDLs since 1998!

Now, we are taking the next step. In late August, AppalMAD attorney Derek Teaney filed a brief in the case now known as OVEC v. Pruitt.

Stay tuned. Obviously, we are in this for the long haul, because, you know, our kids need clean water! We *all* need clean water!

The Congressman Comes to See MTR by Dustin White

The Alliance for Appalachia and Earthjustice teamed up to bring the ranking Democrat on the House Natural Resources Committee (HNR), Congressman Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ), to central Appalachia, where mountaintop removal threatens both the physical and economic health of the people who live there.

Congressman Grijalva has been a long-standing ally of people affected by MTR and is a co-sponsor on both the RECLAIM Act and the Appalachian Community Health Emergency (ACHE) Act. I worked with the congressman's office in 2015 to testify at a HNR Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations hearing titled "State Perspectives on the Status of Cooperating Agencies for the Office of Surface Mining's Stream Protection Rule." I testified that the WVDEP fails to protect the citizens of WV.

Congressman Grijalva wanted to arrange a meeting with residents of Appalachia to talk with them directly about the health and economic effects of MTR and to hear their ideas on economic transition and diversification. He also wanted to see mining impacts in person.

OVEC's Vice Director Vivian Stockman and I took part in some of the planning calls that ultimately resulted in his visit to southwest Virginia on June 10. At a forum that day, the congressman spoke, followed

by one person from each impacted state. Audience members then asked questions and made comments.

I spoke about the psychological effects we face in the area and how they are causing health issues. I also argued that officials need to help us counteract the propaganda the coal industry constantly puts out. The forum was held at Mountain Empire Community College in Big Stone Gap, VA.

After the meeting, a handful of folks were invited

to continue the dialogue over lunch with the congressman. OVEC members Wilma and Terry Steele and Nada White (my mother) joined the lunch, where they discussed issues ranging from economic development projects like the Mine Wars Museum in Matewan, WV (a project in which Wilma and Terry are heavily involved), miners'

benefits issues, and health impacts (seen from Nada's perspective as a medical professional).

The congressman then joined a small group of local residents from VA and KY to tour the area to see active mining, reclamation, acid mine drainage, and more.

We will continue to work with the congressman's office, and with other congressional allies, to keep our "end mountaintop removal" message echoing in D.C. Congressman Grijalva assured us that the issues facing the people of Appalachia were "not passé; not forgotten." 🍌



Take Two: Suing Fola Over MTR Pollution

In early August, we filed a federal suit to challenge the discharge of pollutants from mountaintop removal coal mine sites currently operated by the Fola Coal Company here in West Virginia.

This is the second time that we've taken legal action against Fola for water pollution at this site. Fola's parent company, Consol, recently paid Southeastern Energy to take ownership of the mine because the reclamation and treatment liabilities were too high. Valley fills at the site discharge high levels of conductivity pollution that violate water-quality

standards put in place to protect aquatic life.

The U.S. EPA has estimated that 9 out of 10 streams downstream from valley fills associated with coal mines are biologically impaired. But neither the state of West Virginia nor the EPA has taken action to require compliance and cleanup of the impaired streams. Congress authorized citizen suits under the Clean Water Act to enforce the law directly against permit violators like Fola.

Attorneys with Appalachian Mountain Advocates are representing OVEC, WV Highlands Conservancy, WV Rivers Coalition, and Sierra Club in this case. 🍌

An Artist Response to Mountaintop Removal

by Cristi Rinklin

The uncertainty and fragility of the natural world and the cycles of creation and destruction that can be cataclysmic but also bring about renewal and rebirth have long informed my work. In recent years, I began working with images of fragmented and isolated landscapes, devoid of human presence, that float in ambiguous spaces like something from a memory or a dream.

Through my work, I sought to evoke the sense of existential hopelessness that all of us who fear the implications of climate change grapple with. As I was researching new source imagery to use in my work, a Google image search for “fragmented landscapes” and “cut cliffs” led me to the violent and disturbingly mesmerizing images of mountaintop removal. I was gripped by these images and compelled to use them in my work, but I also felt a sense of urgency and responsibility to witness this with my own eyes and talk to people on the front lines of this issue.

Going to the source of these images led

me to OVEC. I decided to reach out to them, tell them who I was and what I was doing with my work, ask them more about MTR, and find out if any of these sites were visible or accessible. Vivian Stockman quickly got back to me and invited me to follow up on my email with a phone conversation. During our call, Vivian mentioned that one way to understand the vastness of these sites was



by air and offered to check with longtime OVEC partner SouthWings to see if a flyover might be possible. She also offered to be my eco-guide to some of the mines from the ground. I had recently started using a drone to

photograph the landscape for my work, and I offered to bring it along to get footage to use for my work and to give to OVEC for their own outreach.

In the first week of June, I flew down to Charleston with a camera, a drone, sketching materials, and my hiking shoes, and met up with Vivian to engage in some eco-surveillance. (Incidentally, when you register your drone with the FAA, you have to give it a name, so naturally I named my drone “Vivian”!)

Unfortunately, plans to do a flyover with SouthWings fell through due to maintenance issues with the pilot’s plane, but we quickly found that Vivian the Drone was helpful for getting some dramatic and powerful aerial footage of these MTR sites. The two primary sites we documented were the Hobet Mine and the Panther Creek Mine. The footage from the drone was so compelling that my first response was to quickly put together two short videos on iMovie so that OVEC could use them right away. Links to those videos can be found on OVEC’s YouTube channel, which you can find at bit.ly/2wR7pdI and bit.ly/2wHCFvn.

For me, this trip was a powerful and essential way to bear witness to the immensity and devastation of mountaintop removal. Experiencing MTR in person is a multi-sensory experience that is beyond anything that can be seen in a photograph. I found myself recording the sound of grinding machinery in the background of chirping birds—a frightening juxtaposition of industry versus nature. Being able to see and feel the physicality of the sites has brought a new sense of materiality to my paintings.

Since returning from my short residency in West Virginia, I’ve produced a series of digital prints in which I’ve used Photoshop



Above: Cristi sets up the drone. Left: One of Cristi’s digital prints.

to combine stills from the drone footage with watercolors that are scanned and superimposed onto the photographic image (see one image at left). These will be included in an upcoming solo exhibition at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, MN, this fall. I will continue to use this footage to develop new paintings, and I will also be tackling the learning curve of video editing so I can create videos that stylistically echo my paintings. This will take time. I hope to help inform people about the need to end mountaintop removal coal mining—now! (*Editor’s note: CNN used some of Cristi’s footage in reporting on the Trump Administration’s decision to stop the NAS study on MTR and human health; see page 8 for news on NAS.*)

I am also in the process of organizing a panel on mountaintop removal and other extraction mining at the College of the Holy Cross, where I teach. This panel will include Vivian, myself, and other artists whose work sources imagery of industrial mining. I’ve become a sustaining member of OVEC to support the great work they do.

Cristi Rinklin is an artist working in Boston, MA. She is a Professor of Visual Arts at the College of the Holy Cross and a member of OVEC. 🍷

Spiritual Convergence in the Time of Climate Change

by Robin Blakeman

“When all the spiritual people become activists and all the activists become spiritual, then we will win.”

I heard these wise words from Standing Rock leader Cheryl Angel at a summer conference, Ministry in the Time of Climate Change. Held in New York City and organized by the Center for Earth Ethics and Climate Reality, this marvelous event was more of a convergence than a conference.

It brought together faith leaders from Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, Jewish, Christian, and Native American traditions, as well as legal experts, Climate Reality organizers, and a variety of others, including Aztec prayer dancers who led all of us in a “friendship dance.” We also had the presence of former Vice President Al Gore, who attended the entire three-day conference and presented a preview of his updated multi-media presentation, which corresponds with the upcoming release of *Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power*. You will want to see this film!

The amount of learning and networking that took place during this event is too vast to recount in detail, but here are some key points:

- There is an “apartheid of resources” in our world, with many having a poverty of access to energy resources and dramatically increased risk of environmental, safety, and health problems, while a few enjoy great wealth. —*Jaqui Patterson, NAACP Environmental and Climate Justice Program*

- Climate change effects now equal those of 400,000 Hiroshima bombs per day every day. —*Al Gore, Climate Reality*

- Moral arguments and personal storytelling are more compelling than economic or statistical information. —*Climate Reality spokesperson and others*

- Strong correlation exists between the global refugee crisis, immigration rhetoric, and climate change. —*Asma Mahdi, UCLA*

- To alleviate suffering, we must change human thinking to honor the interdependence of humans with nature and with each other. —*Bhikkhu Bodhi,*



Al Gore and Robin Blakeman in NY.

Buddhist Global Relief

- By allowing the proliferation of pipelines, we are becoming partners to crimes against humanity and allowing economic racism to flourish. —*Chief Dwaine Perry, Ramapough-Lenape*

- Repair of the world begins with repair of the mind; thus, it is important to “keep Sabbath” and engage in celebratory rituals and practices with others. —*Ellen Bernstein, Shomrei Adamah*

My take away from this conference is two-fold: One aspect is to examine my own life for ways that I can reduce my carbon footprint and encourage others to do so. To that end, I am engaging with the Huntington Solar Co-op and considering getting solar panels on my home if I can find affordable financing. The other is to connect more strongly with diverse people of many faith and spiritual traditions, especially people who claim Native heritage in this area. To that end, I will be publicizing the MU Native American Student Organization’s monthly water ceremonies at the Ohio River; please watch for these and join us if you want to be inspired and energized in a rare and special way (see story on page 3). I am also continuing to invest time in WV Interfaith Power and Light chapter growth.

Furthering my and OVEC’s connections with Climate Reality affiliates and presentation practices is also a goal (see related story page 13); we affiliated with a Climate Reality leader to co-host the Huntington People’s Climate March, and I now have access to the Climate Reality storytelling training template that was presented to us at the conference. If you are interested in any of these topics, please contact me at robin@ohvec.org.

It was almost surreal to walk among people I consider to be the prophets of our day and time during this event, one of which I had the honor of being photographed with (see above). It is a challenge to hear their words ringing in my ears still—challenging words that indicate that all of us must now be willing to become prophetic voices in our communities, states, regions, and countries. 🍌



Bob McCollister, left, leads a discussion after the screening of *Chasing Coral*.

Climate Conscious: *Chasing Coral*

On August 8, OVEC, the local League of Women Voters and Climate Reality hosted a free screening of the newly released documentary *Chasing Coral*.

Thirteen people attended, from young school children to retired folks, and found the movie both beautiful and heart wrenching. At points, everyone was on the edge of their seat, and at other moments, folks were chuckling or dabbing at teardrops or exclaiming out loud in wonder.

Trained Climate Reality presenter Bob McCollister led a lively discussion after the film. He encouraged everyone to monitor nearby theaters for a showing of another important documentary, *Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power*. If the movie is coming to a theatre near you, please spread the word. If your cinema does not seem to be scheduling this film, please make some calls to ask why, and press the theater for a screening date.

Chasing Coral is definitely worth watching! It is streaming now on Netflix, or Bob will bring a free showing to house parties if asked; OVEC's Robin Blakeman can put you in touch with Bob. Contact Robin at 304-522-0246 or robin@ohvec.org. 🍌

OVEC WORKS!

Thanks to everyone near and far for taking action to end environmental injustice, with an extra special thanks to all the folks fighting extreme fossil fuel extraction. We know it takes courage to speak up! We hope you know how much we appreciate you. OVEC works because of you!

THANKS!



The crew at Train the Trainers.

Training for Change

From July 20–22, Vivian Stockman, OVEC's vice director, took part in Training for Change's WV Training for Trainers. Several OVEC members and folks we work with regularly were also among the 25 WV organizers and community leaders selected to take this intensive workshop, including OVEC board chair Jeff Allen (there with WV Council of Churches), OVEC board member Lauren Kemp (there with Unlimited Futures), Justin Raines, April Keating, and Kevin Campbell (all there with Mountain Lakes Preservation Alliance).

Representatives from the WVU Food Justice Lab, the WV Community Development Hub, Race Matters, WV FREE, the WV Healthy Kids and Families Coalition, the WV ACLU, Women of Color for Change, and more participated in the training.

The workshop was designed so that participants could gain greater awareness about themselves and their strengths as facilitators. It gave folks new tools that are easily adapted, principles of workshop design, skills for working with diversity, and a better understanding of how to use experiential education methods effectively.

Participants were sent home with the hope that they'd continue to learn and begin to infuse their work with what they had learned. One tool OVEC put to use right away was Training for Change's Diversity Welcome. It's a great way to open meetings so that everyone present knows they are welcome, included, and valued. We used that to open a staff gathering, and OVEC project coordinator Dustin White took the Diversity Welcome to The Alliance for Appalachia, where it was used to open a July meeting.

The next step for Vivian is applying her new knowledge to redesign and improve her media trainings. Readers are encouraged to check out TrainingforChange.org for all tools and info on how to apply for upcoming trainings. 🍌

Love = Resistance

On August 11th and 12th, hundreds of torch-bearing white supremacists, KKK members, and swastika-flag-waving neo-Nazis marched in Charlottesville, VA, for a Unite the Right rally. But hundreds more people gathered to march for racial unity and justice, to counter the message of the hate mobs. A young man who had marched with the neo-Nazis drove his car into peaceful marchers, leaving 32-year-old Heather Heyer dead and more than a dozen others injured.

On Sunday, August 13, people around the country held vigils to do what the president of the United States has failed to do: denounce white supremacy, racism, intolerance, hate, and violence. Hundreds gathered in both Charleston and Huntington.

A week later, more than 500 people showed up for a Black Lives Matter (BLM) rally on the State Capitol grounds. (The rally was already planned, before Charlottesville.)



One of the BLM speakers, Adrienne Biesemeyer (daughter of singer-songwriter and civil rights activist Harry Belafonte), reminded the crowd, “The phrase “black lives matter” means we matter *also*. Not we matter exclusively, but *also*.”

As Richard Cohen of the Southern Poverty Law Center writes, “Many of its harshest critics claim

On this page, photos from the August 13 vigil in Charleston, WV. OVEC members and staff have been turning out in force for the vigils and rallies, which have also been held in Beckley and Lewisburg. Hate has no place in West Virginia! Top photo by FightingFox Photography. Bottom two photos by VS.



BLM photos on this page by FightingFox Photography.

that Black Lives Matter's very name is anti-white, hence the oft-repeated rejoinder 'all lives matter.' This notion misses the point entirely. Black lives matter because they have been marginalized throughout our country's history and because white lives have always mattered more in our society."

WVSU student Takeiya Smith was one of the organizers of the BLM rally. She told the crowd, "White supremacy is a threat to us all."

Here's a definition of white supremacy, from **DismantlingRacism.org**:

The idea (ideology) that white people and the ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions of white people are superior to people of color and their ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions. While most people associate white supremacy with extremist groups like the Ku Klux Klan and the neo-Nazis, white supremacy is actually ever present in our institutional and cultural assumptions that assign value, morality, goodness, and humanity to the

If we fail to exercise our fundamental right to vote,
then I guarantee that so much of the progress we've fought for will be under threat.

- Michelle Obama



Takeiya Smith, left, and Gabrielle Chapman, with CARE (Call to Action for Racial Equality), were organizers of the rally.

white group while casting people and communities of color as worthless (worth less), immoral, bad, inhuman, and "undeserving."

A *Courthouse News* article on a protest outside Trump's August 2 rally in Huntington quotes OVEC staff member Dustin White:

I wanted to come here to stand in support of everyone else whose rights he [Trump] has so blatantly been stomping. As an 11th-generation West Virginian and someone who has been around the state, I want people to know that there is a lot of false narrative happening around the people of Appalachia ... that the majority of us, the real hillbillies, the real mountaineers, and the real rednecks ... do not support this kind of hate.

In a recent essay, Dr. David Suzuki reflects:

Are we entering a new Dark Age? Lately it seems so. News reports are enough to make anyone want to crawl into bed and hide under the covers. But it's time to rise and shine. To resolve the crises humanity faces, good people must come together.

We must use our voices, actions, and humor to confront these anti-human undercurrents. We must confront our own prejudices and privilege.

Love conquers fear and hate. We must show those who want to bring us down or take us back to darker times that we outnumber them by far, everywhere. 🍷



Communities, Workers, and Scientists Seek Emergency Relief from Chemical Disasters

We Ask Courts to Stop Trump's EPA from Delaying Safety Protections for Millions

In late June, we joined with other groups representing community members near chemical facilities, as well as workers and scientists, in filing a motion in D.C. Circuit Court. The motion seeks emergency relief to stop the federal EPA delaying needed updates to the agency's Risk Management Program, also known as the Chemical Disaster Rule.

Earlier in June, bowing to pressure from the oil and chemical industries and states aligned with those industries, EPA published a final rule putting these commonsense protections against chemical disasters on hold for an unprecedented period—until February 2019.

“This is a startling nullification of vital protections that puts the lives of emergency responders, workers, and community members in jeopardy,” says Pam Nixon, who is on OVEC's board and is also active with People Concerned About Chemical Safety.

“EPA's sudden delay is a shocking disregard for the rule of law and the process the government is required to follow before it takes away any health and safety protections under the Clean Air Act,” says Gordon Sommers, an attorney with Earthjustice, which is representing the groups.

“In issuing this delay, EPA ignores determinations it made after years of work and says it will suddenly reconsider the protections based on industry requests. That's not just bad policy—it's also illegal,” Gordon adds. That's why we are suing.

When developing the Chemical Disaster Rule, EPA determined that its prior regulations failed to prevent over 2,000 chemical accidents around the country over a 10-year period. EPA's own data shows there could be at least 300 more accidents involving dangerous chemicals during this two-year delay.

From 2004 to 2013, more than 2,200 chemical accidents were reported at hazardous facilities, more than 1,500 of which caused reported harm. These accidents killed 59 people; caused more than 17,000 to be injured, hospitalized, or seek medical care, and nearly a half-million to evacuate or shelter in place to try to avoid chemical exposure and other harm; and caused more than \$2 billion in property damage. No month passed during the studied decade without at least eight accidents at or near a chemical facility in the United States. And communities continue to live under the constant threat of a chemical catastrophe.

The new rules would protect both workers and communities by strengthening emergency preparedness and coordination with first responders and forcing chemical facilities with the worst accident records, such as petroleum refineries, to consider implementing available safety precautions.

About 177 million Americans live in the worst-case-scenario zones for a chemical disaster. At least one in three schoolchildren in America attends a school within the vulnerability zone of a hazardous facility. Black, Latino and low-income communities are disproportionately at risk.

Realizing that EPA's actions needlessly place people in harm's way, in late July, 11 states also filed suit to challenge EPA's illegal delay. In early August, 10 of those states (WV was *not* one of them) filed a statement notifying the D.C. Circuit Court that they join and support our motion to *not* delay implementation of the rule.

In early August, the Democratic senators on the Environment and Public Works Committee sent a letter to EPA demanding that the agency immediately implement the Chemical Disaster Rule. 🍌

The groups represented by Earthjustice in this case include Air Alliance Houston, California Communities Against Toxics, Clean Air Council, Coalition For A Safe Environment, Community In-Power & Development Association, Del Amo Action Committee, Environmental Integrity Project, Louisiana Bucket Brigade, OVEC, Sierra Club, Texas Environmental Justice Advocacy Services, Union of Concerned Scientists, and Utah Physicians for a Healthy Environment. United Steelworkers is represented by Santarella & Eckert, LLC.

EPA Delay of Chemical Disaster Rule Especially Imperils Communities of Color

Earthjustice ran a version of the story below on its blog.



Pam Nixon lives in the Charleston area, in the “Chemical Valley,” where she is surrounded by facilities that handle dangerous toxic and flammable chemicals. Many times during her 65 years there she’s had to shelter in place, tape up windows, and huddle in her home after being alerted about a chemical leak nearby.

For years, Pam has advocated for better protections against toxic chemicals. She thought all her hard work had paid off in January, when the EPA finalized its Chemical Disaster Rule—an overhaul of chemical plant standards that would help prevent accidental chemical release emergencies. The rule was finalized after years of careful consideration and significant public input. But in late June, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt decided to illegally delay implementation of the rule for two years, putting people’s lives at risk while the agency reconsiders the very existence of these protections.

Pam is not alone in living under the shadow of chemical accidents. According to the EPA, more than 1,500 chemical-safety accidents occurred between 2004 and 2013 that caused property damage, injuries, and even death. In 2008, an explosion at a pesticide plant in WV killed two people and injured eight. In 2012, 15,000 people sought medical treatment following a fire and explosion at a Chevron refinery in Richmond, CA. And an explosion at a TX fertilizer

plant in 2014 killed 15 people, including firefighters, and injured 160.

This safety issue particularly threatens African Americans and Latinos, who are more likely to live in proximity to chemical facilities. In fact, African Americans are 75 percent more likely to live near industrial chemical facilities than the average citizen, according to a national report by the Environmental Justice and Health Alliance for Chemical Policy Reform. The percentage of Latinos living in proximity to dangerous chemical plants is also shockingly high, at 60 percent more than the national average.

According to Pam, this disparity makes the voices of communities of color and low-income communities particularly relevant. “These chemical plants—like other polluting facilities—tend to be disproportionately located near low-income and minority communities,” she says. “Perhaps that’s because the companies that run them don’t think our voices will be heeded by the government. We can’t let that happen.”

Pam continues to fight. She says, in an op-ed she wrote for *The Hill*, “This rule should not be delayed any further. It most certainly should not be killed. People in communities like mine near these plants need these safeguards desperately.” 🍌

Hurricane Harvey and the Chemical Disaster Rule

In late August, the flooding associated with Hurricane Harvey caused a power failure at the Arkema petrochemical plant about 20 miles northeast of Houston. The plant stores chemicals that must be kept cold, or else they explode. Backup power failed, too, and the flooding kept workers from making repairs. No power meant no chilled chemicals, which meant explosions at the plant.

Fortunately, workers and people living within one and a half miles of the plant had evacuated before the explosions, after authorities warned that the explosion fumes would be “incredibly dangerous.” As the aftermath of Harvey unfolds, those living near similar petrochemical plants in the flooded region face worries of spills, leakages, and more.

The Arkema plant is one that would be covered under the EPA-delayed Chemical Disaster Rule. Among other protections for workers and communities, the rule would have required the plant’s owners to assess whether they could implement safety improvements such as storing fewer chemicals, using better tanks, improving the backup power system so it wouldn’t fail in a hurricane, etc.

If the rule were in place, such measures would not yet be required, even without the delay, because the rule would give facilities a couple of years to make changes. However, these types of plants would have begun these assessments already. The longer EPA delays the Chemical Disaster Rule, the longer safety measures will be delayed.

The explosion underlines how important it is to take immediate action to improve safety at these plants. Due to human activity, climate change is making natural disasters more common, while safety at these plants lags further and further behind.

We must tell Trump and his fossil-fuel cronies to stop delaying the Chemical Disaster Rule. The oil and chemical industry should be taking these commonsense measures both to protect the health and safety of nearby communities and to protect their own workers, instead of fighting regulations that are expected to save lives and prevent injury.

FERC's Tunnel Vision

by Mary Wildfire

Tunnel Vision at FERC

At a writers' retreat on the banks of the Middle Fork River, a member gave us a delightful assignment. She handed each person a toilet paper roll core—the cardboard tube—and instructed us to fan out, each choose something to look at through the tube, and describe it. As a writing exercise, it was an excellent way to stretch our descriptive skills.

But as a way to study environmental impacts, looking at the world through a tiny close-up lens is not a good approach. Going over the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) issued by FERC (the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission) for the Mountaineer Xpress Pipeline, I kept thinking of that exercise—of people looking at the world through a small tube. In total, the DEIS weighs seven

pounds. (This does include the Gulf Xpress Pipeline, which would take the gas from MXP's terminus near Huntington, WV, on down to the Gulf of Mexico,

likely for export.) Seven pounds, a thousand or so pages, at least a hundred charts. So, FERC's staff must have quite thoroughly examined the potential environmental impacts of this project, right?

Yes, they did. There is great detail here...but the way they analyzed it seems designed to come to a pre-determined conclusion that the environmental impacts won't be significant—or, if they are, just throw some Best Management Practices (BMP) and other acronyms at the problem and everything will be fine.

People have argued that they need to look at cumulative impacts of the plethora of proposed pipelines, and they now do have a section on cumulative impacts. *But it never looks at the big picture*—they're not looking down from a satellite or even an airplane. What they do is look separately at each category of impact (noise, soil disturbance, air quality, wildlife, water quality, safety) and then assign a distance for which, for example, noise impacts from two coinciding projects matter. Then they look at each spot where they identify two such impacts, and decide either that it isn't significant or that it's temporary so it doesn't matter (except for damage to intact forests, which will hurt the cerulean warbler and other species that need intact interior forests, and



there the company just has to adhere to BMP and XYZ and it'll be okay).

They also put climate change under cumulative impacts. How do they deal with the huge impact of burning (and transporting, with associated leakage sooner or later) 2,700,000 dekatherms of natural gas per day? They dismiss it by saying they *don't know* whether it will be used to capacity, and they don't know how much fuel switching will be involved (i.e. will this new source replace existing coal or oil) *so they don't know how significant an impact it will have, so therefore it isn't significant*. In response to OVEC comments on this point, for the Final Environmental Impact Statement they state that they don't believe it will increase drilling and fracking (based on what?) and that they “assume the gas will be used whether

the pipeline is built or not” so therefore it doesn't contribute to climate change (by this logic, nothing does).

They also don't look at the *need* for all these pipelines comprehensively—they just decide each project is “needed” based on whether the company has a contract for the gas.

In 30 years, FERC has only rejected one pair of projects—an export terminal and the pipeline across Oregon that would feed it—and that was because the project had lost its contracts. In many cases, the company contracting for the gas is an affiliate of the one wanting to build the pipeline, so there is suspicion of self-dealing, given the guaranteed profits granted by FERC (more on that below).

There is a mandated analysis of alternatives, including the No Build Alternative, for each project. But FERC doesn't consider renewables or energy efficiency...they look at alternatives that would do what the project is intended to do, interpreting it narrowly as “deliver 2,700,000 dekatherms of natural gas from the Appalachian Basin” to some points between and to the terminus on the Gulf. If *that* is the criteria, then of course a direct pipeline between the two points is better than a collection of truck routes and existing pipelines. They take as the objective Columbia Gas' stated objective—so how do they then conclude that the project fills a *public* need, which is necessary for FERC to grant the company eminent





domain rights over whoever's land lies along their chosen path?

Hint: 80 percent of former FERC commissioners go on to work for the industry, including the most recent one to rotate off, Ms. (Not So) Honorable, who announced immediately upon her departure from FERC that she's joining a legal firm lobbying for the Atlantic Coast Pipeline.

FERC is a Sugar Daddy

FERC is the kind of regulatory agency any industry would love, what with all the aforementioned tunnel vision; that is, the way FERC carries out environmental impact studies, so there is plenty of detail, but within a framework that ensures that all proposed projects will be approved.

But much more sweetness is in the arrangement for the companies that are "regulated" by FERC. It's FERC that gives companies the power of eminent domain, so they can seize whatever land they want, no matter how much the owner objects. This is justified with the idea that the land for the pipeline is serving a "public need." But some studies have shown that existing pipelines are not being used to capacity—they're only about half full, nationally and in our region. So, why do we need new ones? Sometimes, perhaps, to send the gas to more lucrative markets, including export—in recent years exports of gas from the U.S. have skyrocketed.

Proposed pipelines from our area extend to likely export sites. Are more lucrative markets, often in other countries, a "public need" sufficient to justify dozing a trail in someone's backyard? (A whole lot of "someones," and farms, and convents, and...)

And yet, there's more—the biggie. **When FERC grants a certificate to one of these projects, they authorize the company to recoup all of its costs from its ratepayers...plus 14 percent. That's a pretty nice profit margin, and it's guaranteed!** Why not build a new pipeline you only *might* use,



if the billions in costs are all gravy to you; if the financial risk is borne by your customers, and the environmental risk is borne by the public? For that matter, if you're an investment bank, why not fund these dirty projects, knowing they've got a built-in profit coming? Many of these projects involve one company showing "need" by pointing to a deal it signed with a subsidiary.

A good piece on all this is "Pipeline Payday: How Builders Win Big, Whether More Gas Is Needed or Not:" bit.ly/2vxZ8uO. According to this, energy companies also don't have to pay any federal taxes!

It's my view that this outrageous cost-plus deal for gas companies ought to be a prime target for us, as we try to defend our green mountains, our clean—or less clean—rivers, and our quiet communities from this industrial onslaught. Surely if the gas companies, pipeline companies, and funding banks had to risk their own money, they'd be more cautious about investing in what might well become stranded assets—not only because of the possibility that we will actually at long last do something about climate change and other environmental crises, but because they seem to be overbuilding, because the profitable gas may run out sooner than expected, and because the competition from renewables keeps getting keener. And, surely, our attempts to talk banks into divesting would be much easier if they were taking the normal risk.

Please join the fight to get a secure collar and leash on this destructive beast! Call us at 304-522-0246 or e-mail info@ohvec.org.

This article is an excerpt from two blogs available on OVEC's website. 🌰

Photo page 18: In several spots along Rt. 19 from 1-79 to 1-64, massive yards of pipelines lay in wait for not yet approved projects, a testament to FERC rubber-stampy-ness. Above, left: Rover Pipeline construction near the Ohio River, not too far from St. Marys, WV.

Photos by VS. Above, right: A citizen in Doddridge County photographed numerous Rover permit violations and submitted the photos to DEP. DEP forced Rover to temporarily halt construction. Submitted photo.

Project Plant

continued from page 1

These are the reasons why I want to be an environmental scientist when I grow up.

We want to be certain Project Plant continues to help inspire youngsters. So, this year, with help from volunteers from Starbucks and Adopt-A-Block, we expanded the raised beds at the Guyandotte location. This summer's bountiful harvest includes tomatoes, strawberries, basil, kale (for those delicious kale chips!), lettuce, peas, peppers, and carrots. In August, the kids started planting the fall garden; using low tunnels, we hope to extend the harvest well after the first frost.

Nathan Luton, OVEC's AmeriCorps VISTA, leads weekly gardening workshops with Project Plant participants. Among other things, the kids have planted a mini-succulent garden and learned how to set up and use a compost barrel. They also really enjoy the nature hikes Nathan leads, where he teaches about local plants and wildlife; perhaps there's a budding naturalist among the kids hitting the trails with Nathan.

We are so grateful to Jessica Lucas, the program coordinator at the club. It was her vision to start the garden. Jessica is a tireless partner in the project, and obviously loves the kids. So do we! 🌰



Left: Some of the Boys and Girls Club kids with Nathan and one of their gardens. Photo courtesy of the club. All the rest of the photos here of Boys and Girls Club Project Plant participants by Nathan Luton.

Take Me to the Frack-Free River

OVEC attended Take Me to the River, a fracking ban celebration in Friendsville, MD, on June 11. Environmental and sustainability groups from Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, and more took part in the celebration. Friendsville was the second town to ban fracking in Maryland (after Mountain Lake Park) and the first to ban water withdrawals.

Maryland lawmakers passed a moratorium on fracking two years ago, buying time for the state to study the environmental impacts of the practice. Maryland's Republican Governor Larry Hogan signed a bill into law in April 2017 that permanently bans fracking in the state. This makes Maryland the third U.S. state to ban fracking, following Vermont in 2012 and New York in 2014.

The ban was the result of years of grassroots organizing in Maryland by Don't Frack Maryland, a diverse group of public interest organizations, labor groups, businesses, and faith communities from across Maryland and the United States.

Although this is a huge win for Maryland, the residents are not completely safe. As *Think Progress* reported on April 4, "Banning fracking will not keep Maryland out of the natural gas boom. Dominion Resources is in the process of building a natural gas compression station and export terminal for LNG

(liquefied natural gas) in the Chesapeake Bay. And the state is seeing a rise in natural gas pipelines, which have been the subject of local debate.

"Natural gas burns almost twice as cleanly, in terms of carbon dioxide emissions, as coal does—but its lesser climate impact has been diminished by leaks during production, transportation, and storage. Natural gas is 80 percent methane, a greenhouse gas that is 86 times more effective than carbon dioxide at trapping heat over a 20-year span."

We Are Cove Point is a coalition of people and organizations who are fighting to stop the terminal in Lusby, MD. This giant export terminal is a fracking refinery, a power plant, and would be the first liquefied fracked gas export terminal built on the East Coast *and* the first one built anywhere in the world in such a densely populated area. The coalition has spent years urging legislators and state officials to ask for a safety study or Quantitative Risk Assessment (QRA) on Dominion Energy's export terminal. Unfortunately, Governor Hogan supports the project and will not order a safety study. 🍌



Switching from Coal to Fracked Gas Will Not Save Our Planet

continued from page 7

And, sadly, it's now clear that leakage rates are higher than that. Between 2002 and 2014, U.S. methane emissions increased more than 30 percent.

Some experts who have reviewed the data say that because of the boom in fracking and the conversion to gas, America's total greenhouse-gas emissions may actually have gone up during the Obama years. And, at least the Obama administration required drillers to keep track of how much methane they were leaking—one of the first acts of the Trump EPA was to scrap that requirement.

So, to summarize, because this is a subtle point that we all need to understand, given the importance of the debate: Natural gas is not reducing the amount of greenhouse-gas emissions. It is doing nothing to slow climate change.

And worse, it's making it much harder to take the steps that really would matter. As we get off coal

because of the way it drives climate change, what we should be doing is moving to renewable energy. Solar power emits no carbon at all, which makes it the natural choice. But as long as we have cheap natural gas flooding the market, we'll move more slowly in the direction of real renewables.

The solar panel is the great have-your-cake-and-eat-it technology, the real deal! It takes the power the sun sends us every day and turns it into electricity. There's no catch, no con. It's our Houdini escape route from climate change—but only if we catch on in time to the tawdry little three-card-monte game the fossil-fuel industry is running. 🍌

**Stay up to date on
the latest events.
Check our online calendar
at ohvec.org.**



EPA Says it Will “Cap” Dioxin in Kanawha River

An article titled “Deadly Dioxin Still ‘Poca Dots’ The Landscape,” begins on page 10 of the August 2000 edition of OVEC’s newsletter (see that edition here: bit.ly/2xj1P12).

It details a decades-long struggle of people living near Poca who were trying to get EPA to clean up sites where Monsanto had “disposed” of dioxin-laden waste in the 1950s and 1960s. The dioxin was a byproduct of Monsanto’s manufacturing of an herbicide used to make Agent Orange, the defoliant used in the Vietnam War.

Missy Anthony and Lew Baker, OVEC board members at the time, were among those working on this crucial issue.

In early August this year, the EPA announced it would “address” the issue of dioxin contamination in the Kanawha River by constructing stone caps over sediment where the deadly toxin has settled. EPA’s effort will focus on a 14-mile segment of the river in Kanawha and Putnam counties.

In a news release, the EPA says the caps will “reduce the mobility and concentrations of dioxin in the sediments.”

As the *Charleston Gazette Mail* reports:

The plan is the EPA’s preferred alternative, chosen over conducting a broader and more expensive dredging project to actually remove material contaminated with dioxin from the river.

The EPA’s announcement comes roughly 13 years after the federal agency and the state Department of Environmental Protection announced they had reached a deal to further investigate lingering dioxin contamination in the river and come up with a plan to clean up that contamination.

Dioxin has been linked to cancer, birth defects, learning disabilities, endometriosis, infertility, and suppressed immune functions. The chemical builds up in tissue over time, meaning that even small exposures can accumulate to dangerous levels.

Repeatedly, Monsanto entered into agreements with the EPA to clean up at least some of its dioxin contamination, but the river remains contaminated



This photo from our August 2000 newsletter shows, left to right, Missy Anthony, Lew Baker, and Renae Bonnett at the press conference on dioxin.

to the point that anglers are warned against eating fish from that part of the Kanawha.

The EPA said the settlement agreement includes a requirement for long-term monitoring of the levels of dioxin in fish caught from the river.

Missy Anthony reflects on the dioxin saga:

Seventeen years ago, several other concerned citizens and I stood in front of the press and in the shadow of barrels containing soil contaminated with dioxin by Monsanto.

I come from Eleanor, WV, a small town in Putnam County, named for the wonderful crusader Eleanor Roosevelt. Between the years of 1956 and 1986, rail cars coming from Monsanto were serviced at American Car and Foundry, located near the Winfield Lock and Dam. The “service” consisted of running the rail cars back and forth on the tracks to clean them out. What were they cleaning out? Dioxin-laden waste!

The dioxin that was flooded on to the land in that area has devastated many families in Eleanor. One hundred percent of the workers at ACF who didn’t die of accidental death died of some kind of cancer.

Today, in 2017, dioxin is still in the ground. The EPA has done nothing other than study after study. Now, we have the decision to cap the sediment in the river. I let this news sink in. Maybe this is okay, maybe this will make it better, make the dioxin go away. As if! The dioxin won’t go away by covering it up. Is EPA nuts?

This is an emotional subject for me; it hits home for us. No one has ever convinced me that the reason our son was born blind in one eye was not the contaminated water from the site. My husband worked there.

The EPA and any other agency that is thinking they can make this go away, after all these years, by once again trying to cover it up—think again. Capping the dioxin is not good enough. Removing the dioxin is the only acceptable solution and the only one I will accept. The fight is on again! 🍓

Agency's Failure to Enforce ESA Drives Us Batty

In 2015, the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) listed the northern long-eared bat as a “threatened,” rather than “endangered,” species. OVEC joined a lawsuit brought against the agency by the Center for Biological Diversity and Defenders of Wildlife. OVEC got involved because mountaintop removal is destroying so much of the bat’s habitat. The lawsuit contends the FWS failed to protect the northern long-eared bat as endangered under the Endangered Species Act.

The Center for Biological Diversity first petitioned for the listing of protected status for the bat in 2001. By the time the FWS issued the protected status of “threatened” for the bat in 2015, its population had been decimated throughout the core of its range, due in part to the habitat loss of mountaintop removal and in part to white-nose syndrome (WNS).

This fungal disease was first identified in New York in February 2006. It is highly contagious and spreads when infected bats carry the fungus to new hibernacula. Out of the seven North American bats that have suffered devastating population losses due to WNS, the northern long-eared bat is one of the hardest hit. This bat species has a preference for hibernacula in which the interior temperature closely compares to that which the fungus requires to thrive. The northern long-eared bat has the highest observed fungal loads and highest rate of mortality of any WNS susceptible species.



At the time of the agency’s “threatened” listing in 2015, the northern long-eared bat had experienced population declines of 96 to 99 percent throughout the eastern United States and Canada. The FWS estimated that WNS would be spread throughout the entire range within 8 to 13 years of the threatened listing (now 6 to 11 years). The agency neglected to provide the bat with the strongest possible protections when it failed to list the species as “endangered.”

This year, on August 18, our groups moved to have the court make a partial summary judgment on the agency’s listing claims. That means we are now one step closer to having the judge hear the merits of our case.

We are committed to holding agencies accountable for gross failures of judgment. In the case of the Endangered Species Act, courts give deference to the agency (FWS) only if they can reasonably prove that all available scientific evidence was taken into consideration and supported the listing decision.

Bats are facing an epidemic of a highly contagious disease with a mortality rate of around 100 percent along with severe and unprecedented habitat loss due to human development. We intend to prove that, in this case, the agency failed to take into consideration the cumulative effects of all factors threatening the northern long-eared bat populations and therefore failed to protect the species according to the requirements of the Endangered Species Act. 🦇

2018 Primaries: SuperPACs Already Active

On August 8, the *Charleston Gazette-Mail* reported that, nine months before the next primary election for one of WV’s Senate seats, super PACs are already “laying groundwork for an attack-laden campaign season.”

The paper noted that U.S. Rep. Evan Jenkins and state Attorney General Patrick Morrisey, two of three Republicans in the race, “now have the support of outside groups that can raise and spend unlimited amounts of money.”

Not surprisingly, the Koch brothers are among the big-money, out-of-state PAC donors who are hoping to influence WV voters, and WV policy.

The article states, “A super PAC can raise unlimited funds from corporations, unions, or individuals... Though they must disclose their donors, they can take money from organizations that do not disclose their donors—so-called ‘dark money.’”

You can bet those donors include fossil fuel interests, keen on promoting more mountaintop removal, the Appalachian Gas Storage Hub, pipelines, and fracking, and hell bent on beating down renewable energy.

Fight back! Contact us to get active in our Clean Elections work.

Looking Back: Stories About a Few of OVEC's Volunteers

by Janet Keating



OVEC's former Executive Director Janet Keating and her dog Spencer in Ritter Park in Huntington. They stand beside an oak tree OVEC had planted when Janet retired. The plaque in the foreground reads "OVEC honors Janet Keating's passion for protecting the Earth." Photo by Natalie Thompson.

OVEC first began efforts to stop mountaintop removal coal mining (MTR) in 1997. In less than a decade, groups in WV formed Friends of the Mountains (FOM), as opposed to the so-called Friends of Coal (FOC). The earliest participants included OVEC, Coal River Mountain Watch, WV Sierra Club, WV Environmental Council, and WV Highlands Conservancy. Back then, regular meetings were held at the Charleston

first of many in which groups committed to ending mountaintop removal would meet, develop and coordinate strategy, and strengthen relationships toward the common goal of ending MTR once and for all.

Later in 2000, with participation by various groups, we organized a unique, but much needed event, the "Funeral for the Mountains." The gathering was truly meant to provide people the space to mourn for what had been and was being lost. From OVEC's People in Action webpage:

Mourn for our Losses, Stand Up for our Future! was the theme of the Funeral for the Mountains, held October 28, 2000, in Charleston, WV. In southern West Virginia, mountaintop removal coal mining has destroyed many mountain communities—people's homes, schools, and water wells. Hundreds of square miles of mountainous, richly biodiverse forest habitat and over 1,000 miles of beautiful, biologically crucial streams have been lost to this massacre of our mountains! The funeral allowed us to express our grief over the slaughter, while sending a message to the state's "leaders" that the destruction must stop!

This event occurred before Dr. Michael Hendryx's and other scientist's many studies that indicate that, beyond environmental destruction and death, MTR is killing people and affecting their health.

One fortuitous outcome of OVEC's Funeral for the Mountains was

that an incredible, feisty, strong woman was lured to the event, when, while standing on her apartment's balcony, she spied "Uncle Sam" (Charley Erb) getting out of his car and mounting stilts—readying himself to join the march of oddly attired citizens, led by the drone of bagpipes.

Regina Hendrix's curiosity got the best of her.



Regina Hendrix

Unitarian Universalist.

Groups' legal efforts were primarily represented by attorneys from Appalachian Center for the Economy and the Environment, now Appalachian Mountain Advocates, Earthjustice, Public Justice, and Sierra Club. Beyond our borders, OVEC worked with SouthWings and Kentuckians For The Commonwealth, as well as regional organizations like Heartwood, Citizens Coal Council, and Appalachian Voices. As in our successful work to stop the construction of the proposed Apple Grove Pulp Mill, leaders from the faith community were actively involved in our efforts. We know joining with others makes us stronger.

In 1999, OVEC organized the first "Summit for the Mountains," at the Folklife Center. Sam Cook, a professor and activist at Virginia Tech, who brought together individuals and 17 groups to develop the first coordinated strategy, assisted us. Facilitators included Carolyn Johnson (Citizens Coal Council), Andy Mahler (Heartwood), and longtime grassroots trainer Pete Hill, and WV singer-songwriter Kate Long provided music. Attended by our beloved former congressman, Ken Hechler, this meeting marked the

She quickly descended her stairs and followed the march to find out what all the fuss was about at the State Capitol. She had just retired, returning to the mountain state after many years of working elsewhere. She had heard about mountaintop removal, and, as she listened to the many speeches given that day, she thought, “It can’t really be as bad as they say.”

As part of the event, individuals in attendance were offered over-flights of MTR by the unique non-profit aviation organization SouthWings, departing from nearby Yeager airport. Regina jumped at the opportunity to take a flight. She decided that, if nothing else, she would get a little sightseeing tour from the air. What she saw took her breath away. She couldn’t believe the scale and scope of the destruction—acres upon denuded acres and headwater streams smothered with the rubble from the former mountains—from this bird’s-eye view. That day, her life took on new meaning.

Regina isn’t the type who can ignore injustice. She was a Sierra Club member, and she was surprised to find out that the largest environmental group in the country wasn’t involved in this issue. She immediately began trying, successfully, to bring the national Sierra Club on board to join in the efforts to end MTR. The club provided organizers as well as legal assistance in the work.

Regina became an active OVEC member, eventually serving on the board of directors. She was always thinking of creative ways to elevate the issue, and she tended to think big. On a trip to Rome and Vatican City, Regina, a Catholic, delivered a letter for the Pope, asking for his aid.

Before moving to her current home in Charlestown, WV, she worked side-by-side with a scrappy team of a dozen or so OVEC volunteers for many years. Whether testifying at public hearings, lobbying state and federal politicians, challenging state and federal regulators, or protesting the coal industry at every possible turn, OVEC could count on Regina to show up and speak her mind. And, beyond that, staff from OVEC can thank Regina and her strong leadership for the organization’s continued

existence during a very difficult period in the organization’s history, but that’s a story for another day. Needless to say, OVEC would love to have her living closer to the office—not only because of her dedication to the environment, but also because she’s a fine friend to so many of us.

Moving forward to 2006–2007, groups from WV, KY, VA, TN, and NC, with assistance from OVEC’s executive director, were in the process of organizing what would eventually become The Alliance for Appalachia, to help raise national awareness and

hopefully to end MTR. Like with any gargantuan effort, we all knew that beyond activism, we needed additional financial resources to support individual organizations and coalition efforts. To that end, leaders of various groups organized a funders’ tour of MTR.

At the first event, held in Kentucky, national foundation program officers were invited to hear from organizational leaders as well as residents who

were directly affected by MTR. Again, SouthWings provided over-flights of MTR sites leaving from the airport in Hazard, KY, located in the heart of Kentucky coal country

As some people flew, others spent time in the little airport answering questions and discussing the many issues surrounding MTR with program officers awaiting their flight. One WV activist on the ground, and on OVEC’s board of directors, was Larry Gibson.

OVEC strongly believes that the true experts on environmental issues are the people who live with the impacts of them. Larry was one of those experts. But when it came to MTR, Larry was much more. Larry, whose ancestral home of Kayford Mountain was being surrounded by mountaintop removal, had an unquenchable fire in his soul fueled by his love and attachment to his beloved home. Just as mountains are the iconic symbol of our wild, wonderful state, Larry was becoming a symbol of the work to end MTR. He had the rare ability to engage roomfuls of people. He would tell his story with heart and passion, often bringing himself and others to the brink of tears. He, along with WV Highlands Conservancy volunteer Julian Martin, even walked from Harper’s Ferry, WV, to Charleston, making intermittent stops for press



Larry Gibson, with a reporter on Kayford Mountain.

events to educate more people about the egregious mining that was devouring the mountains. He was a man on a mission.

And, like all heroes, Larry had flaws.

As we were driving back from the funders' tour to Huntington that day (Dianne Bady, Cindy Rank of WV Highlands Conservancy, Larry Gibson, Vivian Stockman, and me), my cell phone rang. On the other end was Maryanne Graham, OVEC's administrative director. Only I could hear what she was telling me. What the others heard was an incredulous "*what?*" followed by, "I need this like a hole in the head. Good grief."

You see, for the next several days, groups from across central Appalachia would be meeting for a large regional summit, dubbed Healing Mountains, organized by OVEC and our friends and allies at Heartwood. I knew I would have plenty of work ahead of me. When I hung up from the call, I explained why I was upset.

According to Maryanne, who had just received a phone call from the Hazard, KY, airport, someone had written "Stop MTR; Call OVEC at 304-522-0246" in large black letters on the wall of the men's bathroom. I was horrified at first, thoughts racing. Who would do such a thing? Did someone frame us? Is someone trying to get OVEC into trouble? Would we ever be able to use that airport again? What will it cost to repair the damage?

Larry was unusually quiet in the back seat.

When we pulled up to my house, Larry 'fessed up. "I just couldn't take all those pro-coal signs and bumper stickers inside the airport."

Admittedly, at the time, I was angry. How could he do this? Well, on second thought (and after a heart-to-heart with another organizational leader), how could Larry have *not* done this? In the many years since, I came to realize how silly it was for me to be

Far Too Many Farewells

OVEC extends deepest sympathy to the family and friends of Chris Hale, Father Roy Gene Crist, Ruth Colvin, Charles Lindbergh Nelson, and Carol Kirkpatrick Gibson. We join with you in grieving their passing, and in remembering their warmth and love for this planet we call home.



Winnie Fox.
Photo by Mark Schmerling,
schmerlingdocumentary.com.

even a little upset with him. When I think of all the devastating losses he and others have suffered at the hands of the coal industry, that heartfelt plea—that graffiti on the wall of the Hazard airport's men's room—as my grandmother used to say, "didn't amount to a hill of beans," by comparison. Of course, OVEC paid for a new paint job.

One final story that I was told second-hand by Laura Forman (OVEC organizer, now deceased): Long-time activist Winnie Fox, silver-haired octogenarian, attended and spoke at one of the public hearings held by the DEP on the Spruce #1 MTR permit near Blair, WV, in Logan County. If issued, the permit would have been the largest ever in the state's history. To know Winnie Fox was to love her. She was absolutely fearless and never minced words.

On this particular evening, as the hearing dragged on, one MTR supporter after another stepped up to the microphone to make excuses for the coal industry, crossing in front of the DEP's table lined with dutifully listening regulators. When it was Winnie's turn to talk, she walked up to the DEP tables, faced the regulators, and, in a style only Winnie could pull off, blurted: "I'm so tired of listening to all this bullsh*t." And she then returned to her seat.

At that moment, the person sitting next to Laura said gleefully, "I can't wait until I'm old enough to do that!"

Ah. Me, too, Winnie, me, too. 🌰

Have you thought about your legacy? Are you looking for a long-term way to make a meaningful difference in the movement to build a cleaner energy future?

Please consider making a planned gift to OVEC today. Planned giving options include:

- Gifts of stocks and bonds.
- Including OVEC as a beneficiary in your life insurance policy.
- Including OVEC in your will.

Tax benefits apply to each of these options. Please contact your attorney or a financial advisor for more info, or go to lalwv.org.



Right On! Renewables' Rapid Rise

This summer, news on the rapid rise of renewable energy gives cause for hope and celebration. Headlines help tell the story (plug these headlines into a search engine to read the full reports):

Clean Energy Is Trouncing Oil, Gas and Coal in Trump Era
Stanford Scientists: Switch to Renewables Would Save 7 Million Lives Per Year, Create 24 Million Jobs
Pass the Salt –Renewable Energy's Storage Problems Might Be Over
How States and Cities Can Unlock Local Clean Energy
In the Heart of [KY] Coal Country, State Officials Bet on Renewable Energy
Orlando Becomes 40th City to Commit to 100% Renewable Energy
One of the Biggest Criticisms Against Wind, and Solar Energy Has Been Quashed
VA: Renewables Seen as Way to Stay in the Energy Business
Replacing Fossil Fuels with Wind Water and Solar Is Doable Per Stanford Research
Solar Is Now Most Popular Form of New Electricity Generation Worldwide
Wind and Solar Energy are Literally Saving Lives
Wind Power Costs Could Drop 50%. Solar Pv Could Provide Up to 50% Of Global Power.
Solar Brightfields: Gigawatts Of Clean Energy Potential On America's Landfills And Brownfields

The good news goes on and on. No matter the attempted Koch-brothers-funded legislative attacks, renewables will rise. For instance, here are some excerpts from an article titled, "Almost every country in the world can power themselves with renewable energy:"

A study published in the journal Joule lays out renewable energy roadmaps—the mix of resources a given country would need to transition away from fossil fuels to renewable energy—for 139 countries collectively responsible for more than 99 percent of the global carbon emissions. According to the resulting analysis, the planet is pretty much ready to go 100 percent renewable by 2050.


The countries could all function using the renewable energy potential contained within their own borders, and most could do it while relying mainly on technologies that already exist.

And according to the researchers, this process would actually decrease the amount of land dedicated to energy production overall.

And then there's the fact that we wouldn't have the oil spills and chemical leaks associated with transporting and refining fossil fuels. Renewable energies involve a relatively fixed amount of land use; wind and solar energy doesn't run out, so a solar farm erected today will still be pumping out electricity in a few decades. And even as those panels wear out, new ones can be erected on the same site. Coal seams run out and oil wells run dry, so we're constantly pressing new locations into service. Tens of thousands of new oil wells are drilled annually.

The research suggests that the gradual shift to 100 percent renewable energy would lower the social cost of energy, especially deaths associated with fossil fuel pollution.

"With oil and gas, you have to keep drilling and mining, and pollution keeps going on forever," says lead researcher Mark Jacobson. "Worldwide, we have more than 4 million air pollution deaths from it. Things have to change—they're not sustainable as they are."

He calculated that renewable energy could prevent 4.6 million premature deaths a year by 2050, simultaneously adding 24.3 million jobs to the economy. It would also save more than \$50 trillion dollars a year in climate- and pollution-related costs. (Read the full article: bit.ly/2vE17Kt.) 

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OVEC's \$30 for 30 Campaign

We have a goal of raising \$30,000 for our 30 years of fighting for the environment, and we need your help.

Times are tough and this boost will help gets us through the year—our 30th year!

Gift	Quantity	Value	Total
New Memberships	30	\$20	\$600
Sustainer Upgrades	60	\$60	\$3,600
Renewals	90	\$20	\$1,800
Donation	100	\$30+	\$3,000
Donation	30	\$300+	\$9,000
Donation	4	\$3,000+	\$12,000
Goal			\$30,000

Help! Become a member. Ask friends to join. Send an extra gift of \$30 or more.

Call 304-522-0246 or e-mail info@ohvec.org to donate, check on your membership status, join for the first time, order gift memberships, or ask questions about why you should join OVEC.

Join and donate by mailing back the envelope inside this newsletter, or donate and join online. Visit ohvec.org and click on the donate button.

Membership Tour Fall 2017:

Meet Our ED

By the time you receive this newsletter, OVEC Executive Director Natalie Thompson will have started her fall tour of WV cities. She'll have met with OVEC members and supporters in Clarksburg and Morgantown. Meetings are coming up in Ripley, Charleston, Lewisburg, Beckley, Elkins, and Wheeling.

She'd love to meet you. Contact her at natalie@ohvec.org or 304-522-0246, or check ohvec.org for details on a meeting near you. Come meet Natalie and discuss issues important to you!



Fossil fuels are dead. That's a long-term view. It's not going to happen overnight. It's not going to be in two or three years. But it's going away, in my view.

- *Hunter Harrison, CEO of CSX, explaining to reporters why the railroad will not buy any new locomotives to pull coal trains.*