

" E " -NOTES
THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
OHIO VALLEY
ENVIRONMENTAL COALITION
PO BOX 970 PROCTORVILLE OH 45669
SEPTEMBER 1994

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LARGEST PULP MILL IN NORTH AMERICA BEING PUSHED

Throughout West Virginia's history, governors and their appointed bureaucrats have willfully conspired with out-of-state corporations to rob Appalachia of its wealth. A few people have gotten rich off of the coal and timber, but the fact that the region remains poor is not an accident.

It's happening again with the proposal to build a pulp mill in Apple Grove. The region's forests are recovering from their destruction 80 years ago in the last timber boom. After the forests here were exhausted, the timber industry moved west--now they're trying to cut down the last old-growth trees in Washington and Oregon, and looking east. Although our forests are not what they once were, they could once again become a source of economic development. Will the forests be used to create sustainable industries that add value to the hard wood resource, such as furniture manufacturing? Or will the trees once again be cut down as fast as possible, creating temporary jobs--a boom followed by the bust made inevitable when resources are controlled by the greedy? (continued on page 4)

EPA ADMINISTRATOR MEETS WITH OVEC MEMBERS IN KENOVA

Never before had a US EPA Regional Administrator come to the Tri-State to meet with folks and listen to their pollution concerns. But this is just what happened in June when John Hankinson and nine other federal and state environmental regulators met with folks at Kenova City Hall. Not only was the attendance good with over 75 OVEC members and friends, but a great number of folks brought to light their concerns regarding pollution related health problems, government enforcement of Ashland Oil pollution violations, and more.

OVEC sent a follow-up letter about the meeting to Hankinson, regulators in attendance, and other concerned government officials.

OVEC thanks Mr. Hankinson for his appearance here and his show of genuine concern. Let's hope that stronger government intervention with Ashland Oil's numerous violations and "malfunctions" will be forthcoming.

Thank you to everyone who made phone calls, handed out pamphlets and brought people to the meeting: James Jones, Pat Davis, Lawyer Ratliff, Ann Kiser, John Little, Pearl and Frank Von derHeide, Carol Ramey and Diana Bowen. Thanks to Donna Kiser for video taping and everyone who attended the meeting. A great job one and all!

WHEN FINISHED WITH THIS, DON'T THROW IT AWAY--PASS IT ON TO A FRIEND!

OVEC MEMBERS TAKE OVER CABELL/WAYNE L.E.P.C. MEETING

The turnout at the August Cabell/Wayne Local Emergency Planning Committee meeting was probably quite a surprise to Committee Chairman Harold Hicks of Ashland Chemical. This meeting at the Wayne County courthouse was supposed to satisfy OVEC's many requests to have the meeting in Kenova, WV. Harold Hicks has been vocal about his opposition, but cannot give an adequate reason for not holding the meetings in Kenova. No doubt his affiliation with Ashland Oil causes him to fear a mass gathering of concerned Kenova folks.

Because of OVEC members participation at this last meeting in Wayne, there will be a C/W LEPC informational meeting at the Kenova City Hall in September. We hope to have in attendance the mayor of Kenova and the town council to voice our demands for a real emergency plan for Ashland Oil accidents. Many Kenova residents already suffer from respiratory damage. OVEC members are planning a petition drive on this issue.

OVEC staff will notify members when the date and time is set for this informational meeting. Your presence at this meeting is crucial!

Thank you to all who attended the August meeting. Your efforts paid off. Good work!

For more info, call Laura--(304)-453-4507

THEY'RE STILL TRYING TO STRIPMINE OUR NATIONAL FOREST

Strip-mining in our national forest? It's planned near Ironton, OH, contrary to the intent of the federal Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (SMCRA).

Loose judicial interpretations and the "accidental" issuance of illegal permits by the Office of Surface Mining (OSM) in 1988 have given over 1,800 acres of public land to the Bellville Mining Company. Even Congress agrees that strip mining should be banned on public lands. So, for heavens sake, let's do it!

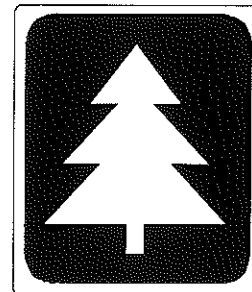
OSM is currently revamping SMCRA. The original intent of the law was to define "valid existing rights" as the right to mine public lands only if all permits were in place prior to passage of the law in 1977. We need to cement this definition.

There will be a meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 8 at the Lawrence County Public Library in Ironton. All are welcome.

What you can do:

1. Attend the meeting on Sept. 8 in Ironton.
2. Write a letter urging no strip mining on public lands to:

Bill Vincent
Office of Regulatory Affairs
Department of the Interior
Mail Stop 6214 MIB
1849 C St. N.W.
Washington DC 20240



For more information, call Jody Schaub: 614-698-2346

HUNTINGTON STILL FLOUNDERING ON WASTE ISSUES

Huntington, WV still has no plan on recycling and trash disposal. When the state ordered the Deitz Hollow Landfill closed, the city council, none-the-less, argued for years about what to do and even tried suing the state to keep the unlined, leaking dump open. Now, the council is still unable to decide how to pay for trash disposal--at a recent meeting, rejected the idea of charging by the bag for garbage pick-up. Although person after person spoke in favor of charging people based on how much trash they produce to encourage reduction, the council voted against the idea!

The city has still not gotten around to developing a sensible recycling program. Many communities around the country have had curbside recycling for years. We've heard it often--newcomers to the Huntington area are shocked to find that the city makes so little effort to recycle municipal waste. Many residents seem to be under the mistaken impression that a sensible curbside recycling program is inevitable--but it isn't. Unless citizens get involved and pressure the council, all Huntington is likely to get is a few bins around town that most people will not use.

ALICE IN WONDERLAND & INCINERATION

Burning the city's garbage has once again been proposed for Huntington--including bringing in some hazardous waste to boot. This, despite the fact that the state has passed a law banning the undesirable practice of waste incineration in West Virginia! Undaunted, some city council members have been taken in by the claims of a company that hopes to sell the city an incinerator. The company, whose name is Energy Incineration Systems, claims that their incinerator isn't really an incinerator after all, and may be legal. The attorney general's office, playing safe with politics, has to think about it for awhile before deciding if banning incinerators means you can have incinerators.

"The time has come," the Walrus said, to talk of many things:
"Of shoes--and ships--and sealing wax--of cabbages and kings--
And why the sea is boiling hot--and whether pigs have wings."
(And whether an incinerator is an incinerator?)

WHY WEST VIRGINIA BANNED WASTE INCINERATION

Incinerators have turned out to be among the most expensive methods for dealing with trash and also the least effective. Organized citizen pressure on the legislature resulted on a state ban. Even the Wall Street Journal has advised against the idea (on economic grounds alone). Much of the trash (metals, etc.) doesn't burn at all and some (plastics) only burns partially producing a witch's brew of toxic air pollutants and toxic ash. The Reagan administration arranged for municipal incinerator ash to be exempted from hazardous waste laws, although this is now changing--disposing of the ash will be increasingly expensive in the future. Most of what does burn (paper & yard waste) is stuff that should be recycled or composted! In other words, if you have an incinerator, you're not going to want to recycle paper or compost organic wastes--instead you'll turn them into air pollution and toxic ash.

DO YOU WANT THE CITY TO START CURBSIDE RECYCLING?

1. Write the mayor and city council:
City Hall
Huntington WV 25701

2. Write a letter to the editor:
Herald Dispatch
PO Box 2017
Huntington WV 25720

PULP MILL (continued from page 1)

The mill, as planned, would be the largest pulp mill in North America and would use trees at fantastic rate--over 70 square miles of clear cutting per year. The Caperton administration shows no inclination toward regulating logging, so the effects are not hard to predict-- the steep hillsides of the region will become less productive for future generations as the topsoil washes into streams and rivers, damaging the river ecology and hurting fishing and tourism as well as adding to the expenses involved in dredging to keep channels open and purifying the water for municipal drinking water. Productive topsoil will be turned into water pollution. The company also plans to use the outdated chlorine based bleaching method that produces dioxin. Some countries are phasing out this technology since better ones are available. A few people would make lots of money, a few will get temporary jobs, but in the long run most people will grow poorer as we export our valuable forest resources. Is this economic development?

The Affiliated Constructions Trades Union is challenging the permit, and OVEC has found a lawyer perhaps willing to appeal also. But the system is controlled by Caperton appointees. What is desperately needed is a complete study of the effects of this project. In many other states such a study--An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is required by law. Only then can the merits of the proposal be judged. OVEC and other groups will be trying to get the US EPA to produce an EIS before the project can be approved.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

1. Write to Senator Byrd and to the Regional EPA administrator to demand that the EPA conduct a complete study of the project's effects and to produce an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Senator Robert C. Byrd
311 Hart Senate Office Bldg.
Washington DC 20510
Leave a message by calling 202-224-1435

Peter Kostmayer
US EPA Region 3
841 Chestnut St.
Philadelphia PA 19107

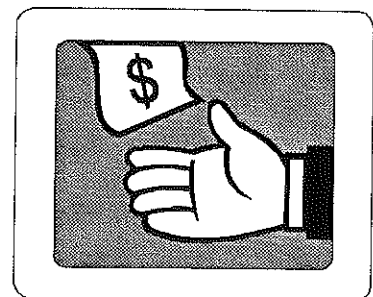
2. Write letters to the editor pointing out this mill, as planned, would hurt the region more than help it.

Herald Dispatch
PO Box 2017
Huntington WV 25720

Charleston Gazette
1001 Virginia Ave. E.
Charleston WV 25301

WV DEP RUBBERSTAMPS PERMITS, AVOIDS CITIZEN INPUT

One would think that the citizens of the region would be invited to take part in a discussion of the merits of building the largest pulp mill in North America. But the mis-named WV Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), headed by Caperton appointees, has actively tried to keep the public in the dark about the project. The company has "donated" at least \$25,000 to Caperton. (continued on page 7).



Printed on totally chlorine free paper, naturally.

Would a pulp mill be a good idea? Compare two kinds of projects:

THE MILL THEY WANT

- A mill that relies on clear cutting of valuable hardwoods.
- A logging industry that cuts where it wants, how it wants.
- A mill that brings in outside workers and dominates its work force.
- A mill that uses out of date chlorine based bleaching technology.
- A mill whose owners refuse to meet with citizens or answer questions.

A MILL THAT MAKES SENSE

- A mill that uses recycling of paper and wood waste as the primary source.
- A sustainable logging industry that is carefully regulated to maintain the forests.
- A mill that employs local workers with union protections.
- A mill that uses state of the art technology to produce a minimum of water pollution.
- A mill whose owners have respect for the region, its citizens, and its environment.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE PULP MILL HEARING

West Virginia-American Water Company--"The proposed pulp mill site is just upstream from the Huntington water intakes and has the potential to degrade source water quality. The permit applications do not provide sufficient data to judge the impact. . ." "The cutting of timber, through higher sediment loading, would adversely impact water treatment plants throughout the state." "Discharge limits for all known carcinogenic compounds suspected to be in the discharge stream should be included and set at zero." "Water plant operating costs may increase. . .these additional costs would be borne by our customers."

US Fish and Wildlife Service--"Sources of existing contamination should be identified and corrective action taken before additional dioxin sources are considered." "The issuance of the NPDES permits for operation of the Apple Grove Pulp and Paper mill has the potential to adversely impact fish and wildlife resources."

Buckeye Forest Council--"Issuance of such a permit would be a direct violation of the federal Clean Water Act. The discharge allowed by this permit would cause significant pollution which would have a significant impact on the aquatic, environmental, recreational and agricultural use of the Ohio River."

The Izaak Walton League of America (a group of sportsmen and conservationists)--"The Izaak Walton League favors selective cutting of timber, not clear cutting, which is the process used by paper mills. The Pulp industry wants to clear cut and use small growth trees. We have the finest hardwoods in the world when trees grow to maturity. Thus we get top dollar for our timber for furniture, veneer and finished products. It would be foolish to build a new plant using chlorine compounds when it will be phased out by 2002 elsewhere."

Jim Kotcon (Sierra club)--"The permits must be amended. As currently written, substantial violations of water quality and other violations of federal environmental statues would likely result. The assumed zero background level (for dioxin in the river) and the thus proposed discharge limits are scientifically unacceptable. An assumption of zero background could only indicate deliberate fraud and /or political interference with the permitting process."

On the other hand, those who spoke in favor of the project as proposed, seemed to have taken little time to consider the overall impact. For example:

Jean Dean (mayor of Huntington)--"It is my hope that everything possible will be done to expedite the issuance of the necessary permits. . ."

Thanks to OVEC members and friends who testified (or tried to) here's some of what they said:

Lewis Baker--"Eli, you do too know there's dioxin in the river."

Bobbie Holzer--"I'm really concerned about the cumulative effect of dioxin"

Kim Baker--"Runoff from irresponsible timbering will hurt the environment and cost the people. There is no opportunity whatsoever for people to comment on non-point source pollution."

Cheleena McCoy--"We don't have anybody to protect us because the DEP is with them!"

Karen Simpkins--"Mason and Cabell Counties have the highest ratings on the number of deaths specifically caused by cancers. Cabell county is down-river from various sources of pollution which routinely or by accident contaminate the river--and my source of water."

Sheila Plumley--"I have studied the Alabama Plant and its total problems and do not wish to eliminate our values, quality and way of life my family and neighbors have."

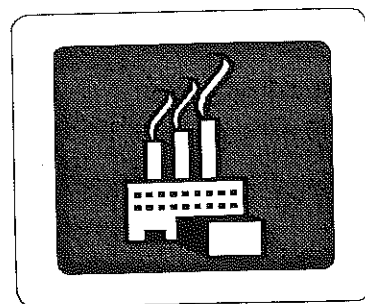
Bill Beard--"The waters and atmosphere used as a dumping ground for wastes represent common goods owned by everyone, but in the instance of waste disposal, exploited by a few to their economic advantage and to the detriment of the many. The proposed mill is not state of the art as demonstrated by other operations in the United States, Canada, and Europe. Let us strive, collectively, to have the wisdom to avoid pending environmental problems."

Charles Spurlock--"Planned development ushers in the "good life" for entire communities. On the other hand, economic growth is for profits alone that may or may not bring benefits to the community."

Janet Fletcher--"Timbering regulations are very weak. Enforcement is non-existent. What will happen to our valuable hardwood forest? Will the diverse forests be converted into pine plantations?"



Earlier, while the project was allegedly "on hold", DEP officials had promised to let OVEC know if it became active. But they didn't. OVEC found out that the company had begun to apply for permits when an OVEC member, driving by the site, noticed a team of archeologists doing the required survey of the area. Then DEP officials promised they'd let us know as soon as the permit drafts were ready. Again, they broke their promise. No one would have known till the last second that the permits were ready except for the fact that OVEC found out the DEP had reserved a Pt. Pleasant school for the hearing.



A public hearing on the permits is supposed to allow the public to comment on the documents. But at the official hearing on the pulp mill permits, the DEP showed it was determined to have a minimum of public participation, especially early in the evening, while the press was still present. The first hour was taken up with a presentation by the Pulp Mill company. After the company show was over, the public could still not speak for the record at first, but only ask questions. Most of the questions were not answered however, as the DEP officials demonstrated that they would rather not talk about the effects the mill would have on the environment and on the health of the people they're paid to protect. During the question and answer session, Lewis Baker pointed out that contrary to the DEP's claim that there is no dioxin in the river that they know of, the agency has accumulated sufficient evidence that the chemical is already at levels sufficient to cause problems in some rivers that feed into the Ohio. Several studies, including one by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, found levels of organochlorines in channel catfish high enough to prompt the DNR to warn people about the health effects of eating certain Ohio River fish.

Finally when the press had started to filter out, and some of those hoping to speak had given up and left, the actual hearing began. Despite having signed up to speak, OVEC members **Bill Ragette**, and **Lewis Baker** (a former DEP employee who knows how the agency works) were not allowed to speak for the record! As the representative of one concerned industry put it: It is unfortunate that the State of WV has treated such an important opportunity with such little regard for competence and professionalism.

A permit as controversial and complex as this should take quite a while to approve or deny, but it didn't take long for the DEP to rubberstamp it. In fact, only 9 days after we were told it would take a while and that they didn't know when action would be taken, the DEP pulled a Friday afternoon announcement--after hours so few people would be available to comment to the press. A state agency is supposed to respond to comments received before taking any action, but the DEP approved the permits before responding to the comments. Some "hearing"! Its clear the DEP wasn't interested in hearing anything at all. Norm Steenstra of the WV Environmental Council has seen the best and the worst of government behavior over the years. He called the action "despicable".

For more info, call Janet--304-525-6984

WHEN FINISHED WITH THIS, DON'T THROW IT AWAY--PASS IT ON TO A FRIEND!

"WEB OF LIFE" DAY CAMP

Let's hear it for the slugs & the bugs & the slippy slimy critters
And the little ones wherever they're found
For they're teeny weeny tiny and they're gritty gratty grimey
And they make the world go round, round
They make the world go round

Those were the sounds from the campfire circle above the "lodge" at Camp Mad Anthony Wayne each morning during a week in August.

Learning comes in many forms and often is most effective when disguised as fun. "Web of Life" day camp, organized and directed by OVEC Project Coordinator Janet Fletcher and co-sponsored by OVEC and others, was attended by 43 youngsters, age 7-13. The day camp included primarily hands-on activities and up-close encounters with spiders, hawks, owls, turtles and a lynx!

For the third consecutive year, "Web of Life" camp was led by an enthusiastic, dedicated staff, junior counselors, and volunteers. OVEC members who taught sessions were Mike Forman (Nature Observation), Rick Bady (Earth, Air, Water, and Fire), and Kim Baker (Eco-Drama). "King Pappy" (AKA Eric Fout) appeared again to lead the campers in rousing choruses of "Slugs and Bugs" as he played the mandolin, assisted by "Prince Kappy" (Rick Bady) on the guitar.

Nature camp would not have been possible without the energetic and seemingly tireless junior counselors Elizabeth Arthur, Aaron Bady, Brooke Baker, Donna Hicks, and Zack Steenstra. They were especially valuable during the one night camp-out session and camp fire.

Other staff members included Norm Steenstra III (camping), Julia Lucas (photography), Julie Raines (art), and Sharon Steenstra (assistant director).

Also a special thanks to those volunteers who presented special programs during the week: Danny Clark (beekeeping), Dr. James Arnold (spiders), and Ron and Wendy Perrone of the Three Rivers Raptor Center (owls and hawks). They make the world go round!

OVEC LINKS UP WITH PIEDMONT PEACE PROJECT (PPP)

OVEC has begun a new partnership with a unique community empowerment organization. Over the years, PPP in North Carolina has developed training to help empower working class people and to link economically advantaged communities with lower income communities facing serious problems.

In June, Kenova OVEC member Pat Davis and OVEC Organizer Laura Forman traveled to Ann Arbor, Michigan. PPP Organizers there set up house parties to familiarize Michigan folks with the pollution problems facing Kenova. As Pat said: "The people in Ann Arbor really care about us. They want to help." And help they did! To date folks in Michigan have raised over \$1,000.00 to help Kenova's fight for environmental justice.

On August 13th, Piedmont Peace Project's organizers met with OVEC members and staff in Kenova. Everyone agreed that an emergency plan was needed in the event of serious refinery emissions or a major industrial accident. Folks discussed the steps needed to accomplish this.

Our next newsletter will carry a detailed story. For more info, call Laura--304-453-4507

A SPECIAL ECO-THANKS TO:

Olin Blain, Ursula Beard, Elaine Rouse, Roberta Holzer and Donnie Gillespie and many others for efforts on the pulp mill hearing.

And to Reverend John Whitaker for facilitating the July Kenova OVEC meeting. He brought hope, encouragement, and peace to those in attendance.

And to those who attended the recent Huntington city council meeting to express support for a volume-based garbage fee. Trying to get the city to use methods that encourage waste reduction were: Jeff Bosley, Fred Fout, Eric Fout, Julie Fletcher and Carol Wolff. OVEC is especially proud of 11 year old Julie Fletcher who read her thoughtful remarks with poise and conviction.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Sept. 4: "Assault on the Male" (Discovery Channel) TV program describing the harmful effects of chlorine-based compounds (such as from the proposed pulp mill) on the reproductive system of men.

Sept 8, 6:30 PM: Meeting on strip mining in the Wayne National Forest at the Lawrence County Public Library in Ironton, OH .

Sept. 9-11: West Virginia Environmental Council annual meeting at Woodlands Institute near Spruce Knob. Focus is on Environmental Education. call 304-346-5891

Upcoming meetings in Kenova and on the pulp mill will be announced later. Notices will be sent to those who have expressed interest on these specific issues. Let us know if you want to be added either of these lists.

Cut and mail to: OVEC, PO Box 970 Proctorville OH 45669

____ New member or renewal (suggested dues: \$25, low income: \$5)

____ Donation enclosed (Donations are tax deductible)

____ Keep me especially informed on this issue: _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone # _____

For more info call: Laura (304-453-4507), Janet (304-525-6984), or Dianne (614-886-5796)
(Please leave a message if we're not home)

OVEC NEWSLETTER FOR SEPTEMBER 1994

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"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world;
indeed it's the only thing that ever has."

-- Margaret Mead

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