WE HAVE A RIGHT TO KNOW!

Can a ghost save West Virginia from economic ruin? A mysterious company, called Parsons & Whittemore, has sold a few politicos on the idea. West Virginia residents, however, see only an apparition. This company, with which the WV governor seems quite familiar, has not shown itself to the residents of West Virginia.

Residents of counties that stand to gain or lose the most from P & W, can get little or no answers about the pulp & paper mill the company wants to build. The company wants West Virginia to weaken its water quality standards. They also filed an application for the mill's 'landfill permit in January. Yet they are trying to make us believe the mill is on hold, due to a glut in the pulp & paper market. What is this ghost really trying to do? Do companies just go around filing for permits for facilities they don't intend to build?

Who fears the truth more: West Virginia citizens or Parsons & Whittemore? Citizens fear this lack of truth. We deserve face-to-face answers. Let's ask the ghost: How many West Virginians would be employed? Would the company consider using a chlorine-free bleaching process that doesn't produce dioxin? How can Route 2 handle the heavy truck traffic that would result from this project? What is that smell we encounter when we drive past the Meade paper mill in Chillicothe, Ohio? If millions of trees will be devoured by the P & W mill per year, what protection will be given to our precious hardwood forests? We shouldn't have to hold a séance to find answers.

Let's find the specter who can answer this question: While West Virginia chemical manufacturers are reporting reduced toxic emissions (according to a recent study released by the National Institute for Chemical Studies), why would any of them, or the proposed pulp mill, want a license to pollute MORE? Perhaps we should consult Ouija boards and tarot decks for the answer to this one!

Whether citizen concerns are based on dioxin by-products of chlorine-bleaching, threats to our hardwood forests, stinky air emissions, hazards on the highway, or any of the myriad of other issues raised by this mill, the foundation of them all is the eerie secrecy surrounding this project.

Has West Virginia's governor been bamboozled by a trickster? Has he been seduced by a promise and a whisper? Should West Virginians get on their knees and beg for this invisible savior? Or should we stand up proudly and say, "We have been victims of these spirits too long! Make your true self known to us, or be gone!"

For information, please call Kim Baker at 522-9562. Contact WV legislators (1-800-642-8650) now and tell them you want strong water quality standards! Write a letter today to the editor of your newspaper & tell them how you feel!

The following newspapers are key targets for your letters about the pulp mill.

The Charleston Gazette
1001 Virginia St. E.
Charleston WV 25301

The Herald-Dispatch
Voice of the People
P.O. Box 2017
Huntington WV 25720

The Point Pleasant Register
200 Main St.
Point Pleasant WV 25550
These letters appeared in the Huntington newspaper in 1991 & are still good summaries of the two primary positions folks have been taking on the mill.

To the editor:
The proposal to build a huge paper mill on the Ohio River, with inadequate regulations, has run into a lot of opposition. Local proponents have claimed that the opponents simply “oppose everything.” No, there is opposition because it’s a dumb idea.

The promoters want to be able to cut down the region’s timber faster than it can grow back. That’s a dumb idea. They want to use the Ohio River as a sewer for chemicals that accumulate in the food chain. That’s a dumb idea.

If this was a sustainable project, one that would provide a permanent industry, everyone would be for it. If the plan was to use waste paper that we're now drowning in, everyone would be for it. If the plan was to use minimum impact chemicals instead of chlorine, everyone would be for it.

The region is rich with natural resources, but the people are poor. How can that be? It's because in the past we've let outsiders and short-sighted developers use the resources any way they liked. A few get rich, the next generation suffers.

It doesn't have to be that way. But those who refuse to learn from history are doomed to repeat it.

Rick Bady
Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition
Proctorville, Ohio

To the editor:
The people of West Virginia should be aware that there will be a campaign to discredit the proposed Apple Grove Pulp Plant in Mason County on the basis of dioxin emissions.

This campaign will not be designed to protect the people of West Virginia so much as to prevent the cutting of hardwood timber. The people behind the campaign are opposed to development, and if their campaign succeeds, the net result will be the loss of several thousand jobs.

If there was a significant hazard to the pulp plant, then there would be reason to oppose it. But there is not. First, no one has ever died of exposure to dioxin — for any reason. Second, the amounts of dioxin involved are so small as to defy the imagination. The dioxin standard of one part per quintillion is literally like one needle in a billion haystacks! Those opposed to the plant would have it 75 times smaller. Neither quantity is significant and both are arbitrary.

The truth of the matter is that some people are using dioxin as a scare tactic to prevent the use of our forests as a renewable resource. It will be up to the people of West Virginia to decide if they go along with the scare tactics or whether they opt for responsible development and jobs.

Robert D. Stief
Gallipolis Ferry, W.Va.

We would like to thank several people who have put time and effort into some fantastic citizen lobbying on the regulations that would weaken West Virginia's water quality standards. Heartfelt thanks to Leanne Krudner, William Beard, Ken Farmer, Tom McDermitt, Mark Smith, Joe Stanley, Chelena McCoy, Margaret Van Zandt, Karen Simpkins, Jeff Bosley, & Carroll Jett, and to all of you who have written letters and made phone calls. We have been receiving some very positive feedback about our efforts. We will continue to schedule trips to Charleston until April 10, the end of the legislative session. Please consider going. If you'd like to go, call Kim Baker (522-9562) for details. Face-to-face visits with lawmakers are one of the most effective tools we can use!

______________________________________________________________

Donations to OVEC are tax deductible  Mail to: OVEC
[ ] Membership $5--$25 (Pay what you can)  PO Box 970
[ ] Contribution:  Proctorville OH
                     45669

Name

Address

______________________________________________________________

Phone  Issues of interest to you
Residents of Kenova, WV reported higher rates of the types of illness associated with air pollution, than residents of Milton, WV. The study included several measures to detect response bias such as overreporting. No evidence of overreporting was found. Differences in illness rates were larger than those found in most other studies of the same type in other polluted areas. (Mermin, 1990)

Residents of Kenova, WV reported higher rates of the types of illness associated with air pollution, than residents of Barboursville, WV. Differences again were larger than those usually found in this type of study. Residents of several communities were more likely to visit a hospital emergency room on days when industries reported malfunctions, as compared to non-malfunction days. (US EPA, Epidemiological Study, 1990), (Lexington Herald-Leader, 1990)

Because of meteorological conditions, the potential for air pollution in the Ashland--Huntington--Ironton Tri-State area is greater than for any other urban area in the eastern United States. (US EPA, Air Pollution Study, 1990)

Air pollution complaints from citizens of Kenova and Ceredo were correlated with malfunctions at Ashland Oil when the wind was in that direction. No correlations were found for other industries. Ashland Oil reported more malfunctions than all other area industries combined. Excess emissions during malfunctions are responsible for degradation of air quality and pose some additional risk to individuals. (US EPA, Air Pollution Study, 1990)

EPA recommends that federal, state and local regulatory agencies should develop a plan to control malfunctions at their sources. (Smith, ADI, 1990) 
(NOTE: DAQ records indicate no apparent decrease in refinery malfunctions since 1990)

"The solutions to many of the problems at Kentucky's Ashland Oil refinery were addressed years ago in Texas and are now routine." (KY DAQ, 1990)

Area exceedances of the sulfur dioxide health standard are a result of shutdowns and malfunctions at the Catlettsburg refinery. (KY DAQ, 1991)

Researchers were unable to get sufficient data about health problems of Kenova adults and school children due to widespread citizen refusal to participate. (Gannett Foundation, 1991)

Ambient levels of particulates in the Tri-State decreased during the period of increased monitoring for the US EPA study. The levels were the lowest in recent history, and increased to "normal" levels after the study was over. (OVEC, 1991)
The amount of major air pollutants emitted per barrel of oil processed was much larger for the Catlettsburg refinery than for similar facilities. Data did not include pollution emitted during malfunctions, but only during normal operation. State officials cited lack of proper equipment for the higher rates. (OVEC, Jan. 1992)

If emissions rates are divided by "complexity factor" the resulting statistic for the Catlettsburg Refinery is similar to other refineries. However, complexity is not statistically related to emissions. (Ashland Oil, 1992)

The greater rate of emissions for the Catlettsburg refinery cannot be explained by reference to "complexity". The statistical method employed in the Ashland study makes no sense. (OVEC May 1992)

REFERENCES

OVEC, 1991. Air Pollution and Health: Two case studies in WV.
OVEC, Jan. 1992 Air Pollution from the Catlettsburg Refinery compared to other large US refineries.
OVEC May 1992 Refinery Comparison Update
US EPA, 1990 Epidemiological Study for the Kenova and Ceredo, West Virginia and Catlettsburg Kentucky Area. (Study conducted by doctors from Univ. of Pittsburgh, Dept. of Public Health. Report prepared by Alliance Technologies under contract to US EPA) Alliance Technologies Corporation, 100 Europa Dr. Suite 100, Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27514

We need to emphasize that finding ways to reduce malfunctions should be the first priority for the new EPA study.

Get informed! Get involved! For more information:
Dianne Bady (Proctorville) 886-5796
Janet Fletcher (Huntington) 525-6984

Please write to:
Mr. Patrick Tobin, Acting Director
U. S. EPA--Region IV
345 Courtland Street, N. E.
Atlanta, GA 30365
CITIZEN MONITORING SPURS STATE ENFORCEMENT IN KY

In Kentucky, state air quality officials have learned a lesson from vigilant citizens: video monitoring is a good idea.

Residents of the tri-state region of Kentucky, West Virginia, and Ohio have been using video cameras for years to document emissions from Ashland Oil’s refinery in Catlettsburg, Kentucky. Most of the tapes were made “in the middle of the night or on weekends when state inspectors are unavailable,” explains Dianne Bady, co-director of the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition (OVEC). Many show it’s been operating without one for at least six years.

This breakthrough comes after nearly a decade of citizen organizing, research, and bitter controversy surrounding Ashland Oil. The fight has been long and ugly, dividing families and even spurring death threats. As one area resident reported to the national press in 1990, “this is like a civil war.” The high stakes tensions arise from Ashland’s economic muscle in the region. The refinery, located in northeastern Kentucky on the Big Sandy River, employs 1,500 workers. An additional 1,000 Ashland employees are stationed at the nearby corporate headquarters. The company is the largest corporation in Kentucky; when its subsidiary companies are considered, it is by far the largest employer in the tri-state region.

The saga begins in 1983, when the refinery installed new equipment to process low quality crude oil into gasoline. Soon thereafter, a fine powdery soot began to settle regularly over the small towns in the tri-state area. Paint began peeling from homes and cars, and many residents experienced skin burns and eye irritation while mowing their lawns. Some were reimbursed by Ashland Oil for the cost of repainting their cars, but Ashland denied the possibility of any health effects. Refinery officials said the powder was “safe enough to eat,” while a chemist with the West Virginia air pollution control commission called the substance “as corrosive as drain cleaner.”

When confused citizens pressed state and EPA officials to investigate further, they found that the powder contained calcium oxide (known to cause respiratory and skin problems), could contain toxic heavy metals, and was extremely alkaline. A study conducted by Stanford University confirmed that residents of Kenova, West Virginia, a small town downwind from the refinery, were two to four times more likely to report headaches, skin problems, respiratory ailments, and eye irritation than residents of a relatively unpolluted town in another part of the state.

By 1987, with property damage and health effects mounting, more than 700 people had filed personal damage claims against Ashland Oil. Most of the claims were settled out of court, with the agreement that plaintiffs not reveal the amount of the settlement. In a case that did go before a jury in July of 1990, four residents were awarded $10.3 million – an amount that stirred hostility and resentment in the tri-state area. Half the residents in the region take home less than $20,000 per year, and many Ashland Oil employees (and local officials) feared the controversy and pressure would convince the company to move elsewhere. Harassment and death threats to the plaintiffs ensued, leading to yet more lawsuits and escalating tensions.

OVEC was not involved in the legal battles. Instead, the group concentrated its efforts on research, education, and organizing. In 1989, OVEC began actively investigating Ashland Oil’s environmental performance, and found Ashland’s history to be spotty at best. According to Kentucky Department of Environmental Protection records, the refinery operated without appropriate air pollution permits through most of the 1980s, and had been fined for numerous air quality violations.

(continued)
Armed with this information, OVEC challenged the company to clean up its act. In addition to monitoring the opacity of emissions with video cameras, the group compiled and published a report comparing pollution released by Ashland Oil with comparable refineries across the country. The report, released in January 1992, showed startling results.

The group collected data on the releases of carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, particulates, VOCs, and benzene reported to state and federal officials by 27 refineries with production levels comparable to Ashland Oil’s (more than 150,000 barrels processed per day). OVEC found that Ashland Oil released significantly more of each pollutant per 1,000 barrels processed than the average rate of emissions reported by other refineries. The company’s emissions of benzene, for example, were 300% higher than the average of other companies. “I expected Ashland Oil to be worse than the other facilities, but these numbers surprised even me,” said Rick Bady, primary author of the report.

Dan Kash, the Regional Supervisor of the Kentucky Division of Air Quality, calls the report “astounding.” “I’d never seen anything like it—it was very difficult for Ashland Oil to brush this aside. It’s based on EPA data and information the refineries had provided to the state.” A copy of the report was forwarded to Kash’s office, state officials in Frankfurt, and EPA’s Region IV offices in Atlanta. “People definitely read it, and viewed it as important work,” Kash reports. “It’s had big impact.”

According to Ms. Bady, OVEC’s relationship with local and state regulators has been central to the group’s success. “There are good people in the agencies, but they have a hard time doing their jobs because their bosses are influenced by business and politics,” she explains. “Too many environmental regulators take the easy way out, succumb to industry pressure. Our job is to make sure that succumbing to industry pressure is no longer the easy way out.”

Environmental/Labor Coalition Encourages Toxics Reduction

Tri-state residents established the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition (OVEC) in 1989 to fight off a proposed hazardous waste disposal complex. The giant chemical company BASF was considering three potential sites for their incinerator and landfill: one in Ohio and two in Indiana. “Their strategy was to play the three communities off one another so we’d be competing for the facility,” says OVEC co-director Dianne Bady. To sweeten the pot, BASF promised a paint plant—and 200 new jobs—to the lucky winner.

But the corporate plan backfired. Instead of competing to attract BASF’s so-called “Midwest Ecology Project,” residents of the three communities joined forces to fight it off. Labor leaders from the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union, which was engaged in a corporate campaign against BASF at the time, helped the groups come up with innovative strategies to fight the disposal complex and facilitate communication among the three communities.

“We took the approach that we didn’t want that facility sited anywhere,” says Bady. “We argued for waste reduction rather than disposal.” Employing the “usual strategies” (petitions, meetings with local officials, and letters to the editor) OVEC managed to sway public opinion against the disposal project in the Ohio Valley. But it was an uphill battle all the way. Many local politicians were convinced the BASF project would benefit the community, and the local building and trade union (whose workers would construct the facility) supported BASF. According to Bady, public support from the county health commissioner was an important ingredient to OVEC’s success. “He wrote letters to the editor voicing his concern that the incinerator would be a health threat,” she explains.

Company officials maintain that the tough citizen opposition in all three communities had little to do with BASF’s decision to abandon the disposal project. But OVEC members who fought the facility believe otherwise. To make up for the lost disposal capacity, BASF said they would build small incinerators at their production facilities and work to reduce their output of toxic waste. The sincerity of the company’s commitment to toxics reduction, however, remains unclear; BASF currently holds the second largest contract for hazardous waste disposal at the embattled WTI incinerator in East Liverpool, Ohio.
WHY CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT IS IMPORTANT
by Janet Fletcher, OVEC Project Coordinator

In everyday conversations with friends and acquaintances, it isn't unusual for me to hear, "I sure am glad that you're out there taking care of the environment." Whew! The job's too big for just one person.

Having been involved in activism for several years, it has become more clear to me how things get done. It seems reasonable to assume that when laws are passed to protect our natural resources, the outcome would be just that—protection. Boy, has my view of reality changed!! What I have learned, is that no matter how stringent environmental regulations may be and no matter how hard I work as an individual, without the active support of other concerned people, enforcement will be lax and protection nil. Here's a recent example:

After OVEC staff learned that Parks Corporation would store, mix and package toxic chemicals used as wood preservatives next to the Lesage Natural Wells water bottling facility (owned by Green Acres Center for the developmentally disabled), we asked members to write to WV Office of Water Resources (WV-DWR) requesting a public hearing on the permit. Staff had reviewed the stormwater permit and saw serious flaws. A few OVEC members as well as OVEC staff wrote letters. The regulators knew that we were paying attention.

Recently the Chief of WV-DWR told me that Parks Corporation will be required to conduct groundwater monitoring—a recommendation made by OVEC. Other changes in the permit are still unknown. Would the WV-DWR have required groundwater monitoring without citizen pressure? It is extremely doubtful. Would OVEC and other concerned citizens been given the benefit of a public hearing had the Chief received an outpouring of requests? Most likely.

Whatever issue OVEC is tackling, whether it be excessive emissions and malfunctions at the Ashland Oil refinery, the continuing saga of Huntington's garbage dilemma, or the siting of a monstrous pulp mill in Mason County—all these issues need your input, energy, and volunteer efforts. While your staff works diligently on these problems, we cannot accomplish OVEC's issue goals without strong citizen involvement—that is, active participation.

If a single thoughtful letter to a state regulator can have an impact—imagine what 15 or 20 could do? Don't ever believe that an individual's effort doesn't make a difference—like Margaret Mead said—"it's the only thing that ever has."

SEE BACK PAGE FOR APRIL MEETING NOTICES!
HAPPY SPRING!!
HUNTINGTON SOLID WASTE BRIEFS

**** Mayor Robert Nelson has requested an extension from the West Virginia State legislature to postpone closure of the unlined Deitz Hollow landfill. That measure is currently in legislative committee. As it stands, the landfill is scheduled to close March 31. The city has bids out to other landfills in the event the extension is not granted. Meanwhile Mayor Nelson remains firm in his resolve to build an expensive, "dirty" MRF (materials recovery facility) where recyclables would be picked out of bags of mixed household garbage.

**** On March 8, members of Huntington City Council approved an ordinance to implement a pilot curbside recycling project involving five Huntington neighborhoods. A big thanks to Mike and Susan Plybon, Ray and Monica Woodruff, Jane Beckwith and Julie Fletcher for attending that meeting!

**** A disagreement has developed between the mayor and the state over the eventual scope of curbside recycling. The state is reluctant to award the $57,000 grant without a commitment from the mayor that Huntington will implement curbside recycling city-wide by 1994. This difference of opinion has caused a delay in the start up of the recycling pilot program which had been scheduled to begin around April 1. The matter is currently under consideration in the office of the Attorney General.

**** The Cabell County Solid Waste Authority has developed written materials to be distributed to households participating in the pilot curbside recycling project. OVEC staff and interested members will be working to educate citizens living in these neighborhoods to insure a successful program.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND OVEC

**** An OVEC staff member serves as a consultant for "Cammack Cares," a community service project at Huntington's Cammack Elementary. The students voted unanimously to begin a school-wide recycling project. Funds generated by this program will be used to support other community service projects that the children have chosen, such as helping the homeless and elderly.

**** On behalf of the school and "Cammack Cares," 10 year old Julie Fletcher, presented a statement in support of the recycling ordinance at the March 8 City Council meeting. She was received by an enthusiastic council and audience.

**** On April 16, 1993, OVEC staff will be participating in an education fair at Enslow Middle School called "Earth Savers." The purpose of the fair, according to Jean McClelland, fair coordinator, is to "celebrate how our immediate community is responding to the need to save the earth."

OHIO ENDANGERED SPECIES COALITION

OVEC has joined the Ohio Endangered species Coalition, a coalition that formed "in anticipation of a tough battle to renew the Endangered Species Act." The purpose of the Coalition is to show federal legislators the broad range of support for the ESA in Ohio and to facilitate communication, cooperation, and coordination of grassroots activities among member organizations.

OVEC's sixth month report has been sent to our funders and is now available to members upon request.
RADIOACTIVE WASTES COMING?

Ohio has agreed to site a "low level" radioactive waste landfill to store its own wastes as well as those from Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri and Indiana. Nationwide, about ten other states have been designated as host states for their region's "low level" wastes. Ohio appears to be the only state which is actually moving forward to site such a facility. Other host states seem to have serious concerns about the inadequacy of relevant federal law.

On Feb. 22, OVEC sponsored a public informational meeting in Portsmouth on this issue, organized by John McHenry. Our guest speaker was Bridgette Marlea of the Ohio Environmental Council. The meeting generated a large front page article in the Portsmouth Daily Times and was an important factor in drawing people out to the March 2 public hearing held by the Governor's "Blue Ribbon Commission" on siting the landfill.

Only one percent of the waste would come from medical facilities. These wastes are short lived, losing most of their radioactivity in less than 100 years. Most would come from nuclear power plants--material that will remain dangerous for far longer.

Informed sources in Columbus say that state officials assume the dump will be located here in Southern Ohio, since this poor area is not expected to generate much opposition.

The March 2 public hearing belied this assumption--200 people packed the room and enthusiastically applauded every speaker but one--the only speaker who favored the dump.

Attorney John McHenry ably testified for OVEC about serious problems in federal law, such as the definition of "low level" waste that includes power plant wastes which will remain radioactive for thousands of years. Experts concede that even a "state-of-the-art" landfill can only contain radioactivity for 100 years at best. Also, current law makes no provisions for encouraging waste reduction. John also emphasized that Ohio regulatory agencies aren't adequately regulating current facilities--how could these agencies protect us from a six-state radioactive dump?

Petitions expressing the above concerns were presented to the Governor's Commission. Kathy Smith, a new OVEC member, deserves special mention for collecting almost 200 signatures in less than a week.

Citizens at the hearing emphasized that our region has already paid its "environmental dues"--we've suffered the damages of coal mining, chemical industries and the DOE's notorious Portsmouth Uranium Enrichment Plant. The Portsmouth facility wasn't supposed to leak either, but now there are radioactive fish in the area streams.

The nuclear power industry exists in the US only because taxpayers have subsidized it. If the benefits actually outweigh the costs, then the regions that benefit from nuclear power should also bear the costs. Our region has no nuclear power plants. We now suffer the effects of acid rain from burning coal to generate electricity. Is it fair that we must also bear the risks of disposal of radioactive wastes from elsewhere?

Like many environmental problems, there are no easy solutions to radioactive waste. Current wastes need to go somewhere. But to simply allow the wastes to be hidden away in the nation's poorer regions will allow policy makers and the nuclear industry to continue with business as usual with little need to reduce waste production or increase energy efficiency.
APRIL OVEC MEETINGS

April 3: 10:30AM--1:30PM  Cabell Co. Library  5th St. near 8th Ave.

10:30--12:00 Choose one from these three workshops
   --Apple Grove Pulp Mill issues
   --Local Fundraising
   --Working with the media
12:00--12:45 Lunch will be provided (donations welcome)
12:45--1:30 Brief meeting/discussions

Late April meetings--times and dates to be announced

   --Kenova meeting on air pollution problems
   --Point Pleasant meeting on pulp mill issues

(We'll notify all members who've been involved in these issues--other interested folks can contact us for more information)

OHIO VALLEY ENVIRONMENTAL COALITION
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