



# Resources and Issues

Friends of the Mountains is a coalition of environmental and community groups working to end mountaintop removal.

## **Background information on mountaintop removal**

Society of Environmental Journalists member **Ken Ward, Jr.**, of the *Charleston Gazette* maintains archives of his stories in *Mining the Mountains*, online at [www.wvgazette.com/section/Series/Mining+the+Mountains](http://www.wvgazette.com/section/Series/Mining+the+Mountains).

Links to news about coal-related issues are posted *daily* to the **Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition's** website at [www.ohvec.org/ovec\\_news.html](http://www.ohvec.org/ovec_news.html). You'll also find extensive information about mountaintop removal and the people who are working to end this type of coal mining throughout the website. Please note the information on the devastating social and cultural effects of mountaintop removal coal mining.

Recent polls conducted in West Virginia show that about two thirds of the state's residents surveyed oppose mountaintop removal coal mining. You'll find complete information on the polling at [www.appalachian-center.org/](http://www.appalachian-center.org/), the website of **The Appalachian Center for the Economy and the Environment** (see reverse). The Center posts news stories related to its issues and provides background information on these issues. **Other FOM member groups\*** include information on their websites.

## **Recommended Reading: Coal--Historical and Contemporary Perspectives**

*Night Comes to the Cumberlands* by Harry Caudill; *Crimes Against Nature* by Robert Kennedy Jr

*Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers: Industrialization of the Southern Appalachian* by Ronald Eller

*West Virginia and the Captains of Industry* by John Alexander Williams

*Appalachia: A History* and *West Virginia: A History* by John Alexander Williams

*Coal: A Human History* by Barbara Freese

*The Appalachians: America's First and Last Frontier*, companions to the PBS series of the same name, edited by Mari-Lynn Evans, Robert Santelli, and Holly George-Warren

*Coal Waste Impoundments: Risks, Responses, and Alternatives* presented by the National Academy of Engineering of the National Academies Publishing

*Everything in its Path: Destruction of Community in the Buffalo Creek Flood* by Kai Erikson

*To Save the Land and People: A History of Opposition to Surface Coal Mining in Appalachia* by Chad Montrie

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## **Figures from the Draft Environmental Impact Statement on Mountaintop Removal**

*Despite the massive environmental harm documented (the DEIS fails to document social and cultural impacts), the DEIS does not propose a single specific action to limit that harm. See [www.epa.gov/region3/mtntop/eis.htm](http://www.epa.gov/region3/mtntop/eis.htm).*

724 stream-miles buried and 1200 stream-miles impacted. (Ben Stout argues that these figures are much higher; stream maps are inaccurate.)

Without additional restrictions, a total of 2,200 square miles of Appalachian forests (6.8 percent) would be eliminated by 2012 by large-scale mining operations.

Without additional environmental restrictions, mountaintop removal mining will destroy an additional 600 square miles of land and 1000 miles of streams in the next decade.

At least 350 square miles of mountain land has already been destroyed.

The total of past, present and estimated future losses of the most biologically diverse temperate hardwood forests on earth is 1.4 million acres, 11.5 percent of the study area.

The southern Appalachians have been identified as one of the world's hot spots in the United States for rarity and richness. Here we find the highest regional concentration of aquatic biodiversity in the nation. Mountaintop-removal-related impacts which result in decreases in genetic diversity will likely have a disproportionately large impact on the total aquatic genetic diversity of the nation.

## **Mountaintop Removal Bill in Congress**

The **Clean Water Protection Act** (HR 738), introduced by Reps. Frank Pallone (D-NJ) and Christopher Shays (R-CT), currently has 64 co-sponsors in the house. The Clean Water Protection Act would nullify changes to the Clean Water Act that the Bush administration made on behalf of the coal industry, one of its main campaign contributors. HR 738 would shore up the original intent of the Clean Water Act by prohibiting the dumping of former mountaintops into most waterways. Nationally, this bill would prohibit industries from dumping all manner of waste into streams and waterways.

## **Bush Administration Changes, Proposals and "Clarifications" Affecting Mountaintop Removal**

Buffer zone rule

Definition of "fill"

Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Proposal by the Office of Surface Mining to weaken oversight of state mining programs

Promotion of the myth of "clean" coal

Current bonding issues and pre-law (SMCRA, 1977) abandoned mine land funding. The above mentioned *Charleston Gazette* series and websites have information on these topics.

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## **The Other Side: Some of the “foes” of FOM**

The WV Coal Association: [www.wvcoal.com/](http://www.wvcoal.com/)

The Ky. Coal Association: [www.kentuckycoal.org/](http://www.kentuckycoal.org/)

The National Mining Association: [www.nma.org/](http://www.nma.org/)

Some of the larger coal companies and operators include: Arch Coal, Addington Brothers' companies, Massey Energy and Don Blankenship, Peabody Coal, TECO, Buck Harless

Most of the so-called regulatory agencies and some of their appointed office-holders including Jeffrey Jarrett, director of the Office of Surface Mining and J. Steven Griles, deputy secretary of the Department of the Interior. See FOM's contacts sheet for a listing of many of the agencies involved.

## **Polling on Mountaintop Removal**

In June, 2004, the DC polling firm Lake-Snell-Perry and Associates conducted a telephone survey of 500 likely voters in West Virginia.

*Q: As you may know, coal companies in West Virginia mine coal from mountains through a process called mountaintop removal mining. Do you favor or oppose mountaintop removal mining or are you undecided?*

*A: Nearly twice as many West Virginians oppose MTR as support it: 56% oppose, 29% favor, and 15% are undecided.*

Of the 56% opposed, 39% strongly oppose the practice. Of the 29% who favor the practice, just 12% strongly favor it. People are angry about mountaintop removal! Opposition to mountaintop removal is broad and deep, across all demographic groups and every region of the state. No one group defined by age, gender, location, union membership, etc. supported rather than opposed mountaintop removal. Rarely do pollsters find such unanimity of opposition in their polling.

West Virginia voters are overwhelmingly concerned about the studies in the draft environmental impact statement that details the impacts of mountaintop removal on the state's environment. 79% are concerned by the finding that, if new limits are not placed on mountaintop removal, the estimated forested area that will be stripped by the end of the decade is 1.4 million acres, over 2,200 square miles.

There is also significant evidence that as West Virginians learn more about mountaintop removal, they are even more likely to oppose it. 60% of those who had heard something about the mining technique say what they heard made them less favorable toward it. 60% also don't want politicians to make mountaintop removal easier to permit.

**\*FOM Member Groups:** Appalachian Center for the Economy and the Environment; Appalachian Voices; Coal River Mountain Watch; Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition; Sierra Club Environmental Justice Program (Appalachian States); Stanley Heirs Foundation; West Virginia Citizen Action Group; West Virginia Environmental Council; West Virginia Highlands Conservancy; West Virginia Interfaith Global Climate Change Campaign; West Virginia Rivers Coalition. Also working to end mountaintop removal are groups in Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia, such as Kentuckians for the Commonwealth, the Clinch Coalition and Save Our Cumberland Mountains.