



# Winds of Change

the newsletter of the

## Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition

Huntington, WV

www.ohvec.org

### Massey Energy Court-Ordered to Provide Water in Mingo Co.

*“This is the first time in Mingo County history that anyone has refused to obey a court order, that I know of.” - OVEC member Billy Sammons*

by Audrey Carter, Williamson Daily News, July 31, 2006

Residents of the Lick Creek, Rawl, Merrimac and Sprigg areas, who have maintained for years that coal mining destroyed their source of potable water, were granted temporary relief by the court system recently.

However, the defendant in the case has yet to comply with the court order.

On June 8, 2006, a motion was filed by the attorney representing these residents asking that the mining company responsible for allegedly destroying their wells and water table be ordered to provide water replacement.

This motion was granted on July 24, 2006, and Circuit Court Judge Michael Thornsby decreed that the defendants, Rawl Sales and Processing Co., a subsidiary of Massey Energy Co., provide one case of bottled water per person every week to 194 individuals.

Water replacement was to be made within 72 hours at the Rawl Church of God in Christ.

The defendants were under a legal obligation to  
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**Brenda Brown and brother-in-law Ernie Brown review the names on a court order making Massey Energy supply bottled water to people in Rawl, Sprigg, Lick Creek and Merrimac. Massey tried to “lawyer” its way out of the court order, but finally delivered water on August 12. Most of the families in the area, even with this drinking water, are still forced to bathe and wash with contaminated water.**

### Healing Mountains



During Memorial Day Weekend, more than 300 mountaintop removal opponents converged for the Healing Mountains conference at the Cedar Lakes Conference Center in Ripley, WV. The event combined OVEC’s 6<sup>th</sup> annual Summit for the Mountains with Heartwood’s 16<sup>th</sup> annual Forest Council.

“The destruction of our natural heritage and the obliteration of our mountain communities would be  
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## *Back to Work for Our Enchanted Forests, with Love*

by *Dianne Bady*

I live in a magical garden, tucked into an enchanted forest. As I write this, I'm appreciating a lush green branch hanging heavy with peaches. This little tree sprung up on its own on the edge of our front yard, nestled in with some mimosas, apparently growing from a carelessly tossed peach pit. We didn't even notice the tree for the first time until it was full of baby peaches.

The chamomile tea I'm drinking came from the chamomile flowers in my garden, but I didn't plant them either. Awhile back I kept thinking that I should drink chamomile tea to help ease the tight, sore muscles that were a side effect of large doses of steroids, part of my chemotherapy regimen. But I never quite got around to actually making chamomile tea until the day I found a thriving chamomile plant growing with my bachelor button flowers. Today is the first day I picked some of my own chamomile for tea. It tastes way better than store bought.

Several years back I was smitten with hostas, so I planted them all over our property. They're now at their peak of calming beauty. One of my favorites is a plant with slender, light green leaves that came up all on its own in the middle of a patch of lawn. Huh. It's a variety I've never had before, and it fits in beautifully near a little hosta garden I'd put in myself.

Recently, Rick and I saw a coyote in our backyard. We don't live in a remote area; we live in a typical Huntington-area holler neighborhood where the houses are close together along the creek and the backyards morph into steep forested hills.

A few days ago, a newborn fawn was nestled only a few hundred yards from our door. Its momma must have been out foraging. I sat two feet away and whispered sweet words to that baby while it looked into my eyes with its own eyes open wide in wonder. A couple nights before that, we watched an incredibly cute baby possum scamper around our backyard. We've seen wild turkeys like never before.

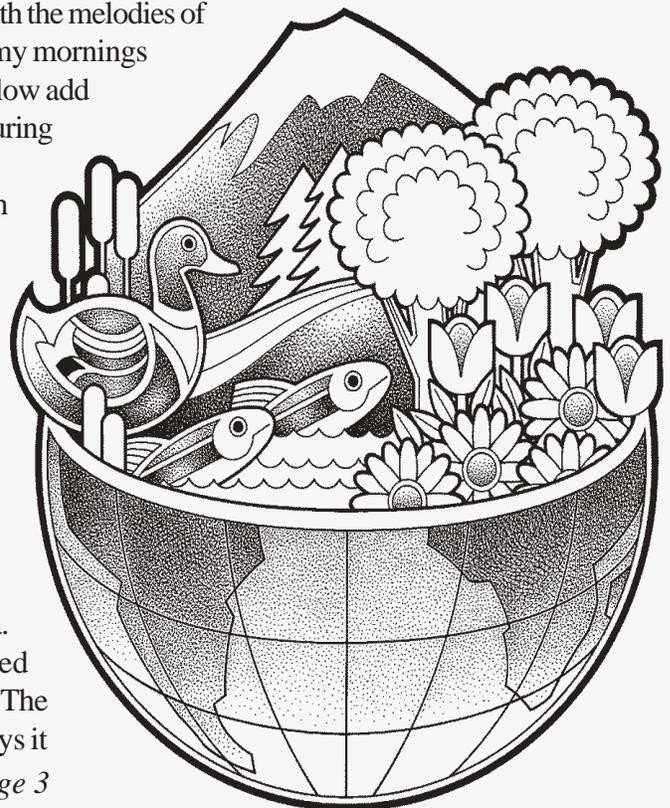
And then there were the foxes. For two weeks I saw red foxes from our dining room window. That was during a time when two OVEC friends told me that they were feeling Laura Forman's presence. Red foxes have been a strong symbol of Laura for some of us – wily, mysterious, beautiful. I haven't seen a fox in some weeks now.

I live in an enchanted world where my soul flows with the melodies of wood thrushes and my spirit dances with fireflies. Where my mornings are perfumed by wild honeysuckle and the mists up the hollow add mystery to my nights. But it's time to be thinking about venturing out again.

I've been sick for much of the past three years, which is why I was able to retreat from the troubled outside world; why I was able to seek and find Love, strength and comfort in the streams forests hills. The lymphoma is gone, now I'm recovering from the chemo. The lung cancer of nearly three years ago is still gone too, and my body has now adjusted well to life without a spleen.

I've missed so many of you – the incredible people I've had the exquisite good fortune to work and laugh with. It's been hard to have to stop seeing you all so regularly. I've watched in awe at your collective accomplishments and marveled at your courage and stamina. How I've missed you – you ragtag bunch of good-hearted and stubborn people who think you can take on King Coal. The amazing thing is, you DO take on King Coal, and some days it

*continued on page 3*



## Massey Water

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supply the bottled water by July 27.

However, the defendants failed to comply with the order and in facsimile correspondence with the residents' legal counsel indicated they had not agreed to provide the water.

As of 9:30 a.m., Friday, July 28, approximately 22 individuals, who were desperate for water, according to their attorney, were turned away from the church because of the defendant's failure to supply water at the designated time and place.

... Construction is currently ongoing to extend waterlines to the affected areas and residents will be getting water from the city of Williamson.

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**Right, Pastor Larry Brown with some of the bottled water Massey Energy *finally* delivered to his church. He and others would spend the next several days handing out the water according to the court order. The pastor was forced to send some people away, even though they were in desperate need of clean drinking water, or face jail for contempt of court.**



## Back to Work

*continued from page 2*

even seems as if he's a little bit less kingly than he used to be.

How easy it would be to stay here in my enchanted world 24/7. I've worried that I'm not strong enough to jump back into the fray. I have to keep reminding myself

that in our collective battles for justice, just as in my immediate surroundings, There's Something Else Going On. We're not alone.

The words from a Catholic Bishops of Appalachia Pastoral Letter – *This Land Is Home to Me* – bring me hope. It reads:

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**Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition**  
P.O. Box 6753, Huntington, WV 25773

phone: (304) 522-0246 fax: (304) 522-4079

e-mail: [ohvec@ohvec.org](mailto:ohvec@ohvec.org) web page: [www.ohvec.org](http://www.ohvec.org)

OVEC is a founding member of Community Shares of West Virginia  
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*Dear sisters and brothers,*

*We urge all of you  
not to stop living,  
to be a part of the rebirth of utopias  
to recover and defend  
the struggling dream  
of Appalachia itself.*

*For it is the weak things of this world  
which seem like folly  
that the Spirit takes up  
and makes its own.*

Being an active part of our struggle again is scary. It's dirty and mean out there, and some people don't like us very much. But when I let the Bishops' words live in my consciousness, I know without a doubt that as long as I continue to pour my heart out to God, and make the time to immerse myself in awe of Creation, I'll be just fine.

Whatever happens. 🍌

However, the entire project is not expected to be completed until 2007... (See related story on page 7.)

### **Lawsuits Muddy Water Project**

by Leigh Ann Wells, *Appalachian News-Express*, July 30, 2006

The residents of Lick Creek, Rawl, Merrimac and Sprigg have waited for years to have the ability to turn on any faucet in their homes and use the water that runs from it. Now, after more than a decade of attending Mingo County Commission meetings and making countless trips to the state capital in Charleston to share their plight with any politician who would listen, the residents of these areas are closer than ever to having potable public water at their disposal.

Miles of blue water lines are being laid along the twists and turns of Route 49. Project Manager Sheila Erwin said some residents are within a month or so of being able to tap into the new water supply.

Erwin said it is her understanding that once the project's water tank is installed, residents can begin connecting to the new source. The entire \$4.3 million project is expected to take approximately a year to complete, Erwin said.

... the project should bring relief to the 245 families who have not had potable water without the use of bottled water and 50,000 gallon water "buffaloes" supplied by the Mingo County Office of Emergency Management Services.

... More than 80 families have joined forces to file a lawsuit against Massey Energy and its Rawl Sales and Processing subsidiary and Rawl Sales, in turn, has filed a defamation suit against Smith and Thompson, attorneys at law, the firm representing the families against the coal operation.

A 20-page complaint filed in Mingo County Circuit Court asks that Rawl Sales be made to provide temporary water replacement, medical monitoring, relief for personal injuries proximately caused by exposure to toxic substances, property damage and abatement of public nuisance.

No excuses - Vote! Deadline to register to vote: Oct. 17. From Oct. 18 - Nov. 4, during business hours, you can vote early, usually at your County Courthouse. Election Day is Nov. 7. Make Your Voice Heard - Vote!

The plaintiffs contend that Rawl Sales, having operated coal mining and processing facilities in and around the Rawl, WV, area for at least 40 years, contaminated the area's watershed through operation of a large slurry impoundment...

The plaintiffs claim that the coal company drilled and operated a series of injection wells into which slurry and other toxic materials were pumped and also conducted blasting operations in connection with strip mining operations in the affected areas, which also allegedly destabilized various strata overlaying the aquifers.

The complaint lists the presence of toxic substances in the water supplies as including, but not being limited to, arsenic, manganese, iron, mercury and selenium.

It states that the concentrations of "known human carcinogens" and toxins in the drilled water supply have rendered the plaintiffs' property virtually worthless; caused cancers, maladies and injuries; makes necessary the need for residents to undergo periodic medical monitoring to screen for the health threats presented by said carcinogens; and that the plaintiffs have all contracted and are suffering from "dread diseases and maladies" including kidney stones, kidney failure, gall stones, kidney cancer, liver cancer, colitis, painful urination and chronic diarrhea, among others.

The complaint alleges that people living in the affected areas need periodic diagnostic medical examinations different from what would be prescribed in the absence of exposure. ... The case is set for a jury trial on Nov. 6. 🍂

### **MTR Trial Reset for October**

You may have seen the headline: "Mining trial canceled while permits reviewed." As Ken Ward reported in a June 15 *Charleston Gazette* article:

"A federal judge on Wednesday canceled a trial scheduled for next week in the latest legal effort to curb mountaintop removal coal mining.

"U.S. District Judge Robert C. Chambers acted on a motion by the federal Army Corps of Engineers ... In a court filing, corps lawyers said the agency decided its original permit approvals "merit further review and reconsideration."

"...In the case, the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition and other groups hope to force the corps to begin conducting detailed studies - called environmental impact statements - every time the agency considers a new mining permit application.

The trial is on again, right now tentatively scheduled for October 3. Check our website, [www.OHVEC.ORG](http://www.OHVEC.ORG) or call the office at (304) 522-0246 to confirm the trial date. 🍂

## Healing Mountains

*continued from page 1*

considered an ‘Act of War’ were the damage perpetrated by a foreign power,” said Heartwood event organizer Andy Mahler. “The Forest Council/Summit opened the door wide on this dirty little secret.”

Conference keynote speaker Doris Haddock, better known as the 90-something Granny D who walked across America to raise awareness of the need for real campaign finance reform, described mountaintop removal: “Great electrical shovels, like invading space monsters, take apart our mountains ... The question for environmental activists is this: Can the planet be saved even if many of the people do not understand the problem or, despite the ready facts, are insistent upon staying the course of self-destruction because it profits them in the short term?”

Granny D, introduced by former Congressman Ken Hechler, urged young people to set goals for their communities, states and nation. Conference attendees – from 19 states and the District of Columbia – spanned four generations, including a large contingent of students and young adults. Many heeded Granny D’s advice as they participated in Mountain Justice Summer 2006. (Read Granny D’s entire speech at [www.truthout.org/docs\\_2006/053006S.shtml](http://www.truthout.org/docs_2006/053006S.shtml).)

Throughout the weekend, participants could choose from a variety of trainings and workshops and panel discussions. Filmmakers and authors presented their documentaries or spoke about their books – and filmed and wrote for unfinished documentaries and books. TruthOut.org carried video from the conference on its popular website.

Mary Hufford of the University of Pennsylvania’s Center for Folklore and Ethnography presented “Holding Up the Mountains, The Narrative Ecology of Southern West Virginia’s Community Forest” to thunderous applause.

She noted, “In this region one cannot talk about places in the mountains without talking about people, or about people without talking about the land...”

“...The names on the land are touchstones to the



**Ken Hechler, left, and the irrepressible Granny D, at the Healing Mountains Conference.**

historic depth of a seasonal round of hunting, gathering, and gardening, which we schematized and placed online at the Tending the Commons website. (A participant in her work noted), ‘People on Coal River – just about every one of them does the same thing. They dig the ramps, pick the greens, they get the molly moochers, they pick the blackberries, they fish, they hunt, they dig ginseng. It’s the traditions of the people. They do it, their kids is gonna do it, their grandkids is gonna do it, and that’s the way it is on Coal River’.”

That’s the way it is – until mountaintop removal destroys the forests, the streams and the culture of the people that rely on them. Healing Mountains attendees will work to ensure that the mad destruction of our future stops!

Healing Mountains was organized and co-hosted by OVEC and Heartwood. Co-sponsors included Coal River Mountain Watch, Kentuckians for the Commonwealth, Sierra Club Central Appalachian Environmental Justice Program, West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, Model Forest and SouthWings. Dozens of groups, businesses and individuals supported the event. 🍄



**Maria Gunnoe shares the horrors of living next door to a mountaintop removal mining site in southern WV.**

# Memorial Service in Forested Cemetery Amidst the Devastation of Mountaintop Removal Mining

To end the Healing Mountains conference on a somber, yet inspirational and action-oriented note, about 100 conference participants carpooled to Kayford Mountain on Memorial Day. For many, it was their first time seeing the extreme-mining devastation that is mountaintop removal.

Kayford Mountain is the ancestral home of OVEC board member Larry Gibson. The Stanley Cemetery atop Kayford provides a vantage point for viewing “reclaimed” and active mountaintop removal sites. Journalists, students and concerned citizens from throughout the United States and beyond have visited the cemetery to witness the destruction first hand – Larry hosted over 700 people on the mountain in 2005.

Another lesser known cemetery on Kayford is the Stover Cemetery. The old mountaintop cemetery, covered with daylilies shaded by maples, sassafras, basswood and many other hardwood tree species, is an oasis surrounded by a scene of desecration – over 12,000 acres of active and “reclaimed” mountaintop removal mines operated by subsidiaries of Arch Coal and Massey Energy.

The cemetery is trapped inside an Arch Coal mountaintop removal operation, and Arch previously has been reluctant to grant Stover kin access. But, it was hard to refuse the crowd that Gibson led to the mine gates on Memorial Day.

Laws require mountaintop removal operations to relocate cemeteries from mining, or to not mine within 100 feet of cemeteries and to give people access to cemeteries remaining on otherwise mined land. Coalfield residents frequently report that they are denied admission to cemeteries; when they are allowed in, they are almost always accompanied by mine guards.

Allen Johnson, co-founder of Christians for the Mountains, led the prayers on the mountaintop. Emotional memorial service participants joined hands and reflected in



**Top photo, the journey up the steep, dusty, rutted road that the coal company grudgingly left to provide access to the cemetery. Bottom photo, the Stover Cemetery is in the small area of trees at the upper left, surrounded by bare ground and scalped mountains.**

silence, then vowed to abolish mountaintop removal mining.

“At the cemetery we paid tribute to those before us who have loved these mountains and to the indomitable power of the human spirit,” Heartwood organizer Andy Mahler said. “We made a vow that together we would forever end the practice known as mountaintop removal coal mining.” 🍌

# After 13 Years, Work Finally Underway on Lick Creek Water Project

by Leigh Ann Wells, *Appalachian News-Express*

WILLIAMSON, W.Va. - Residents of Lick Creek and the surrounding areas of Mingo County will have access to public water within a year now that construction has begun on the area's long-awaited water project.

Mingo County grant writer Sheila Erwin said Wednesday that work began on the approximate \$4.3 million project (June 27)...

The project will serve 245 families and approximately 707 individuals in the Lick Creek, Merrimac, Sprigg and Rawl areas of Mingo County. The residents have been working to get water in their areas for many years, making numerous trips to the state capitol in Charleston, WV, and making their plight known to anyone who might help them. *National Geographic* magazine even featured the residents and their situation in its March 2006 issue. *Vanity Fair* magazine also printed a piece that included information about the situation.



**This sign, erected by community members years ago, was knocked to the ground in July. It has been replaced by a sign about the water line project replacing it.**

## Attorney Responds to Coal Company's 'Frivolous Lawsuit'

by John O'Brien, *The West Virginia Record*, May 4, 2006

Attorney Kevin Thompson has a clear-as-clean-water message for Rawl Sales and Processing coal mining company.

"The biggest opponent of frivolous lawsuits has filed one against me. To hell with them," he said. "If they want to sue me, to hell with them."

Thompson and partner Martin Smith are representing a group of hundreds of citizens suing Rawl Sales

**"OVEC helped in every aspect of getting us water lines here. They helped in the planning, scheduling, making appointments at the capitol to make our needs known to the powers that be. They were instrumental in helping us to get the word out to the public, including the national outcry to make our needs known. We tried for 13 years on our own, but once we partnered with OVEC, people started paying attention. OVEC gave us expertise, help, and contacts to get us clean water here." - Debbie and B.I. Sammons of Lick Creek, Mingo County**

*(Ed. note: Mega-thanks to all the folks in Mingo County who are giving huge kudos to OVEC. The thing is – you are driving OVEC – you/we are OVEC.)*

*(Ed. note: As did the July edition of O, Oprah Winfrey's magazine.)*

Residents allege that an incident involving Massey Energy caused their wells to be contaminated. They have been relying on bottled water to bathe, cook and drink...

*(Ed. note: Some residents were getting free bottled water this spring, after our visits to the statehouse. A local politician, up for re-election, delivered a \$15,000 check for bottled water during a big community meeting on March 2. Strangely, the last delivery of 10 pallets of water came May 8. The primary election was May 9. No more water arrived after that. We are just saying.)*

The residents are currently involved in a civil lawsuit against Massey Energy, seeking damages in connection with the situation ... (See related story on page 4.)

The project is totally grant-funded and was made possible through the Office of Abandoned Mine Lands, Small Cities Block Grant Program, Appalachian Regional Commission, the Infrastructure and Jobs Development Council and the Mingo County Commission. 🌰

and Processing for alleged contamination of the drinking water in Rawl, a town in Mingo County.

Rawl Sales, in turn, has sued Smith and Thompson over a letter Thompson wrote to the Mingo County Commission.

That letter stated: "We have collected a massive amount of evidence that proves beyond any doubt the water in the Forgotten Communities is deadly. Our evidence proves

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## Attorney Responds

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that Rawl Sales and Processing knowingly contaminated the water. Our evidence shows that they did it without permits. And, our evidence shows that the people of Rawl are slowly dying.”

...Thompson argues he was only trying to help the citizens of Rawl. Rawl Sales and Processing argues that he defamed its character and filed a lawsuit last week in

## “Like Walking Onto Another Planet” - MTR Horrors Described

Carol Warren, a member of the Peace and Justice/ Government Concerns Committee of the West Virginia Council of Churches, interviewed several folks who live in the shadow of mountaintop removal coal mining. People told Carol about incidents of intimidation against some outspoken residents.

She transcribed the interviews – which detail the intolerable conditions of living below valley fills, coal sludge impoundments and with well water apparently contaminated by coal slurry – into a booklet titled *Like Walking Onto Another Planet*. The title comes from the words Cynthia Karriker, of Sharples in Logan County, used to describe mountaintop removal. OVEC was one of the sponsors of the booklet; we helped Carol set up the interviews with affected residents. (Carol is working on Volume Two of this booklet. Call OVEC at (304) 522-0246 if you want to tell your story, and we’ll try to set up an interview.)

In May, three Catholic Sisters carried the booklet inside the Massey Energy’s annual stockholders’ meeting in a hotel in Richmond, Va. The Sisters made certain that each Massey board member received a copy.

Coal River Mountain Watch and Mountain Justice Summer protested outside, while the Sisters delivered their message inside.

Below are some excerpts from Jim Foster’s words in *Like Walking Onto Another Planet*. Jim lives in Bob White, Boone County, WV.

“I’m Jim Foster. I’ll soon be 78 years old. I was born at what’s called the old Y and O Coal Camp. I grew up here and I’ve lived here all my life except for a brief time when I was in the United States Marine Corps. (At 17) I went to work at the coal mines and worked about ten

Kanawha Circuit Court.

...In 1994, the Department of Environmental Protection ordered that Massey Energy Company, the owner of Rawl Sales and Processing, provide a temporary water replacement. Massey took the case before the Surface Mine Board, which ruled in favor of the mining company.

Since then, the citizens of Rawl have been intent on making Massey accountable for the condition of their water. 🍂

months. (After two years in the Marines, I) came back and worked in the coal industry then until 1983 when I retired.

“... I’m the kind of person that has always been proud of my heritage. My father was a coal miner. I had three brothers was coal miners... I feel like the work we done underground coal mining, we needed the coal to produce electricity and stuff that our nation needs. But I believe they could mine it better without destroying the environment like they’re doing with mountaintop removal.

“When I was just a young man, when I first saw coal mining through strip mining – which was a disaster to me – I’ll never forget what my dad said. He said, “Son, this is the ruination of our state if they allow this strip mining to go on like that. They can’t do that in these mountains and survive.” Which was true, I knew that. But I’ve said I’m proud my dad didn’t live to see this mountaintop removal because if he had, he would absolutely... it would have broke his heart. If he knew it today, he would turn over in his grave.

“I believe they can mine the coal and do it underground and not do the damage to the environment like they’re doin’. The only reason they’re doin’ it the way they’re doin’ it with mountaintop removal is because they can do it with dynamite and machinery instead of workin’ men. They don’t want to pay men a decent wage to mine the coal – they want to use mountaintop removal.

“... One person can’t do anything, but if everybody would open their eyes to the fact of what’s happenin’ and do somethin’, stand up to ‘em, they might listen to ‘em.

“... Probably after I’m dead and gone they’ll pass on new laws that will outlaw this. I just wish they had done it sooner so that some of the generations that’s comin’ on ahead of me could have a better place to live.”

You can read all of Jim’s interview and the other compelling stories here:

[www.ohvec.org/issues/mountaintop\\_removal/misc/ovec\\_mtrbooklet.pdf](http://www.ohvec.org/issues/mountaintop_removal/misc/ovec_mtrbooklet.pdf) 🍂

## PUBLIC NOTICE

Due to space limitations we are unable to present information on all the entities Massey Energy and its subsidiaries are currently suing.

## Residents Want New School, Different Location

# Local Grandpa Walking to DC for Marsh Fork Kids

by Amelia Pridemore, Beckley Register-Herald, July 26, 2006

Ed Wiley has already taken his concerns about the children at Marsh Fork Elementary to the governor – literally.

Now, he plans to take his campaign to build a new school in the Marsh Fork community straight to the nation's capital – on foot.

Wiley, 49, of Rock Creek, plans to leave Charleston on Aug. 2 and arrive in Washington, D.C., Sept. 12, representing Pennies of Promise, a campaign to raise funds for a new school in the Marsh Fork area, according to Coal River Mountain Watch, a Coal River Valley-based environmental organization.

The campaign is also designed to raise awareness for what the group and some residents believe are problems facing the children at the Sundial school.

“Our local and state leaders have turned a blind eye to this problem and a deaf ear to our concerns,” Wiley said. “I’m walking to Washington, D.C., to get some help.”



**Ed on the road to Washington because, as the smaller flag says, All Talk + No Action = Gov Joe Manchin.**

Wiley's 11-year-old granddaughter recently graduated from the school.

... C R M W members and other concerned citizens contend dust and other chemicals used at Goals are making children at the school sick.

These citizens are now calling for a new school to be constructed in the Marsh Fork area – and for it to house grades kindergarten through 12. This is due to long bus rides older students have faced since Marsh Fork High School closed...

Through the Pennies of Promise web site at [www.penniesofpromise.org](http://www.penniesofpromise.org), Wiley said they have received donations and calls from all over the United States, Europe and Australia. (See related stories pages 10-11) 🍂



**Debbie Jarrell and Ed Wiley at the start of the march in Charleston, WV.**

## TAKE ACTION

Please support the  
Pennies of Promise Campaign,  
[WWW.PENNIESOFPROMISE.ORG](http://WWW.PENNIESOFPROMISE.ORG).

Check out the website for info on ways you can help. One thing you can do is call Gov. Manchin every day Ed is walking. Tell the governor you want him to build a new school for the Marsh Fork kids in their community. Tell him every student in America deserves a safe place to go to school within their community. Let him know you think it's a shame a grandfather has to walk in order to prod the governor to do the right thing.

Call him toll-free: 1-888-438-2731  
or 1-304-558-6000, or e-mail:  
[Governor@WVGov.org](mailto:Governor@WVGov.org).

# Don't Consolidate In Mingo – Build a New School for Marsh Fork Kids

by Donetta Blankenship

I want to express my concerns for the Pennies of Promise campaign and the Marsh Fork Elementary School. We always hear that no kids are left behind and that they are our future, but actions speak louder than words. Because money means more to some people than our kids, we have kids slowly dying due to illnesses, and the coal dust, the chemicals and vapors in the air. Some of our children are even afraid to sleep, fearful of being washed away due to

the sludge “ponds” around their homes and schools.

I am a parent from Mingo County with three children in the school system. I am speaking for myself and I am sure for many other parents. I do not want the schools consolidated here in Mingo. I think that we already have enough troubled kids in our schools and if they combine the schools together, there will be more trouble in the schools. Some kids already are on the buses long enough and the

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## *A Man of the People?*

### *'For the Sake of the Kids,' Blankenship Should Give Back Some of His Millions*

Excerpted from *Beckley Register-Herald* editorial, August 3, 2006

It's been a couple of weeks now since Massey Energy CEO Don Blankenship unveiled his plan to change West Virginia's political landscape and it certainly came as no surprise.

Blankenship has been feeling his oats since he flexed his monetary muscle in 2004 to aid in unseating controversial Supreme Court Justice Warren McGraw, and then again last year when he financed a campaign to derail Gov. Joe Manchin's attempt at a bond issue designed to refinance some of West Virginia's gigantic public pension debts.

Now Blankenship has “targeted” West Virginia Democrats in the upcoming November general election to try to shift the power in Charleston.

All of this is well within Blankenship's right and we won't criticize him for having a seemingly endless bankroll.

However, if Blankenship really wants to change West Virginia history and be a true man of the people, we have a plan for him and it's called “For the Sake of the Kids.”

Spend what you will on backing your slate of candidates this fall, Mr. Blankenship, but reach a little deeper into that financial treasure chest, padded by the millions of dollars you have made for yourself and Massey in West Virginia and give some of it back where it will make a real difference.

The first thing we'd like you to do – “For the Sake of the Kids” – is to build a new, modern elementary school in the Marsh Fork area. Get it away from your silos. Do this and we'll be glad to back an effort to rename the school Don Blankenship Elementary ...

Throughout southern West Virginia there are countless people living in poverty, worrying about how to put another meal on the table or how to get needed medication to survive.

Eliminating the 5 percent food tax is not the answer to this problem. Set up a food distribution system for the needy and while you are at it put up the \$1 million needed to get West Virginia started on a Central Fill Pharmacy program that would provide prescriptions for those without insurance and the financial resources to obtain their medicine ...

So “For the Sake of the Kids,” why not be a real man of the people, give back some of the millions you have earned and cement your legacy as a power broker who really does care about the common folk.

Oh, and by the way, you might want to touch base with your company's shareholders sometime soon – we understand they are concerned about dropping profits.

# *The MOP, OVEC's Contribution to Mountain Justice Summer 2006*

by Jen Jackson

Many of us dream of playing an active role in social change to create a more livable world. In Mingo County, WV, a few of us have taken on the role of community organizers, for the Mingo Organizing Project.

“An organizer must always be trying to work herself out of a job,” I’ve reminded myself a few times when figuring out the next step I should be taking. Our goal has been to meet people who feel their quality of living is suffering because of the coal industry. The effects of coal mining and processing seem invisible to most, but are poisoning folks’ water, rocking their houses off the foundations and quickly diminishing the hope of a livable future for creatures of any sort here. Once we meet potential leaders, we introduce those who have common complaints and interests.

As I drive down windy Route 52, gazing into the rocky and usually forested roadside, I remember the stories I’ve heard: of fish being cut open – appearing normal from the outside, but black as coal on the inside; of a hunted deer found rotting away from the inside out. Animals rotting on

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## *MJS Street Theater - King Coal in Bed with Manchin, Other Govs.*



“King Coal weds the governors of coal-producing states and the law is complicit in this foul union.” As one of its summer activities, Mountain Justice Summer 2006 performed street theatre in Charleston, S.C., at the annual meeting of the National Governor’s Association. Coal River Mountain Watch joined MJS in making sure the governors all understood the full toll from our continued over-reliance on burning coal for electricity.

the inside, walking around with a normal appearance.

“Imagine what our insides look like after drinking this water for so long,” Debbie Murphy said, as I looked at the 13 bottles of pills sitting on her coffee table. “This is my life right here; I can’t live without these pills.” I am constantly surprised and inspired by the strength of Mingo County residents like Debbie.

Another new friend I’ve made here decided that, tomorrow, when she sees her doctor, she’ll ask him to write a letter stating he believes her health problems are a result of drinking the bad water, as he’d told her before.

This summer, most of our organizing has been focused around well water apparently poisoned from slurry injections, a waste product of coal processing. With the injections occurring since 1977, this is a struggle folks here have been fighting since I was a wee one growing up in Virginia. At first I felt wary of being seen as just another outsider environmentalist, but instead I’ve been energized by the contacts and friends I have made. Unity can be established because of the clear difference between what’s happening here, the conditions people are being forced to

*continued on page 23*

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## **Don’t Consolidate**

*continued from page 10*

consolidation would make it worse. I think that there is more control of everything with the schools as they are. My children and I want the \$18 million (slated for school consolidation in Mingo County) to go to Marsh Fork Elementary instead, because them kids are the ones that need a new school – not us!

My son, 14-years-old, and my daughter, 13-years-old, were going to walk all the way to Washington, DC, with Ed Wiley and the Pennies of Promise campaign to raise money and raise awareness for the kids at Marsh Fork Elementary, but my son got too sick to go. Ed started his walk this week. My son is very upset because he wants to see something happen better for all them kids. I think that it is a shame that children like mine care more about them children at Marsh Fork than some of the adults that should be caring for them.

Our officials say that they don’t have enough money for a new school at Marsh Fork in Raleigh County, but they have it to waste on building consolidated schools that we don’t want in Mingo County. It isn’t right, nor fair to all these kids! They’re already punishing the kids at Marsh Fork and now they’re going to punish ours here. 🍌

# I Z N Y - - -

She had never been on a train before in her life. She had rarely been beyond the borders of West Virginia and Kentucky. And now, in May, Donetta Blankenship was on her way to New York City, to speak before the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) as it reviewed its “Energy for Sustainable Development” plans.

Donetta was traveling with ten other coalfield residents, including Patricia Feeney, who, before she joined OVEC’s staff, coordinated this trip to the UN, working with several groups in three states.

The coalfield delegation – six folks from West Virginia, four from Kentucky and one from Tennessee – presented their stories to civil society caucuses at the UN and met with U.S. State Department representatives and officials in ☛

## *Welcome to OVEC’s Newest Organizer*

Please join OVEC in heartily welcoming our newest organizer, Patricia Feeney. Tricia will focus her efforts in Mingo County. Many of you already know and love her, because she was working with us for months prior to joining OVEC on staff. She organized the Appalachian Coalfield Delegation to the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (see above).

Tricia graduated with a degree in biology from Berea College in May of 2005. As a student, she organized locally on campus and nationally with the Student Environmental Action Coalition to raise awareness of mountaintop removal.

In 2005, Tricia won *one of only five* Compton Fellowships awarded to college graduates nationwide. Her Compton grant work focused on supporting grassroots organizing efforts in communities where the drinking water apparently has been contaminated by coal sludge – that’s how her path intersected with OVEC.

If you haven’t met Tricia in person yet, some excerpts from her report for the Compton Fellowship serve as an excellent introduction:

*This year for me was about learning how to live my ideals – these principles that I have been reading about and talking about for the past five years. What does it mean to work for social justice, to build power*



**Appalachian women on the march. Front row left to right, Pam Maggard of KY, Tricia Feeney. Back left to right, Joan Linville, WV, and Marie Cirillo, TN.**



**In front of the UN, from left, Tricia Feeney, Donetta Blankenship, Bo Webb, Maria Gunnoe and Larry Gibson.**

*at the grassroots?*

*I can say that it means constantly checking ourselves and each other...*

*Truly believing in people, in community, means that no one person has the answer, least of all, the outsider, the academic, or the expert. Everyone is needed. We bring people together to share ownership of their collective self-determination.*

*...the real answer to the injustices here and in any community is that we fight.*

*Relentlessly. We fight the status quo that tells us we have no power to change the world around us. We fight the rumors and deep cultural divides that threaten to tear us apart and keep us isolated from one another. We build the base. Every day. Talk to one person, and then another person, and then another.*

*...I am grateful for this role and proud to be a community organizer.*

Welcome Tricia!



# United Nations Sustainability Commission Hit with MTR Realities

the Department of Energy. They put a human face on the real tolls of our nation's apparent energy policy: "Cheap" energy, at any, usually hidden cost.

One of the first things they witnessed at the UN horrified them all. Jonathan Margolis, head of the US State Department delegation to the Commission on Sustainable Development, gave his speaking time to a vice president of Pfizer Pharmaceutical, Inc. It seems our government thinks "sustainable" is about sustaining mega-corporations' bottom line, instead of about clean air to breathe, clean water to drink, and societies where our kids have a chance at a healthy future.

Despite the rude start, overall, the trip was empowering for the participants. The coalfield delegation reminded the CSD, and delegates from all over the world, about human-level concerns. Some other people at the UN told them, "This is what the CSD is for – grassroots participation." Our Appalachian Coalfield Delegation was the first group of impacted residents to participate in a CSD meeting! (The CSD was created to provide an avenue for grassroots participation at the UN. Before its founding, 14 years ago, the UN only recognized government delegates.)

The UN trip received quite a bit of publicity, including a spot on West Virginia Public Broadcasting's *Inside Appalachia* and in the *New York Post*. A documentary filmmaker followed the group from Mingo County to New York City.

The delegation has commented that witnessing personal growth in one another was the best part of the trip. Bo Webb marveled on Donetta – shy Donetta, who was nervous the first time she spoke before state-level politicians. Here she was now, standing up in a room full of people at the United Nations, saying, "Excuse me, but I have to tell my story." She was unapologetic and firm. She held up a jar of her water – black. She held up a picture of her family and explained how she believed the sludge had made them sick. She inspired all on the trip.

Ripples from the trip have inspired other communities to demand they be heard at all levels of governance.

The group built alliances with communities in other regions of the United States and the world who are fighting the same cycle of exploitation and corporate takeover of their resources and lives – pushing them off their land, stealing their water.

The delegation left the UN with solidarity and ideas for strategy. They left revitalized and affirmed in the righteousness of the struggle we all share. They've already had a follow-up meeting, and they have started planning for the CSD next year, where they are preparing with other communities to lobby the corporate and government delegations more directly.

To each of you who donated to make this trip possible, thanks so much. Please consider supporting this effort again next year. 🌰



**Larry Gibson, front and center in the middle of Times Square.**  
*all UN photos by Bo Webb*

# THANKS!

OVEC would like to offer its gratitude to the staff of the Cedar Lakes Conference Center for all the ways they accommodated our many requests and needs for Healing Mountains, the joint Summit for the Mountains / Heartwood Forest Council. We highly recommend their services to any organization planning a conference. What a wonderful group of people with whom to work. Thanks Cedar Lakes staff!

An extra special thanks to a teen supporter from NYC who helped fund the Mingo Organizing Project. She wrote: *I heard about your program and problem through my father. I have realized that not all of America is the way it is in movies and books. There are many things wrong in our country, and not having clean water is one that needs to be fixed. Now. Having your homes destroyed also needs to be fixed! That is why I'm donating 2,500 dollars (from my bat mitzvah) to your cause. I want to show my support.*

## A Huge Heap of Healed-up Mountain Thanks to:

*The numerous co-sponsors of Healing Mountains and the groups that worked on making the conference a huge success.*

Doris "Granny D" Haddock  
Dr. Ken Hechler  
Bob Hamburg and Spring Creek Tofu  
Ruth and Mel Meyer  
Maryanne Graham  
Tonya Adkins  
Andy Mahler  
Christina Wulf  
Devin Ceartas  
Steve Chaplin  
Kevin Pentz  
Colleen Unroe  
Vernon Haltom  
Bill Price  
Bill McCabe  
Elisa Young  
Connie Lewis  
Dave Cooper  
Cindy Rank  
Ernie Reed  
Monty Fowler

Taylor Barnhill,  
Lauren McGrath  
Greg Carroll  
Chuck Wyrstok  
Caroline Douglas  
Teri Blanton  
Mary Hufford  
Barnes Nugent  
Mary Anne Hitt  
Lennie Kohm  
Ed Wiley  
Jeff Combs  
Larry Bush  
Pete Ramey  
Anne League  
Donnetta Blankenship and family  
Jack Spadaro  
John Blair  
Judy Bonds  
Julie Archer  
Maria Gunnoe  
Bob Gates  
Penny Loeb  
Janice Nease  
Sarah Haltom

Betsy Taylor  
John Hennen  
Chris Irwin  
Joe Lovett  
Brian Wright  
Jeff Stant  
Aimee Erickson  
Don Gasper  
Mari-Lynn Evans  
Allen Johnson  
Bob Sloan  
Catherine Pancake  
Jeff Barrie  
Winter Ross  
Robert Tohe  
Denny Haldeman  
Bob Fener  
Mark Donham  
Kristie Hanson  
Alan Twedde  
Christine Risch  
Abe Mwaura  
Ann Pancake  
Greg Buck  
Jill Morrison  
The Voodoo Katz

Kathryn Stone for her reliable support.  
Regina Hendrix, Kenny King for their relentless work on Blair Mountain.  
Larry Gibson and his persistent efforts to stop mountaintop removal.  
David Duke for his help at the OVEC office.  
Eric Fout for his loyal, steady support of OVEC.  
Dan Kash for his dedication to OVEC.  
Michael Morrison for his leadership.

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# We care, We Count, WE *VOTE!*

## Are You Ready for Some ... Coal Ball? FOC (says) Yes!

by Janet Keating

Just when you think you've heard it all regarding the coal industry's domination of state politics – along comes the Coal Bowl.

For the next seven years, Big Coal will promote itself to a captive audience within Marshall University's or West Virginia University's football stadiums – dishing out some rah-rah, feel-good noise to tens of thousands of West Virginians.

The two state-owned universities' arrangement with the Friends of Coal (FOC) will even allow FOCer emblems on the players' helmets. In return, the universities will split \$140,000 per year – a paltry sum compared to the billions of dollars of profits that the industry extracted from the state. West Virginia sure does sell itself cheaply.

Polluters have long used the technique of “buying” public and institutional support as an effective way of silencing detractors or at least keeping criticism to a minimum (the Massey Energy picnics, for example). Undoubtedly, “public relations” is cheaper than complying with environmental laws and regulations.

And how did this cozy relationship between the universities and the coal industry come about? Was it put out to bid? Like underground mining – the deal was apparently done “in the dark” – though it's a safe bet Gov. Manchin may have known.

No other industry or organization was granted an opportunity to bid for the rights. Is that the way open government and democracy is supposed to work? Should public institutions, supported by tax-payer dollars, be dominated so thoroughly by a single industry? This latest deal underscores how coal “pays the piper” and then calls the tune.

Sadly, Rich Rodriguez, the current WVU football coach, is ready to follow in the questionable footsteps of former coach Don Nehlen, another FOCer spokesman (who thought the state needed to chuck all those gol'darn environmental regulations placed on the coal industry).

Rodriguez was quoted: “Coal is a part of everything good in the Mountain State, so it's natural that the Friends of Coal would jump in and become a part of this game. I know all football fans in the state appreciate their generous support.”

“A part of everything good?” Like 400,000-acres of stripped and decapitated mountains? “Good” like nearly 2,000 miles of streams smothered beneath coal mining waste? “Good” like drinking water wells apparently so polluted by underground injection of toxic coal sludge that residents have to pressure the state to get potable water? Or “good” like sending your little child to a school adjacent to a giant coal processing plant, a coal silo, and a 2.8 billion gallon toxic coal waste lake topped off with a mountaintop removal site?

Coal Association president Bill Raney said he hoped that the football games would “put the spotlight on the proud working people in the coal industry.” Indeed, the aim of coal's latest public relations ploy may be to deflect criticism, buy goodwill, and cover a host of bad publicity.

OVEC exposes the ways in which the coal industry wields its power and influence. See our reports at [www.wvoter-owned.org](http://www.wvoter-owned.org). One thing they show is that **since 1996, coal and its supporters have contributed more than \$4 million to political campaigns** of state candidates running for various offices.

Let's face it. Our political system is broken. The officials we elect to represent us instead spend their time chasing big campaign checks and using their votes to do political favors for big-money special interests and lobbyists like Big Coal.

It's time to do something about it – and we can.

By enacting a system of public financing for elections we can cut the ties between politicians and the big-money special interests and lobbyists who currently fund their campaigns.

It's called Clean Elections. **It's already working in seven states and two cities across the country.**

Under Clean Elections, qualified candidates who agree to forgo all private contributions and follow strict spending limits receive public financing for their campaigns, freeing them from having to chase campaign donations from big money special interests and lobbyists. Clean Elections is a constitutional, creative alternative.

We are working to establish a Clean Elections system here in West Virginia. Isn't it about time that the public interest comes before Big Coal? Now that would be something to really cheer about! 🍌

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☆☆ DEMOCRACY WORKS! ☆☆

*Follow the Tombstones - Coal Mining Contributions in the States*

The nation's coal mining industry, facing scrutiny for the high number of fatal accidents so far this year (16 in WV alone), has long sought the ear of the officials at the state level. The industry has given at least \$8.57 million to

political candidates and party committees over a six-year period, concentrating its contributions in many of the states rich in coal.

Learn more at [WWW.FOLLOWTHEMONEY.ORG](http://WWW.FOLLOWTHEMONEY.ORG).



**T H A N K S ! - cont'd.**

Winnie Fox for being a great role model and hosting so many OVEC volunteers and friends.  
Jeff and Victoria Bosley, Thomas Kincaid, John Taylor, LaShonda Bare, and Elinore Taylor for their service to OVEC's board of directors.  
The Bank Street Group, especially Sal and Ann.  
The Miller / Caudill family for always being willing to show the world what is up.  
Ronda Harper.  
Brent Rowley, Cabell Hodges, Jennifer Jackson, Willie Dodson, Monica Brown and Tyler Pannell for their Mingo Organizing Project work.  
Mel Tyree for thinking of the future.  
Jack Frazier for all the clippings and to-do notes.  
The great folks in Bandytown, Marnie and Twilight areas for the hard work you are all doing to preserve your home towns.

Caroline and Taylor at SouthWings for tirelessly and cheerfully helping us to get airborne.

Jim and Jean Foster

Leon and Lucille Miller

Peter Britton

Joan Linville

Anita and Stanley Miller

Steve Fesenmaier

John Schwam

Burt Lauderdale

Sister JoeEllen Sbrissa

Antrim Caskey

Beth Raps

Sister Ruth Kuhn

CB of Blair

Hillary Hosta

Sister Diana Oleskevich

Chrystal Gunnoe

Maureen O'Connell

Mark Schmerling and Rima

Donetta Blankenship

Si Galperin

Versie Sims

Amy and Josh Runyon

Steve White

Gerald Winegrad

Christina Blankenship

Susan Sobkoviak

Jeannie Kirkhope

Vickie Wolf

Kathy Stoltz

Terry and Wilma Steele

Mimi Pickering

Mayor Richie Robb

Greg Wood

Ralph Oppenheimer and the

Carol Warren

Dwight Siemiaczko

Cabell County Library

Dan Kurland

Lynda Ann Ewen

Sue Price

Sarah Kidder

John Welbourn

Stephanie McSpirit

Helaine Rodkin

Ben Stout

RB

Mary Ellen Cassidy

Chuck Wyrstok

Alisa Nance

Mary Wildfire

Stephen Perry

Jim Kotcon

Angela Quackenbush

Rick Carrico

Walter and Carol Young

Adam Brown

Carm and Ernie Brown

Heath Harris

Rev. Larry and Brenda Brown

Wess Harris

The BI Sammons family

Todd Garland and Carol

Dustin Steele

Warren

Don Garvin

Sylvester Dustbusters

Mary Ellen O'Farrell

Giles Ashford

**Congratulations**

**Congrats to Jack Spadaro** for winning the 2006 Hugh Hefner First Amendment Award

**Congrats to Elisa Young** for winning a 2006 Women of Peace Award from the Womens Peacepower Foundation.

**Congrats to OVEC organizer Abe Mwaura** for his Generation Next Award, from the *State Journal*, for up and coming young professionals.

We care, We Count, WE VOTE!

## Editorial: Stop Complaining, Go to the Polls and Vote!

*Huntington Herald-Dispatch*  
editorial, July 31, 2006

Problem: West Virginians have collectively become a group of whiners. Stop the whining already. Stop the passivity and become active. After all, it is your hard-earned tax dollars not at work.

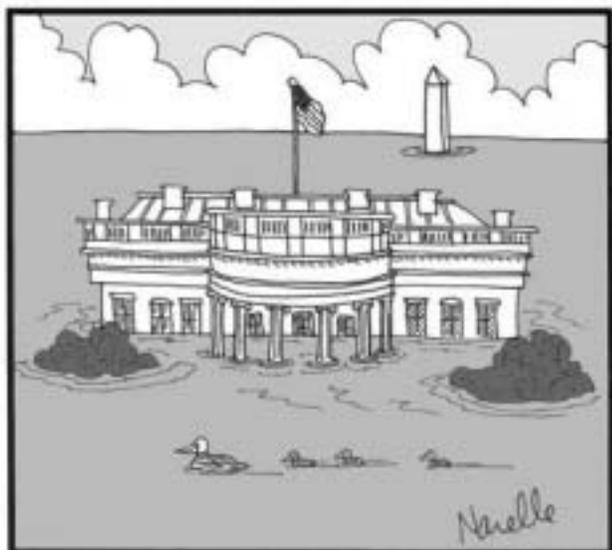
Vote every opportunity you have. According to statistics, voter turnout ranges anywhere from 3 percent to 15 percent statewide. If you don't vote, you will not (and should not) have a voice.

Citizens worldwide, especially in the Third World and developing countries, struggle, fight for and many times die for the right to vote.

### *Was the 2004 Election Stolen? Our Voting System is Not Secure*

by Robert F. Kennedy Jr., excerpted from *Rolling Stone*, July 1, 2006

The issue of what happened in 2004 is not an academic one. For the second election in a row, the president of the United States was selected not by the uncontested



The President's indifference to global warming was starting to show.

***“We, the public, can hope and pray for change, and we can delude ourselves into thinking that a simple change in party control will fix our problems. But the simple truth is that until we go to the ballot box and punish representatives from both parties who are part of this consensus, we will continue to live not in a democracy – but in a system of legalized bribery that makes our problems worse.”***

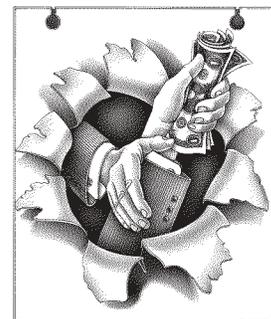
**- David Siroti**

In recent Iraqi elections, for example, nearly 100 percent of eligible voters turned out, in a war zone, yet.

Solution: Get off your “ain't able,” indifferent, complacent, whining, “your vote cancels my vote” butts and vote in every upcoming election event. It is your constitutional right; use it. The pen is still mightier than the sword.

The low, low voter turnout rate says something – even if you feel fed up by all the corruption in politics. If enough of your fed-up friends and neighbors come out to vote with you, your votes will make a HUGE difference. Next time, VOTE! 🍌

will of the people but under a cloud of dirty tricks. Given the scope of the GOP machinations, we simply cannot be certain that the right man now occupies the Oval Office – which means, in effect, that we have been deprived of our faith in democracy itself.



***Stealing elections takes LOTS of cash***

American history is littered with vote fraud – but rather than learning from our shameful past and cleaning up the system, we have allowed the problem to grow even worse.

If the last two elections have taught us anything, it is this: The single greatest threat to our democracy is the insecurity of our voting system.

If people lose faith that their votes are accurately and faithfully recorded, they will abandon the ballot box. Nothing less is at stake here than the entire idea of a government by the people.

Voting, as Thomas Paine said, “is the right upon which all other rights depend.” Unless we ensure that right, everything else we hold dear is in jeopardy. 🍌

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## Blankenship Has Too Much Influence

From a July 26, 2006, letter to the editor in the *Charleston Daily Mail*.

The portrayal of Don Blankenship as a “third party” in West Virginia politics goes to show just how messed up political campaigning has become.

When any individual can determine the outcome of an election just by throwing money at it, clearly the system is long overdue for reform.

This is the farthest thing possible from what our legacy of “popular elections” was meant to be.

“Popular elections” means exactly that. It means that whoever has the greatest support of the population wins the election.

Anything that takes away from that concept is a threat to democracy.

Allowing unlimited amounts of money from a single person to be directed toward a particular candidate or issue is just plain wrong. It works against the principle of one person, one vote, and against the principle of the popular election.

We must figure out how to resolve this problem.

Mike Harman

St. Albans 🍌



## *Awards Presented at OVEC's Annual Meeting on, Naturally, Earth Day*

OVEC members gathered on Earth Day for our annual meeting, held at St. Cloud Commons in Huntington. Folks feasted on a fine Italian dinner prepared by OVEC board chair Eric Fout. Singer/songwriters Jen Osha (an OVEC member) and Tonya Adkins (on staff) entertained the group.

After the awards were handed out (see below), everyone joined in planting a Red Oak tree on the park grounds.

We chose the Red Oak because it is native to the area, vigorous and tenacious. As we planted the tree, we spoke of our vigorous, tenacious resolve to improve social and environmental conditions in our communities.

### *2006 OVEC Award Winners*

- + Outstanding Blair Mountain Battler – **Kenny King.**
- + Perpetual Hostest with the Mostest – **Kathryn Stone.**
- + Perpetual Hostest with the Mostest – **Nanette Nelson.**
- + Outstanding Volunteer in Defense of Mother Earth – **Michael Morrison.**
- + Outstanding Volunteer in Defense of Mother Earth – **Elisa Young.**
- + Outstanding Road Warriors – **Joan Linville, Pauline Canterbury and Mary Miller.**
- + Outstanding Community Leadership in Kanawha and Fayette Counties – **Dwight Siemiaczko.**
- + Outstanding Community Leadership in Mingo County – **Carmelita and Ernie Brown.**



**Whitney Eskew adds a shovelful of dirt to the newly-planted tree as, from left, Janet Keating, OVEC board member Thomas Kincaid and Carol Warren look on.**

*photo by Todd Garland*

- + Mountainkeeper Extraordinaire – **Larry Gibson.**
- + Raging Granny Award – **Winnie Fox.**
- + Mingo County Community Watchdogs – **Walter and Carol Young.**
- + Bill Moyers Defender of Democracy Award – **Julie Archer.**
- + Laura Forman Passion for Justice Award – **Regina Hendrix.** 🍌

# stopmountaintopremoval.org

Starting Sept. 1, these ads – featuring photos taken by Giles Ashord and OVEC’s Vivian Stockman – will appear in four Washington, DC-area Metro Stations, as well as on one quarter of the Metro trains.

Their debut will coincide with the launch of a new website, [WWW.STOPMOUNTAINREMOVAL.ORG](http://WWW.STOPMOUNTAINREMOVAL.ORG).

Earthjustice, OVEC, West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, Coal River Mountain Watch and the Appalachian Center for the Economy and the Environment have been collaborating on this site, which will be a way for us to engage people across the nation in helping us end mountaintop removal. 🌰

*Greetings from*  
**APPALACHIA**

Mountaintop removal mining destroys mountains and much more.  
Flooding caused by mining destroyed more than 500 West Virginia homes in 2001 alone.

STOP MOUNTAINTOPREMOVAL.ORG

*Hello from*  
**WEST VIRGINIA!**

Mountaintop removal mining destroys mountains and much more.  
Lost so far: Schools, family homesteads, local economies, jobs and hope.

STOP MOUNTAINTOPREMOVAL.ORG

*Greetings from the*  
**BEAUTIFUL**  
**APPALACHIAN MOUNTAINS**

Mountaintop removal mining destroys mountains and much more.  
Lost so far: 1.4 million acres of forests that were home to both people and wildlife.

STOP MOUNTAINTOPREMOVAL.ORG

*Wish you were here!*

**APPALACHIAN MOUNTAINS**

Mountaintop removal mining destroys mountains and much more.  
Lost so far: Over 1,200 miles of rivers and streams have been buried or poisoned.

STOP MOUNTAINTOPREMOVAL.ORG

DISPATCHES

From Austin Hall, part of Ed Wiley’s Pennies of Promise Walk support team, on Day 4:

*“Support on the road continues. It is strange to be out of the Coal River Valley and have this issue gain 100 percent support from all the people we encounter. From state troopers to coal miners’ wives, moving the school is everyone’s first instinct. There is a completely different air in this region of West Virginia, devoid of the tumultuous vibe felt in Coal River. Jordan remarked yesterday that even the trees seemed happier.”* 🌰

## Don Blankenship Responds to *Vanity Fair* Article

In May, *Vanity Fair* ran “The Rape of Appalachia,” an article by Michael Shnayerson that beams in on Massey Energy’s assault on our homeland. In July, the magazine published Massey CEO’s Don Blankenship’s response:

**Massey Energy Co. chief Don Blankenship says he’ll do “whatever it takes,” that is, spend millions of dollars to target 36 Democratic legislators up for re-election in November. He spent about \$6 million on previous political campaigns, most to unseat Supreme Court Justice Warren McGraw and elect unknown Brent Benjamin in 2004.**

“Michael Shnayerson should consider the damage his untruths can cause. People can only be helped by truth. AIDS, starvation, war, and lack of clean water are just some of the real issues facing the world today. Wasting billions of dollars on a climate-change theory won’t help people in their lifetime (even if it were true). It only serves to deprive them of resources that could make their lives better.

“Shnayerson’s emotional attachment to the climate issue prevents him from seeing the truth. The current world suffering demands realism. Inexpensive energy and electrification of homes around the world will help far more people than scaring them with non-scientific theories.

“Massey Energy has endured decades of criticism and untruths in order to provide jobs for those who want to work in Appalachia. The coal industry provides low-cost electricity to 150 million Americans. The mining and burning of coal are done continually with less pollution and even

fewer accidents. Additionally, coal does not lead to war. The same cannot be said for oil. Today, war over oil - along with the issues of poverty, cholera, and malaria - among others - outranks global climate change. Worry about global climate change theory after people have the necessities of life, including peace.”

**Eleanor Gould wrote this**

**in response (excerpted):**

“First of all, thank you Michael Shnayerson and *Vanity Fair* for bringing attention to the environmental damage being done in my home state of West Virginia.

“Don Blankenship’s response to the article is typical big coal propaganda. He says the mining and production of coal doesn’t lead to war – but there is an endless war being waged in these hills between the coal companies (and the politicians who enable them) and the fine people of West Virginia who have found themselves in close proximity to the coal seams of Appalachia.

“... Imagine how you might feel if while living on land that had been in your family for hundreds of years a giant coal company decides to blow away a mountaintop and fill a valley nearby. Blasts, flooding, poisoned water, air and damage are unchecked. Then, when/if you decide you have to leave, your land has been rendered worthless.” 🍄

### ***Open Letter to Don Nehlen’s Publisher***

Today, I have received your letter and other materials promoting your new book by Don Nehlen called *Tales from the West Virginia Sideline*.



Please inform Mr. Nehlen (the former WVU football coach) that I absolutely will not be carrying his book because of his support of the environmentally devastating coal mining method called mountaintop removal.

Please also inform Mr. Nehlen that I will be contacting other independent booksellers in West Virginia, urging them to take a stand, and join me in boycotting Mr. Nehlen’s book.

Sincerely,  
Mike Sublette, owner

Frog Creek Books, Charleston, WV 🍄

**GET ACTION ALERTS!**  
**Stay Informed by E-mail:** Join OVEC’s Action Alert! e-mail list by sending an e-mail with “join list” in the subject line to [vivian@ohvec.org](mailto:vivian@ohvec.org). This is not a discussion list, so you won’t be swamped with e-mails.  
**Stay Informed by Phone:** If you don’t have or don’t like e-mail, call the OVEC office at (304) 522-0246 and ask to be put on our Call List. We’ll need your name and phone number. Don’t worry - we will only call to let you know about major events or actions.  
**Stay Informed by WWW:** Visit [WWW.OHVEC.ORG](http://WWW.OHVEC.ORG) frequently for news and action updates. Check out our extensive background information in the Issues section. Look for your friends in the People in Action section.

## Ex-Maid Alleges Blankenship Bullied Her Out of Job

by Lawrence Messina, excerpted from May 3, 2006, article (AP) CHARLESTON, W. Va. – Don Blankenship’s former personal maid alleges the Massey Energy Co. chief forced her to quit last year by piling on work duties while bullying her verbally and sometimes physically.

Deborah K. May has appealed to Kanawha Circuit Court for unemployment benefits after they were denied by the review board for the state Bureau of Employment Programs.

May said she was hired to be the maid for Massey’s chief executive officer, president and chairman through Matecreek Security Inc. in May 2001. Besides doing laundry, shopping and other personal chores for Blankenship, May was to maintain and clean a three-story home that Massey provides for Blankenship in Sprigg, Mingo County.

May said her duties were gradually expanded to include a two-cabin complex, a four-story hilltop mansion and a customized tour bus complete with a living quarters and kitchen. Hired at \$8.56 an hour, May alleges she repeatedly requested more pay for the additional workload but received only a 30-cent raise in 2002.

May also alleges a series of tirades by Blankenship, 55. He once tore apart a closet after she forgot to leave out a hanger for his jacket. He had a secretary demand an explanation in writing after he found one of his freezers

### Massey CEO’s Pay Vastly Exceeds Salaries of Peers, Reports Find

by Paul J. Nyden, Charleston Gazette, May 11, 2006

Don Blankenship, chief executive officer of Massey Energy, receives higher annual pay than most of his colleagues, according to a new report issued on Wednesday by PROXY Governance Inc ...

“The average three-year compensation paid to the [Massey] CEO is **419 percent above the median paid to CEOs at peer companies**, while the average three-year compensation paid to the other named executives is in line with the median paid to executives at peer companies.”

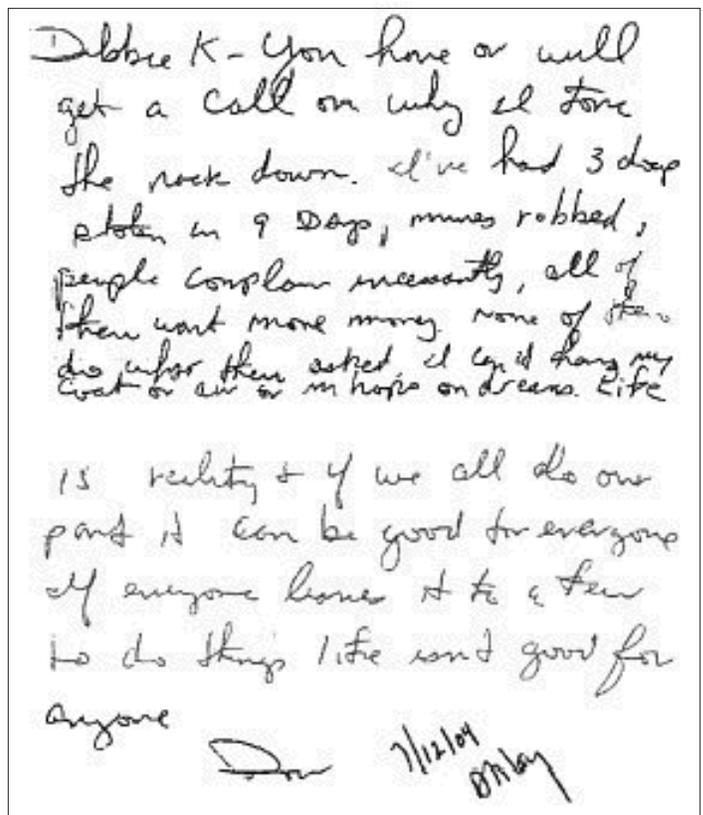
... In a recent Securities and Exchange Commission filing, Third Point stated, “For the year ended Dec. 31, 2005, **Massey’s CEO was paid \$33.7 million**, more than four times the average compensation of \$8.1 million for the competitors’ CEOs.” 🍌

stocked with the wrong kind of ice cream, May alleges.

May further alleges that Blankenship once grabbed her by the arm while she was stocking the bus and ordered her to leave. Another time, he grabbed her by the wrist and threw McDonald’s food around the bus after receiving the wrong breakfast biscuit order ...

Shareholders unhappy with Massey’s recent finances have begun scrutinizing Blankenship’s executive perks. During a conference call with shareholders last month, Blankenship was asked about the Sprigg home, built in 1904 and valued at \$305,000, which Massey gave him as a gift in 1998.

Richmond, Va.-based Massey is the fourth-largest coal company in the U.S. by revenue and has mines in West Virginia, Kentucky and Virginia.



*“Life is reality & if we all do our part it can be good for everyone If everyone leaves it to a few to do things life isn't good for anyone*

*Don”*

(Note to Deborah May from Don Blankenship, dated July 12, 2004, from WV Bureau for Employment Programs.) 🍌



# CALENDAR

**Reminder:** The third Thursday of every month, the Mountain Community Preservation Coalition meets at the Van Community Center in Van, Boone County, WV. For directions or more info, call (304) 245-8481.

**Sept. 11-14:** Stop Mountaintop Removal Lobby Week in Washington, DC. Check [www.ohvec.org](http://www.ohvec.org) or call the office.

**Sept. 12:** Ed Wiley and the Pennies of Promise walk due to arrive in Washington, DC. Check our website or call the office at (304) 522-0246 for details.

**Sept. 15 - 17:** Third annual Culturefest at Appalachian South Folklife Center in Pipestem, Summers County, WV. See [WWW.CULTUREFESTWV.COM](http://WWW.CULTUREFESTWV.COM).

**Sept. 17:** Regional Roundtable Discussion on Sustainable Livelihoods in Appalachia. Highlander Center in New Market, TN. Sponsored by the Appalachian Coalition for Just and Sustainable Communities.

**Sept. 28:** Clean Elections Meeting, ACT Foundation, 600 Leon Sullivan Way, across from the Capitol Street Market in Charleston. See [WWW.WVOTER-OWNED.ORG](http://WWW.WVOTER-OWNED.ORG).

**Oct. 3:** Tentative trial date for OVEC's federal case against the Army Corps of Engineers (see story on page 5), in Judge Chambers' Court, Huntington.

**Oct. 13-15:** 11th annual Heartwood Reunion at the Lazy Black Bear, a one-of-a-kind rustic farm and lodge surrounded by the Hoosier National Forest near Paoli, Indiana. We welcome old-timers and newcomers alike. Enjoy an engaging and spirited program, great food, and lively entertainment, all in a beautiful forest setting. Program will include a Mountaintop Removal Update and Action Plan. For more info: [andy@blueriver.net](mailto:andy@blueriver.net).

**Oct. 17:** *Deadline to register to vote.*

**Oct. 18 - Nov. 4:** Early voting, usually at County Courthouses.

**Oct. 21-22:** Free symposium - Writing about Mountain Culture, Mountain Top Removal and the Environment, at Marshall University. Six authors will hold writing workshops, give readings and engage in roundtable



discussions. Saturday afternoon's featured speaker is Denise Giardina. Registration required. E-mail Chris Green at [green@marshall.edu](mailto:green@marshall.edu). Part of the Birke Symposium, [WWW.MARSHALL.EDU/COFA/BIRKE/](http://WWW.MARSHALL.EDU/COFA/BIRKE/).

**Nov. 7 - Election Day. VOTE! VOTE! VOTE!**

**Nov. 11:** *Bob Ross Don't Live Here No More.* An art show to benefit OVEC. Call the office for more details.

**Fall:** Stayed tuned for information on 2006 Treehuggers' Ball! 🍂

## ***No Rain Check for the Man with Endless Blank Checks for Politicians***

No blank check for Don BlankCheck – er, Blankenship. Michael Morrison couldn't let him come to town without a proper reception.

When Michael heard the Massey CEO was coming to speak at a Republican "Spirit of Lincoln Day Dinner" fund-raiser on April 29 in Wayne County, he called the OVEC office and said, "Let's get some people out there." Mike ditched his plans for that Saturday, took the lead, and scouted the venue for safe places for protestors to stand. He made the calls, organized carpooling and got the turnout – all in just two days!

Mike exemplified the Spirit of Protest and helped show a Spirit of Solidarity with those who have been oppressed by Don Blankenship's Massey Energy Spirit of Illegal Activities. 🍂

## **Blair Draft EIS Under Review**

Thanks so much to all the OVEC members who attended the hearing and/or made comments regarding a draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) on the proposed Spruce No. 1 Mine near Blair, WV.

Big thanks to Gerald Winegrad at the American Bird Conservancy, who spearheaded a drive to get 60 different organizations – representing millions of Americans – to sign on to scientifically-backed comments on the DEIS. Conclusion: The DEIS on this proposed mountaintop removal site, which would destroy 2,278 acres of mostly mature deciduous forests (for starters), is highly flawed. 🍂

# Inspirational, Educational Gifts – for Others and Even Yourself

*The Character of the Mountains*, a collection of poems by Dr. Delilah O’Haynes is now available from [WWW.APPALACHIANAUTHORSGUILD.COM](http://WWW.APPALACHIANAUTHORSGUILD.COM). A portion of the proceeds from the sale of this book go to OVEC.

*When Miners March* – now you can order the book and/or the audio drama. Order the book from [WWW.WHENMINERSMARCH.COM](http://WWW.WHENMINERSMARCH.COM). Order the audio drama, with 16 songs, from [WWW.MOUNTAINWHISPERS.COM](http://WWW.MOUNTAINWHISPERS.COM).

*Moving Mountains*, a music CD. A portion of the proceeds from the sale of the CD go to assorted groups, including OVEC. Available at [WWW.FALLINGMOUNTAIN.COM](http://WWW.FALLINGMOUNTAIN.COM).

*Mountain Mourning*, a 76-minute DVD. Produced by B. J. Gudmundsson and Doug Chadwick for Christians for the Mountains, the film alerts Christians and their churches to the ruinous coal extraction practices in the coalfields and challenges them to summon moral courage and effective advocacy that will end mountaintop removal

and bring healing and justice to the land and its inhabitants. The DVD also includes two short films, featuring OVEC’s Maria Gunnoe and Larry Gibson, which will make us think twice every time we turn on our lights. Order from [WWW.PATCHWORKFILMS.COM](http://WWW.PATCHWORKFILMS.COM).

Jeff Goodell’s book, *Big Coal*, features OVEC members speaking on mountaintop removal and an OVEC photo. It gives a good overview on all the problems, and the political stranglehold Big Coal has on southern WV.

For solutions to those energy problems, see *Kilowatt Ours*. This film examines mountaintop removal (with interviews of Larry Gibson and Coal River Mountain Watch’s Judy Bonds), poisonous nuclear power and air pollution. It then gives you tools to start making mountain-saving, planet-saving changes in your own home. See [WWW.KILOWATTOURS.ORG](http://WWW.KILOWATTOURS.ORG). 🍌

## Mingo Organizing Project

*continued from page 11*

live with, and what people really deserve.

I see people daily who feel powerless – yet when asked what can be done, what do you think is the next step, what would you like to see in your community, they come up with impressive and achievable visions.

There is the Sludge Safety Project, organizing between Coal River Mountain Watch, Mingo residents, and OVEC. We are calling for alternatives to be used in place of dangerous coal sludge dams and underground coal slurry injections.

In late July, a Mingo County judge ruled that Massey must pay for bottled water to be delivered weekly to certain households, until pipelines bring city water into each house. The lawsuit and the city water are major victories the people, united and organized, created for themselves. The victory will build stronger community organizing.

There is still work to be done. What about other hollers that are about to be in similar circumstances? Slurry injections and impoundments continue to contaminate the area. What happens when enough of the tributaries feeding the Tug Fork, where Williamson draws its water, are poisoned? Will the city water coming through the pipelines be too poisoned to drink? What about the people who are being blasted off of their foundations because of mountaintop removal mining? And those being flooded out? What about the unwanted school consolidation?

I don’t see easy solutions, but I do see empowered people multiplying and uniting. 🍌

**Make a DIFFERENCE!**  
**Join a WINNING TEAM!**  
**Get ACTIVE with OVEC!**

**Cut this coupon out today and mail to:**  
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\_\_\_\_\_ New member or renewal (Dues \$15-\$30 yearly, pay what you can)  
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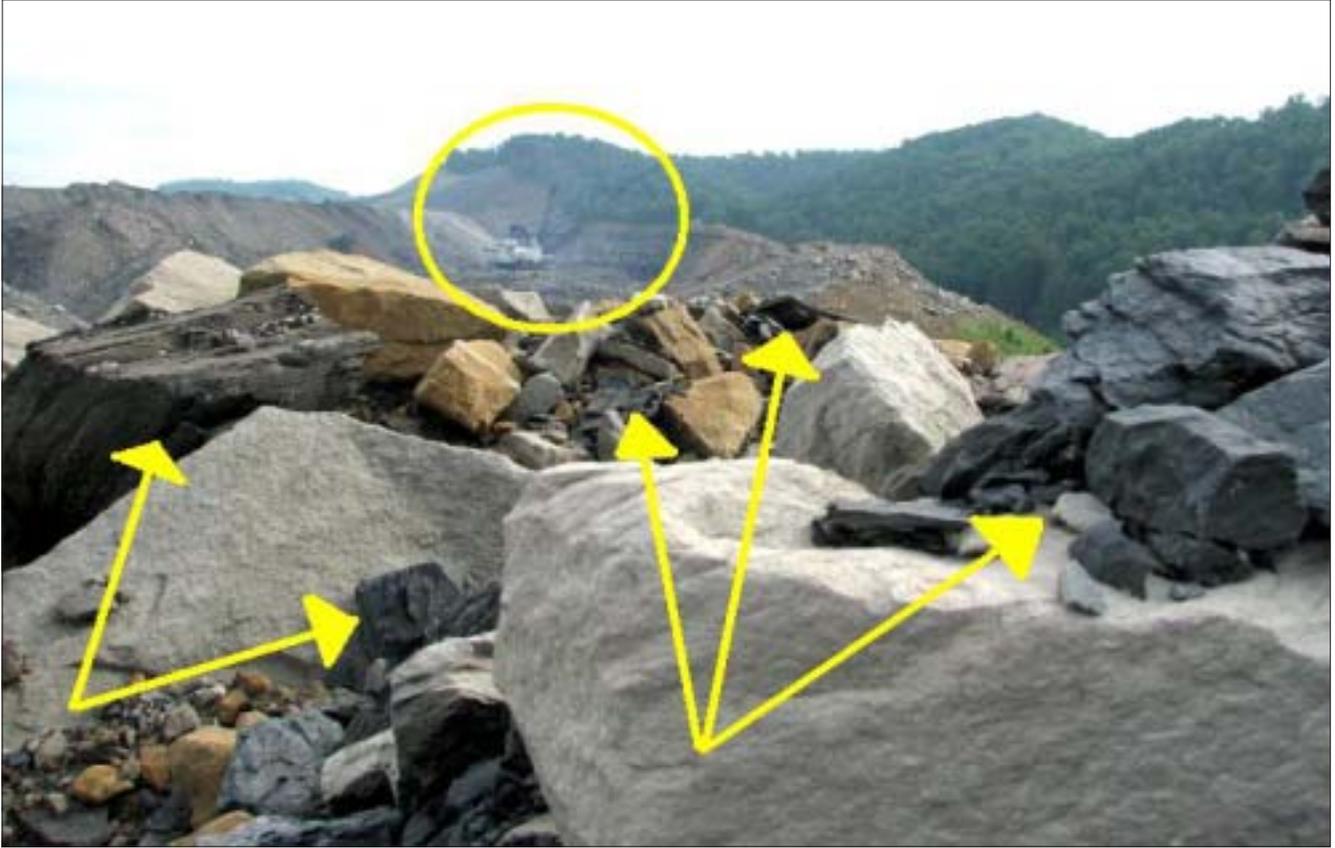
**For more information call**  
**(304) 522-0246 or go to**  
**[www.ohvec.org](http://www.ohvec.org)**



**Remember – All donations to OVEC are tax deductible!**

***Hey King Coal! You missed some! Right ... over ... there ...*** ,

King Coal likes to endlessly repeat how “efficient” mountaintop removal mining and massive draglines are at getting every last scrap of coal possible. Well, this dragline (circled) seems to have missed quite a bit (arrows), and since we always like to be helpful, we’ll send them a copy of this photo so they can meet their production quotas.



**Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition  
P O Box 6753  
Huntington WV 25773-6753**

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