

Maria Gunnoe
Community Organizer
PO BOX 494
Van WV
25206
304-245-8478
wvhollowgirl@aol.com

My name is Maria Gunnoe I am a native West Virginian. I and my family before me have lived the history that the coal industry has left in its path. We settled this area before coal was discovered. I am a Daughter of the American Revolution. Throughout all the “boom and bust”, manmade catastrophes, and massive deaths and sicknesses some members of my family tell their generational part of coal’s history in Southern Appalachia. This history is one of the many lessons of life we learned at a young age growing up in these communities. We learned from our hard schooled fathers and grandfathers that coal is mean and one thing you simply could not do was to trust this industry. No matter what the subject the conversation always come down to the coal company’s bottom line. All my life every political move has always been directed at propping up the coal industry in WV. The fear that we as Appalachians have experienced throughout time of being without jobs is nothing compared to the fear of living without healthy, clean water in our streams and homes. We as families for many generations have survived some of the most historically horrible poverty in this country by sustaining our lives from these mountains and streams. The biodiversity in S WV is what created the culture of the real mountaineers that we grew up being. Now rule changes such as Stream Buffer Zone threaten to permanently annihilate all that supports the real mountaineer’s culture. The coal industry obviously wants to bury and pollute all of our water and all of who we are for temporary jobs. Jobs in surface mining are dependent on blowing up the next mountain and burying the next stream. When are we going to say enough is enough?

The Buffer Zone Rule from the Regan era was historically was intended as a good thing for people who lived in the valleys where these intermittent and perennial streams flow. Over the years it has been crooked politics and coal money influence that has gutted the intent of this law. In my lifetime I do not know of this law ever being fully enforced. The coal industry and the politicians have for most of my life manipulated and twisted the law in order to legally break this law by destroying our valuable headwater streams.. Surface mining has demolished our quality of life and life expectancy in our native homes. Our communities are now war zones with constant blasting, pollution and all area surface mining has stolen our ability to recreate in the mountains and do what we culturally always have. We are being shut out of areas that we have always enjoyed. Even our historic cemeteries are left in accessible to the public.



This photo shows Jarrell Cemetery and the town of Lindytown in Boone County WV. This is one of my many family mountain cemeteries. We as family members must go through training and guards to visit our loved ones in these now active destruction sites.

The town in this photo is nearly gone. One family is all that remains in this town. The homes that you see are now gone now. The people that were bought out signed contracts that clearly violated their rights to contact state or federal regulatory agencies to complain about blasting dust, water pollution, or health and safety concerns.

Here is a link to those [contracts](#).

Our regulatory agencies are allowing this to happen. I have been told that the WV state DEP is a PERMITTING AGENCY by one of their agents. The DEP is allowing these companies to destroy our mountains and our waters and in turn this destroys our towns and runs away all the people. The WVDEP treats us less than human. The WV DEP is permitting the destruction of our homes and we are not even supposed to get upset. See [this](#) and [this](#).

Below is a text copy of the NY Times article that Dan Barry wrote about Lindytown. In reading this article please recognize that Lindytown is only one of the recent towns that this has disappeared. There are many of our rural communities depopulated to expand surface mining and stream fills. How could anyone say that these temporary jobs is worth the permanent displacement of our people and the destruction of their waters, mountains and culture.

The New York Times

April 12, 2011

As the Mountaintops Fall, a Coal Town Vanishes

http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/13/us/13lindytown.html?_r=2

By [DAN BARRY](#)

LINDYTOWN, W.Va.

To reach a lost American place, here just a moment ago, follow a thin country road as it unspools across an Appalachian valley's grimy floor, past a coal operation or two, a church or two, a village called Twilight. Beware of the truck traffic. Watch out for that car-chasing dog.

After passing an abandoned union hall with its front door agape, look to the right for a solitary house, tidy, yellow and tucked into the stillness. This is nearly all that remains of a West Virginia community called Lindytown.

In the small living room, five generations of family portraits gaze upon Quinnie Richmond, 85, who has trouble summoning the memories, and her son, Roger, 62, who cannot forget them: the many children all about, enough to fill Mr. Cook's school bus every morning; the Sunday services at the simple church; the white laundry strung on clotheslines; the echoing clatter of evening horseshoes; the sense of home.

But the coal that helped to create Lindytown also destroyed it. Here was the church; here was its steeple; now it's all gone, along with its people. Gone, too, are the surrounding mountaintops. To mine the soft rock that we burn to help power our light bulbs, our laptops, our way of life, heavy equipment has stripped away the trees, the soil, the rock — what coal companies call the “overburden.”

Now, the faint, mechanical beeps and grinds from above are all that disturb the Lindytown quiet, save for the occasional, seam-splintering blast.

A couple of years ago, a subsidiary of Massey Energy, which owns a sprawling mine operation behind and above the Richmond home, bought up Lindytown. Many of its residents signed Massey-proffered documents in which they also agreed not to sue, testify against, seek inspection of or “make adverse comment” about coal-mining operations in the vicinity.

You might say that both parties were motivated. Massey preferred not to have people living so close to its mountaintop mining operations. And the residents, some with area roots deep into the 19th century, preferred not to live amid a dusty industrial operation that was altering the natural world about them. So the Greens sold, as did the Cooks, and the Workmans, and the Webbs ...

But Quinnie Richmond's husband, Lawrence — who died a few months ago, at 85 — feared that leaving the home they built in 1947 might upset his wife, who has Alzheimer's. He and his son Roger, a retired coal miner who lives next door, chose instead to sign easements granting the coal company certain rights over their properties. In exchange for also agreeing not to make adverse comment, the two Richmond households received \$25,000 each, Roger Richmond recalls.

“Hush money,” he says, half-smiling.

As Mr. Richmond speaks, the mining on the mountain behind him continues to transform, if not erase, the woody stretches he explored in boyhood. It has also exposed a massive rock that almost seems to be teetering above the Richmond home. Some days, an anxious Mrs. Richmond will check on the rock from her small kitchen window, step away, then come back to check again.

And again.

A Dictator of Destiny

Here in Boone County, coal rules. The rich seams of bituminous black have dictated the region's destiny for many generations: through the advent of railroads; the company-controlled coal camps; the bloody mine wars; the increased use of mechanization and surface mining, including mountaintop removal; the related decrease in jobs.

The county has the largest surface-mining project (the Massey operation) in the state and the largest number of coal-company employees (more than 3,600). Every year it receives several million dollars in tax severance payments from the coal industry, and every June it plays host to the West Virginia Coal Festival, with fireworks, a beauty pageant, a memorial service for dead miners, and displays of the latest mining equipment. Without coal, says Larry V. Lodato, the director of the county's Community and Economic Development Corporation, "You might as well turn out the lights and leave."

In recent years, surface mining has eclipsed underground mining as the county's most productive method. This includes mountaintop removal — or, as the industry prefers to call it, mountaintop mining — a now-commonplace technique that remains startling in its capacity to change things.

Various government regulations require that coal companies return the stripped area to its "approximate original contour," or "reclaim" the land for development in a state whose undulating topography can thwart plans for even a simple parking lot. As a result, the companies often dump the removed earth into a nearby valley to create a plateau, and then spray this topsy-turvy land with seed, fertilizer and mulch.

The coal industry maintains that by removing some mountaintops from the "Mountain State," it is creating developable land that makes the state more economically viable. State and coal officials point to successful developments on land reclaimed by surface mining, developments that they say have led to the creation of some 13,000 jobs.

But Ken Ward Jr., a reporter for The Charleston Gazette, has pointed out that two-fifths of these jobs are seasonal or temporary; a third of the full-time jobs are at one project, in the northern part of the state; and the majority of the jobs are far from southern West Virginia, where most of the mountaintop removal is occurring, and where unemployment is most dire. In Boone County, development on reclaimed land has basically meant the building of the regional headquarters for the county's dominant employer — Massey Energy.

And with reclamation, there is also loss.

"I'm not familiar at all with Lindytown," says Mr. Lodato, the county's economic development director. "I know it used to be a community, and it's close to Twilight."

A Fighter

About 10 miles from Lindytown, outside a drab convenience store in the unincorporated town of Van, a rake-thin woman named Maria Gunnoe climbs into a maroon Ford pickup that is adorned with a bumper sticker reading: "Mountains Matter — Organize." The daughter, granddaughter and sister of union coal miners, Ms. Gunnoe is 42, with sorrowful dark eyes, long black hair and a desire to be on the road only between shift changes at the local mining operations — and only with her German shepherd and her gun.

Less than a decade ago, Ms. Gunnoe was working as a waitress, just trying to get along, when a mountaintop removal operation in the small map dot of Bob White disrupted her "home place." It filled the valley behind her house, flooded her property, contaminated her well and transformed her into a fierce opponent of mountaintop removal. Through her work with the [Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition](#), she has become such an effective environmental advocate that in 2009 she received the prestigious [Goldman Environmental Prize](#). But no one threw a parade for her in Boone County, where some deride her as anti-coal; that is, anti-job.

Ms. Gunnoe turns onto the two-lane road, Route 26, and heads toward the remains of Lindytown. On her right stands Van High School, her alma mater, where D. Ray White, the gifted and doomed Appalachian dancer, used to kick up his heels at homecomings. On her left, the community center where dozens of coal-company workers disrupted a meeting of environmentalists back in 2007.

“There was a gentleman who pushed me backward, over my daughter, who was about 12 or 13, and crying,” Ms. Gunnoe later recalls. “I pushed him back, and he filed charges against me for battery. He was 250 pounds, and I had a broken arm.”

A jury acquitted her within minutes.

Ms. Gunnoe drives on. Past the long-closed Grill bar, its facade marred by graffiti. Past an out-of-context clot of land that rises hundreds of feet in the air — “a valley fill,” she says, that has been “hydroseeded” with fast-growing, non-native plants to replace the area’s lost natural growth: its ginseng root, its goldenseal, its hickory and oak, maple and poplar, black cherry and sassafras.

“And it will never be back,” she says.

Ms. Gunnoe has a point. James Burger, a professor emeritus of forestry and soil science at Virginia Tech University, said the valley fill process often sends the original topsoil to the bottom and crushed rock from deeper in the ground to the top. With the topography and soil properties altered, Dr. Burger says, native plants and trees do not grow as well.

“You have hundreds of species of flora and fauna that have acclimated to the native, undisturbed conditions over the millennia,” he says. “And now you’re inverting the geologic profile.”

Dr. Burger says that he and other scientists have developed a reclamation approach that uses native seeds, trees, topsoil and selected rock material to help restore an area’s natural diversity, at no additional expense. Unfortunately, he says, these methods have not been adopted in most Appalachian states, including West Virginia.

Past a coal operation called a loadout, an oversized Tinker Toy structure where coal is crushed and loaded on trucks and rail cars. Past the house cluster called Bandytown, home of Leo Cook, 75, the former school bus driver who once collected Roger Richmond and the other kids from Lindytown, where he often spent evenings at a horseshoe pit, now overgrown.

“We got to have coal,” says Mr. Cook, a retired miner. “What’s going to keep the power on? But I believe with all my heart that there’s a better way to get that coal.”

Ms. Gunnoe continues deeper into the mud-brown landscape, where the fleeting appearance of trucks animates the flattened mountaintops. On her right, a dark, winding stream damaged by mining; on her left, several sediment-control ponds that filter out pollutants from the runoff of mining operations. Past the place called Twilight, a jumble of homes and trailers, where the faded sign of the old Twilight Super Market still promises Royal Crown Cola for sale.

Soon she passes the abandoned hall for Local 8377 of the United Mine Workers of America, empty since some underground mining operations shut down a couple of decades ago. Its open door beckons you to examine the papers

piled on the floor: a Wages, Lost Time, and Expense Voucher booklet from 1987; the burial fund's bylaws; canceled checks bearing familiar surnames.

On, finally, to Lindytown.

The Company Line

According to a statement from Shane Harvey, the general counsel for Massey, this is what happened: Many of Lindytown's residents were either retired miners or their widows and descendants who welcomed the opportunity to move to places more metropolitan or with easier access to medical facilities. Interested in selling their properties, they contacted Massey, which began making offers in December 2008 — offers that for the most part were accepted.

"It is important to note that none of these properties had to be bought," Mr. Harvey said. "The entire mine plan could have been legally mined without the purchase of these homes. We agreed to purchase the properties as an additional precaution."

When asked to elaborate, Mr. Harvey responded, in writing, that Massey voluntarily bought the properties "as an additional backup to the state and federal regulations" that protect people who live near mining operations.

James Smith, 68, a retired coal miner from Lindytown, says the company's statement is true, as far as it goes. Yes, Lindytown had become home mostly to retired union miners and their families; when the Robin Hood No. 8 mine shut down, for example, his three sons had to leave the state to work. And yes, some people approached Massey about selling their homes.

But, Mr. Smith says, many residents wanted to leave Lindytown only because the mountaintop operations above had ruined the quality of life below.

His family went back generations here. He married a local woman, raised kids, became widowed and married again. A brother lived in one house, a sister lived in another, and nieces, nephews and cousins were all around. And there was this God-given setting, where he could wander for days, hunting raccoon or searching for ginseng.

But when the explosions began, dust filled the air. "You could wash your car today, and tomorrow you could write your name on it in the dust," he says. "It was just unpleasant to live in that town. Period."

Massey was a motivated buyer, he argues, given that it was probably cheaper to buy out a small community than to deal with all the complaint-generated inspections, or the possible lawsuits over silica dust and "fly rock."

"Hell, what they paid for that wasn't a drop in the bucket," he says.

Massey did not elaborate on why it bought out Lindytown, though general concerns about public health have been mounting. In blocking another West Virginia mountaintop-removal project earlier this year, the Environmental Protection Agency cited research suggesting that health disparities in the Appalachian region are "concentrated where surface coal mining activity takes place."

In the end, Mr. Smith says, he would not be living 150 miles away, far from relations and old neighbors, if mountaintop removal hadn't ruined Lindytown. "You might as well take the money and get rid of your torment," he

says, adding that he received more than \$300,000 for his property. “After they destroyed our place, they done us a favor and bought it.”

Memories, What’s Left

Ms. Gunnoe pulls up to one of the last houses in Lindytown, the tidy yellow one, and visits with Quinnie and Roger Richmond. He uses his words to re-animate the community he knew.

For many years, his grandfather was the preacher at the small church down the road, where the ringing of a bell gave fair warning that Sunday service was about to begin. And his grandmother lived in the house still standing next door; she toiled in her garden well past 100, growing the kale, spinach and mustard greens that she loved so much.

His father, Lawrence, joined the military in World War II after his older brother, Carson, was killed in Sicily. He returned, married Quinnie, and built this house. Before long, he became a section foreman in the mines, beloved by his men in part because of Quinnie’s fried-apple pies.

After graduating from Van High School — that’s his senior photograph, there on the wall — Roger Richmond followed his father into the mines. He married, had children, divorced, made do when the local mine shut down, eventually retired and, in 2001, set up his mobile home beside his parents’ house.

By now, things had changed. With the local underground mine shut down, there were nowhere near as many jobs, or kids. And this powder from the mountaintops was settling on everything, turning to brown paste in the rain. People no long hung their whites on the clotheslines.

Soon, rumors of buyouts from Massey became fact, as neighbors began selling and moving away. “Some of them were tired of fighting it,” Mr. Richmond says. “Of having to put up with all the dust. Plus, you couldn’t get out into the hills the way you used to.”

One example. Mr. Richmond’s Uncle Carson, killed in World War II, is buried in one of the small cemeteries scattered about the mountains. If he wanted to pay his respects, in accordance with government regulations for active surface-mining areas, he would have to make an appointment with a coal company, be certified in work site safety, don a construction helmet and be escorted by a coal-company representative.

In the end, the Richmonds decided to sell various land rights to Massey, but remain in Lindytown, as the homes of longtime neighbors were boarded up and knocked down late last year, and as looters arrived at all hours of the day to steal the windows, the wiring, the pillars from Elmer Smith’s front porch — even the peaches, every one of them, growing from trees on the Richmond property.

“They was good peaches, too,” says Mr. Richmond.

“I like peaches,” says his mother.

Would Lindytown have died anyway? Would it have died even without the removal of its surrounding mountaintops? These are the questions that Bill Raney, the president of the West Virginia Coal Association, raises. Sometimes, he says, depopulation is part of the natural order of things. People move to be closer to hospitals, or restaurants, or the Wal-Mart. There is also that West Virginia truism, he adds:

“When the coal’s gone, you go to where the next coal seam is.”

Of course, in the case of Lindytown, the coal is still here; it’s the people who are mostly gone. Now, when darkness comes to this particular hollow, you can see a small light shining from the kitchen window of a solitary, yellow house — and, sometimes, a face, peering out.

We as community members have been forced to reach out to the state and national environmental and social justice organization and foundations across the country to help us end the Appalachian Apocalypse that this committee dismisses as being benign simply by changing words of laws and buying time before they are reviewed again. The people who have lived and died with these impacts are the people who have helped to form a national movement to end all surface mining in Appalachia. <http://appalachiaring.org/> We have had no choice but to take these measures to protect our own lives and the future existence of who we are from this out of control industry and their big money backing in DC. We like the Obama Administration know what it is like to go up against impossible odds created by the coal and energy industries that have control of our Congress.

We suffer these very real consequences daily and we to have drawn a line and dug in our heels. We refuse to tolerate inhumane treatment of our people in their homes, communities and jobs. We too have taken a stand and it has been a tough one with basically no protection and still we refuse to back down.

The New York Times

July 14, 2010

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/15/us/15mining.html?scp=1&sq=Jimmy+Weekley&st=nyt>

Project’s Fate May Predict the Future of Mining

By [ERIK ECKHOLM](#)

BLAIR, W.Va. — Federal officials are considering whether to veto mountaintop mining above a little Appalachian valley called Pigeonroost Hollow, a step that could be a turning point for one of the country’s most contentious environmental disputes.

The [Army Corps of Engineers](#) approved a permit in 2007 to blast 400 feet off the hilltops here to expose the rich [coal](#) seams, disposing of the debris in the upper reaches of six valleys, including Pigeonroost Hollow.

But the [Environmental Protection Agency](#) under the Obama administration, in a break with President [George W. Bush](#)'s more coal-friendly approach, has threatened to halt or sharply scale back the project known as [Spruce 1](#). The agency asserts that the project would irrevocably damage streams and wildlife and violate the Clean Water Act.

Because it is one of the largest mountaintop mining projects ever and because it has been hotly disputed for a dozen years, Spruce 1 is seen as a bellwether by conservation groups and the coal industry.

The fate of the project could also have national reverberations, affecting [Democratic Party](#) prospects in coal states. While extensive research and public hearings on the plan have been completed, federal officials said that their final decision would not be announced until late this year — perhaps, conveniently, after the midterm elections.

Environmental groups say that approval of the project in anything like its current form would be a betrayal.

“Spruce 1 is a test of whether the E.P.A. is going to follow through with its promises,” said Bill Price, director of environmental justice with the [Sierra Club in West Virginia](#).

“If the administration sticks to its guns,” Mr. Price predicted, “mountaintop removal is going to be severely curtailed.”

Coal companies say politics, not science, is threatening a practice vital to local economies and energy independence. “After years of study, with the company doing everything any agency asked, and three years after a permit was issued, the E.P.A. now wants to stop Spruce 1,” said Bill Raney, president of the [West Virginia Coal Association](#). “It’s political; the only thing that has changed is the administration.”

While the government does not collect statistics on mountaintop mining, data suggest that it may account for about 10 percent of American coal output, yielding 5 percent of the nation’s electricity. The method plays a bigger economic role in the two states where it is concentrated, Kentucky and West Virginia.

The proposal to strip a large area above the home of 70-year-old Jimmy Weekley, Pigeonroost Hollow’s last remaining inhabitant, was first made in 1997 by [Arch Coal, Inc., of St. Louis](#). The legal ups and downs of Spruce 1 have come to symbolize the broader battle over a method that produces inexpensive coal while drastically altering the landscape.

Spruce 1 started as the largest single proposal ever for hilltop mining, in which mountains are carved off to expose coal seams and much of the debris, often leaking toxic substances, is placed in adjacent valleys.

After years of negotiations and a scaling back of the mining area to 2,278 acres, from its original 3,113 acres, the Spruce 1 permit was approved by the Army Corps of Engineers in 2007 and limited construction began. But this spring, the [E.P.A. proposed](#) halting the project.

The announcement caused an uproar in West Virginia. The E.P.A. held an emotional [public hearing](#) in May and stopped accepting written comments in June. Arch Coal has objected publicly, but did not respond to requests to comment for this article.

The Obama administration's E.P.A. has already riled the coal companies by tightening procedures for issuing new mining permits and imposing stronger stream protections. But environmental groups were worried in June, when the agency approved a curtailed mountaintop plan in another site in Logan County, W.Va. Now, as negotiations between the E.P.A. and Arch Coal continue, the Spruce 1 battle is being closely watched as a sign of mountaintop mining's future.

Feelings run high in the counties right around the project area.

"Spruce 1 is extremely important to all of southern West Virginia because if this permit is pulled back, every mine site is going to be vulnerable to having its permits pulled," said James Milan, manager of [Walker Machinery](#) in Logan, which sells gargantuan [Caterpillar](#) equipment.

The loss of jobs, Mr. Milan said, would have devastating effects on struggling communities.

Maria Gunnoe, an organizer for the [Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition](#) and a director of [SouthWings](#), which organizes flights to document environmental damages, said that if Spruce 1 went forward, "it's going to mean the permanent erasure of part of our land and our legacy."

"We can't keep blowing up mountains to keep the lights on," said Ms. Gunnoe, a resident of nearby Boone County who has received death threats and travels with a 9 millimeter pistol.

Mr. Weekley, whose house is in sight of the project boundary, remembers the day in 1997 when he decided to fight it. Nearby mining under previous permits had filled his wooded valley with dust and noise.

"You couldn't see out of this hollow," he recalled. "I said, Something's got to be done or we're not going to have a community left."

He and his late wife became plaintiffs in a 1998 suit claiming that the project violated environmental laws. A ruling in their favor was overturned, setting off litigation that continues.

Mr. Weekley said that he had rejected offers of close to \$2 million for his eight acres and that he had seen the population of the nearby town of Blair dwindle to 60 from 600, with most residents bought out by Arch Coal.

A rail-thin man who enjoys sitting on his porch with a dog on his lap, Mr. Weekley uttered an expletive when told that coal industry representatives, including Mr. Raney in an interview, referred to the upper tributaries filled in by mining as “ditches” that can be rebuilt. In fact, some of the streams to be filled by Spruce 1 are intermittent, while others, including Pigeonroost Creek, flow year-round.

“I caught fish in that stream as a child, using a safety pin for a hook,” Mr. Weekley said. “If they get that permit, there won’t be a stream here.”

In documents issued in March, the E.P.A. said the project as approved would still smother seven miles of streambed.

Filling in headwaters damages the web of life downstream, from aquatic insects to salamanders to fish, and temporary channels and rebuilt streams are no substitute, the agency said. The pulverized rock can release toxic levels of selenium and other pollutants, it noted.

The effects of Spruce 1 would be added to those of 34 other past and present projects that together account for more than one-third of the area of the Spruce Fork watershed, the agency said.

The debate over Spruce 1 and other mountaintop mine permits has been a source of division and anguish among local residents.

Michael Fox, 39, of Gilbert, is a mine worker who like many other miners here thinks the objections are overblown. “I have three kids I want to send to college,” Mr. Fox said.

One former mountaintop miner who says he now regrets his involvement is Charles Bella, 60. He is one of the remaining residents on Blair’s main street, along the Spruce Fork, which is fed in turn by Pigeonroost Creek.

“I know it put bread on my table, but I hate destroying the mountains like that,” Mr. Bella said.

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WE refuse to tolerate this industry in our schools attempting to brain wash our kids into being their next generation of slaves by influencing the curriculum with big money. Below is a scanned copy of my children’s history book. Notice it says that “surface mining in some instances leaves the land in better than before condition”. In reality no one is stupid enough

to believe this, not even impressionable kids. We all know that no one can improve on God's work. This alone is outrageous behavior.

Chapter Preview

Terms: surface mining, region, urban, spa, immigrant, plateau, treason, capital

Places: Potomac Section, Berkeley Springs, Allegheny Highlands, Spruce Knob, Beckley, Helvetia, Allegheny Plateau, New River, New River Gorge, Ohio River Valley, Blennerhassett Island



Dedicated to All
WEST VIRGINIA

Human/Environmental Interaction

The theme of human/environmental interaction describes how humans use, affect, and are affected by their environment. The elimination of animals like the American bison, wolf, and elk from West Virginia is an example of geographic conditions being suitable for the animals' inhabitation, but human intervention causing their extinction.

Over the years, geography has dictated where people live as well as how they make a living. Three major industries in West Virginia can serve as examples of how geography affects development while detailing how industrial growth and success brought change to the very environment that supported their birth.

The central and southern regions of West Virginia contain valuable supplies of coal, sometimes referred to as "black diamonds." Geographic conditions caused the coal to develop where it did. Humans, however, had to alter the natural surroundings somewhat in order to make mining the mineral profitable. Although there were some settlements in the area before coal became important, the lack of roads and navigable streams delayed the region's development. It was not until the coming of the railroad in the mid- to late 1800s that the area began to grow and become economically successful. Building the roads and railroads changed the look of the region. What was once fertile, unspoiled land was soon covered with houses, churches, schools, and stores to accommodate the needs of the many people who came to work in the mines or on the railroad.

As mining became more and more profitable, some companies began to look for an easier way to extract the coal that was near the surface. The result was **surface mining**, or strip mining as it was commonly called. This type of mining actually did strip the land. Trees were uprooted, land was destroyed, and streams were polluted, increasing the potential for erosion and flooding. Today, companies engaged in surface mining must restore the land when they are finished. In some instances, the area is actually left in better condition.

West Virginia was a natural site for the expansion of the chemical industry. The state contained almost limitless quantities of five of the six elements needed for the production of chemicals. These elements are: carbon from coal, hydrogen from water, oxygen and nitrogen from the air, and chlorine from salt brines. Sulfur, the sixth element, was easily obtained from surrounding states. The availability of these elements as well as an abundance of natural gas were major factors in Union Carbide's decision to locate in the state. Other chemical companies followed Union Carbide's lead, and soon the Kanawha Valley became known as "the Chemical Valley of the World."

More links to what is going on in schools. “It’s predatory marketing. By selling its privileged access to children to the coal industry, Scholastic is commercializing classrooms and undermining education.”

<http://www.cedarinc.org/>

http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/12/education/12coal.html?_r=1

The New York Times

May 11, 2011

Coal Curriculum Called Unfit for 4th Graders

By [TAMAR LEWIN](#)

Three advocacy groups have started a letter-writing campaign asking Scholastic Inc. to stop distributing the fourth-grade curriculum materials that the [American Coal Foundation](#) paid the company to develop.

The three groups — [Rethinking Schools](#), the [Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood](#) and [Friends of the Earth](#) — say that Scholastic’s “United States of Energy” package gives children a one-sided view of [coal](#), failing to mention its negative effects on the environment and human health.

Kyle Good, Scholastic’s vice president for corporate communications, was traveling for much of Wednesday and said she could not comment until she had all the “United States of Energy” materials in hand.

Others at the company said Ms. Good was the only one who could discuss the matter. The company would not comment on how much it was paid for its partnership with the coal foundation.

Scholastic’s InSchool Marketing division, which produced the coal curriculum in partnership with the coal foundation, often works with groups like the American Society of Hematology, the Federal Trade Commission and the Census Bureau to create curriculum materials.

The division’s programs are “designed to promote client objectives and meet the needs of target teachers, students, and parents” and “make a difference by influencing attitudes and behaviors,” according to the company Web site.

“Promoting ‘client objectives’ to a captive student audience isn’t education,” Susan Linn, director of the Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood, said in a statement. “It’s predatory marketing. By selling its privileged access to children to the coal industry, Scholastic is commercializing classrooms and undermining education.”

The Campaign for Commercial-Free Childhood, a tiny group in Boston, has often been at odds with Scholastic, a \$2 billion company whose books and other educational materials are in 9 of 10 American classrooms. Last year, the group criticized the company for its “SunnyD Book Spree,” featured in Scholastic’s Parent and Child magazine, in

which teachers were encouraged to have classroom parties with, and collect labels from, Sunny Delight, a sugary juice beverage, to win free books. The campaign has also objected to Scholastic's promotion of Children's [Claritin](#) in materials it distributed on spring allergies.

And in 2005, the campaign tangled with the company over its "Tickle U" curriculum for the Cartoon Network, in which posters of cartoon characters were sent to preschools and promoted as helping young children develop a sense of humor.

None of the previous episodes led to any specific action.

The coal controversy seems to be the first time the campaign and its allies have challenged Scholastic lesson plans.

"The United States of Energy' is designed to paste a smiley face on the dirtiest form of energy in the world," said Bill Bigelow, an editor of Rethinking Schools magazine. "These materials teach children only the story the coal industry has paid Scholastic to tell."

The [Scholastic materials](#) say that coal is produced in half of the 50 states, that America has 27 percent of the world's coal resources, and that it is the source of half the electricity produced in the nation, with about 600 coal-powered plants operating around the clock to provide electricity.

What they do not mention are the negative effects of mining and burning coal: the removal of Appalachian mountaintops; the release of sulfur dioxide, mercury and arsenic; the toxic wastes; the mining accidents; the lung disease.

"The curriculum pretends that it's going to talk about the advantages and disadvantages of different energy choices, to align with national learning standards, but it doesn't," Mr. Bigelow said.

"The fact that coal is the major source of greenhouse gases in the United States is entirely left out," he said. "There's no hint that coal has any disadvantages."

In a statement, Ben Schreiber, a climate and energy tax analyst at Friends of the Earth, called the curriculum "the worst kind of corporate brainwashing."

According to an article by Alma Hale Paty, the executive director of the American Coal Foundation, and [posted on Coalblog](#), "The United States of Energy" went to 66,000 fourth-grade teachers in 2009.

There was no answer at the foundation Wednesday, and Ms. Paty did not return calls.

We refuse to tolerate violent attacks on ourselves and our family members because of our open opposition to our mountains blowing up over our homes and our streams, wells, and air being poisoned.

This link is where we were attacked by men on Larry Gibson's property on Kayford Mountain. These men were out to defend their jobs at all cost. One went as far as to

threaten to cut a child's throat. This is what is happening to us as our politicians turn a blind eye and pretends as if it didn't happen. There is no "balance" when people are dying. This industry is pitting their workers against the community members in violent attacks.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gjc7Jg_gMy0&feature=related

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7XSTrXX7hbo>

Judy Bonds being smacked at a peaceful protest.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8dP27PKnCG0&feature=related>

We have even been brutalized by our local law enforcement while attempting to protect a school full of children from a leaking sludge dam and coal load out facility. The officers actually carried one protestor out by the cuffs. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3jqENyow0cQ>

Even our elders have been attacked at federal hearing while the officials pretended as if they had no control. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EtwceseZz4w>

I too have been personally attacked while attempting to speak at a permit hearing in Charleston WV. I was nearly assaulted as I left this federal hearing. The officers told us that "we got what we deserved". No one should have to be subjected to this treatment to defend their home. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5WeJgX7vmgE> Because of my out spoken opposition I currently live on high alert 24/7.

In 2007 there was an occasion where myself and other participants was attacked during a media training at the local community building by 60 men that were told that we were going to shut down their operation. When in reality we were organizing to stop an ILLEGAL permit.

<http://noacentral.org/page.php?id=191>

I was charged with battery because I defended myself from a 250 pound man who was pushing me over my daughter to defend his job. This individual filed battery charges against me. ME an individual that had already been put through everything imaginable by this coal company was being arrested for battery. I was found not guilty of these charges. After nearly 2 years of litigation the jury vote was unanimously not guilty.

Our industry controlled Government continued their violent rhetoric even today as they up hold the practice of blowing up mountain over our homes and filling our streams for jobs. After meetings with Joe Manchin and all our state leaders we still face these attacks in our communities and homes. Only because we don't agree that blowing up our mountains and putting them into our valleys and calling it jobs is a good thing. Here is [one article](#) about this meeting. After all the discussion about death and sickness caused by surface mining and water pollution Then Governor now Senator Manchin words were "every job in the state of WV is a precious one". Shame on all of our state and federal politicians! Not one

will stand up to the industry that is responsible for demise of southern Appalachia. They are all responsible putting temporary jobs above the importance of human health, lives, communities and long term livelihoods.

Here a good insight... <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g24tpXtJ540> They try to make us lo0k like extremist by saying we only care about [mayflies..](#)

Manchin calls for calm in the coalfields

<http://blogs.wvgazette.com/coalatattoo/2010/01/25/manchin-calls-for-calm-in-the-coalfields/>

Ken Ward January 25, 2010

Well, here's the answer to the question posed on my previous post, "[What's Gov. Manchin going to say?](#)" For starters, Manchin emerged from a long meeting with coalfield citizens and issued a call for an end to threats and intimidation against West Virginians who are fighting to stop mountaintop removal:

We will not in any way, shape or form in this state of West Virginia tolerate any violence against anyone on any side. If you're going to have the dialogue, have respect for each other.

Manchin also promised he would look into citizen complaints about lax enforcement of strip-mining rules by the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection, but he certainly wasn't persuaded to drop his strong support for mountaintop removal. He said he told the citizens they would have to agree to disagree about that one.

Singer and West Virginia native Kathy Mattea was among those who met with Gov. Manchin.

This meeting was slightly different in format than [the one Manchin held back in early November with coal executives](#). For one thing, the citizen groups offered to have a couple of coal industry lobbyists sit in, and they did. Reps. Rahall and Capito of West Virginia both attended, but Sen. Jay Rockefeller (who did have time to meet with the industry executives) didn't show up. [Rockefeller sent a staffer. \(Senate records indicate there was just one floor vote yesterday in Washington, D.C.\)](#)

And more importantly, the citizen groups brought some experts with them — including WVU's Michael Hendryx, who told me he tried to explain to the governor his research [about coal's harsh impacts on public health and a study that showed the industry costs the Appalachian region more than it provides in economic benefits](#).

I'm not sure Manchin heard that, given his comment about how **"every job in West Virginia is a precious job."** I got the idea that Manchin is still focused on just trying to preserve existing

jobs, not finding ways to “[embrace the future](#),” as the Central Appalachian coal industry [continues its inevitable decline](#).

Bo Webb, the Raleigh County resident and activist who asked Manchin for the meeting, seemed pretty pleased, but he also emphasized “there is an urgency to address some serious issues, and hopefully some of those concerns will begin to be addressed very soon.”

And while Rep. Shelley Moore Capito, R-W.Va., was busy filing for re-election and also forming a “coal caucus” in Washington, D.C., even she was talking about trying to find ways to “bridge that gap” between the coal industry and folks who want to stop mountaintop removal.

Activist Maria Gunnoe — not really one to settle for just talk when it comes to mountaintop removal — assessed the meeting by saying it needs to be just the start of such talks:

It's very important that this not be a one-time thing. We live in these communities, and we're not going anywhere. This can't be where it ends. This is the beginning of a long process

It is important to know that this was the end of these discussions about the violent attacks and violent rhetoric that we refuse to tolerate.

If you will notice that there are members of the group that formed in support of surface mining our homes present at this hearing today. They call themselves FACES of coal. <http://www.facesofcoal.org/> Here is a photo of a screen shot that I saved from their website. This is only one example of “what we get” for opposing them blowing up the mountains over our homes and dumping them into the valleys where we live polluting our headwater streams and destroying everything that support our lives.



I believe the “They” above would be people that live here and oppose what is happening to them.

We refuse to continue to tolerate the terror of the flooding from these stream fill experiments and sludge dams. Throughout the years of the manipulations of the laws governing the impacts on our streams we have always been the ones at risk. We live daily hoping that they don’t fail yet knowing that someday they will. As a child I experience the loss of family members in the [Buffalo creek flood](#) that brought about the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act Laws. Then in 2001 our neighbors in KY suffered the [Martin County Coal Spill](#). These laws didn’t help us sleep at night knowing that these very operations were being permitted all over southern Appalachia. To us this was no more than words on paper. Living here you know that these laws were not being enforced then and they are not being enforced now. The present day generations of children and their families live terrified of the rains. It nearly always brings flooding when you have surface mining and plugged valleys nearby. [Studies have shown 40%to 200%](#) increase in peak flows caused by surface mining runoff during rainfall periods. FEMA and we as individuals picks up this cost while companies go on with business as usual keeping their men working destroying our very existence. At what cost do we excuse these illegal jobs?

Surveys show that most voters in 4 regional states dislike mountaintop removal.

<http://earthjustice.org/features/campaigns/poll-strong-opposition-to-mtr>

A majority of voters in WV, KY, VA, and TN reject mountaintop removal mining: The number of voters who oppose mountaintop removal dwarfs the number who support it: 57% oppose mountaintop removal, and with noticeable intensity (42% strongly oppose), compared to just 20% who support it. Voters who strongly support mountaintop removal mining in these states are a very small minority (at 10%).

“Jobs at risk” is as insulting as anything I have ever read. We have worked consistently in DC and in Southern Appalachia to get our political leaders to enact a moratorium on any further surface mining permits [because studies prove](#) that this type of mining is killing the people who live in our communities. All of our politicians continue to ignore our plea for help. This blatantly says that none of you care about the Appalachians who are paying the real cost of this so called “cheap energy” with their very existence. IT IS LIVES AND LIVLIHOODS AT RISK. This industry is willing to take this risk for their bottom line. The National Mining Association attorney called us inbreeds. This again shows the total and complete disrespect for our people. This hearing really isn’t about jobs. This hearing is about the coal bosses bottom line. This hearing was staged as a political platform to get out their message that” jobs are at risk in the already impoverished WV”. Let’s talk about those jobs, why we are still one of the poorest states with the richest resources and what is really at risk.

These jobs are people from the outside. Very few of our local people work these jobs. This is mostly outsiders from other states here doing this work. In Twilight, WV there is imported workers coming in by the busloads. Some of which are not legal to be in the US. Here is a photo taken from my vehicle along RT 26 where this non-English speaking gentleman ask me for directions to Progress Coal which is the Twilight surface mines. The buses were packed with imported workers and marked as school buses with PA plates. These same people show up drunk at our community church outings so they can eat. There was also an incident where a drunk imported worker from the Elk Run mines in Sylvester killed a child while racing on our roads as school was letting out. This is what kind of jobs we are talking about.



This again shows that this is all about the company's bottom line and not about jobs for poor people.

Fallacy and Facts About Jobs in Appalachia

Fallacy: Stopping the destruction of Appalachian mountains and streams would cost jobs

Fact 1:

Underground mines create 50% more jobs than mountaintop removal mines.

Underground mines create 52% more jobs than mountaintop removal mines for every ton they produce -- they employ nearly two thirds of the miners in Central Appalachia while producing just over half of the coal.

Fact 2:

Unemployment in counties where a high proportion of coal is mined by mountaintop removal is higher than in counties where coal is mined mostly underground. According to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics from 2000 through

2010, the average annual unemployment rate was 8.6% in Central Appalachian counties where more than 75% of coal production was by mountaintop removal, compared to 6.7% in counties where mountaintop removal accounted for less than 25% of production².

See: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/appvoices/5938215752/>

Fact 3:

Historically, the total number of mining jobs has fallen in places where the proportion of coal mined by mountaintop removal has increased. According to the West Virginia Geologic and Economic Survey, the proportion of coal production in West Virginia that came from mountaintop removal mines increased from 19% to 42% of production between 1982 and 2006³. Even though overall production increased, the number of mining jobs was cut in half over the same period⁴.

See: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/appvoices/6167625000/>

Fallacy: More stringent enforcement of the Clean Water Act by the EPA and other federal agencies is creating an economic crisis in Central Appalachia

Fact: The number of mining jobs in Appalachia has increased since the start of the recession, since the EPA began enhanced review of mountaintop removal permits, and since the EPA released its interim guidance in April, 2010. Since 2007, as production in Central Appalachia has shifted away from mountaintop removal in favor of underground mining techniques, the increase in employment at underground mines has more than offset declines at other types of mines. Employment is up 11.5% since the start of the recession

(December, 2007), up 2.5% since Enhanced Coordination Procedures on mountaintop removal permitting were announced between 3 federal agencies (June, 2009), and up almost 6% since the EPA announced a new guidance on Appalachian mine permitting (April, 2010).

See: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/appvoices/6130794844/>

Fallacy: Ending mountaintop removal would put US energy supply at risk

Fact: U.S. coal production is limited by demand for coal, not by the ability of companies to obtain permits for mountaintop removal mines. According to energy analysts⁸ as well as executives from Arch Coal⁹, Peabody Energy¹⁰ and Southern Company¹¹, declining Central Appalachian coal production is the result of competition from lower cost natural gas. Mines across the country are producing at just 75% of their capacity¹² - down from 85% in 2008 - and the Energy Information Administration projects that coal demand won't recover to 2008 levels for another 15 years¹³. Coal from mountaintop removal mines could easily be replaced if other US mines were operating at just 81% of their capacity.

See: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/appvoices/5937661551/>

Fact: Coal from mountaintop removal mines accounts for less than 5% of US electricity generation. While coal accounts for nearly 45% of US electricity generation¹⁴, only 15% of that is mined in Central Appalachia¹⁵. Coal from all of Appalachia accounts for less than 9% of US electricity generation, and coal from mountaintop removal less than 5%.

See: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/appvoices/5818441741/>

Fallacy: Prohibiting valley fills would prevent all forms of coal mining in Appalachia

Fact: The majority of recently approved permits for new mines in Central Appalachia do not use valley fills. A survey of all applications for new mine permits in Central Appalachia that were approved by state agencies in 2009 revealed that just 44% used valley fills to dispose of mine waste¹⁶.

See: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/appvoices/5938219772/>

References and Notes

1. Calculated from MSHA Part 50 data files < <http://www.msha.gov/stats/part50/p50y2k/p50y2k.htm>>; Mountaintop removal production and employment calculated from "strip" mines, as defined by MSHA for mines in Central Appalachian counties.
2. Ibid; Unemployment data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics < <http://www.bls.gov/ces/>>
3. Hendryx, 2008. "Mortality Rates in Appalachian Coal Mining Counties: 24 Years Behind the Nation." *Environmental Justice*; Volume 1, Number 1
4. MSHA op. cit. 2000-2010
5. MSHA op. cit. 2007-2010; Bureau of Labor Statistics op. cit.
6. EIA/DOE "EIA-923" Database <http://eia.doe.gov/cneaf/electricity/page/eia906_920.html>
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8. Bernstein Commodities & Power Report, 2/18/2011: "No Light for Dark Spreads: How the Ruinous Economics of Coal-Fired Power Plants Affect the Markets for Coal and Gas"
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11. Chad Hewitt, Southern Company, "Utility Perspective on the Future of Coal" presented at American Coal Council's Spring Forum on February 3, 2011;
12. DOE/EIA *Annual Coal Report* for 2009. Analysis by Appalachian Voices.
13. DOE/EIA *Annual Energy Outlook*, 2011 Early Release edition
14. EIA/DOE Electric Power Monthly with data for December 2010, Table 1.1: "Net Generation by Energy Source: Total (All Sectors) "; <http://eia.doe.gov/cneaf/electricity/epm/table1_1.html>
15. EIA/DOE "EIA-923" Database op. cit.
16. Applications for new mine permits approved in 2009 obtained from: Kentucky Department of Natural Resources; West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection; Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy; US Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, Knoxville Office

Produced by Appalachian Voices on behalf of the Alliance for Appalachia
Spreadsheets and details of all analyses available at: www.appvoices.org/resources/mtr_facts.zip

The Obama administration has stated that they would follow the science. That is what I see that this administration is doing SLOWLY. Simple fact is science doesn't favor jobs over human health so this administration is being attacked by the extractive industries who now call themselves "job creators". It's true that we all need jobs. However we cannot depend on jobs that destroy other's lives and livelihoods. Frasure Creek Mining is owned by an INDIAN Company and they are blowing up my homeland. I feel the vibrations of the core driller in the floors of my home and impacts of the blasting near my home are horrendous. This is absolutely against everything that America stands for. When someone destroys water in a foreign country it is called an act of war. When the coal industry destroys Appalachia's water it's said to be in the best interest of our homeland security. Here is what the Scientist says... What are we waiting on? People are dying!

<http://blogs.wvgazette.com/coaltattoo/2010/01/07/bombshell-study-mtr-impacts-pervasive-and-irreversible/>

Mountaintop Mining Impacts Serious and Irreversible

Led by Chesapeake Biological Laboratory Director Margaret Palmer, a team of the nation's leading environmental scientists completed a comprehensive analysis of the latest scientific findings and emerging data related to the controversial practice of mountaintop mining. In this practice massive amounts of rock are removed to expose coal seams, valleys and streams are filled with the rock debris. **Dr. Palmer's team concluded that peer-reviewed research**

unequivocally documents irreversible environmental impacts from this form of mining and also exposes local residents to a higher risk of serious health problems.

At one time even Jay Rockefeller support banning surface mining. He openly admitted that strip mining was not a good economic future. Here is a few quotes from him.

December 20, 1970--"I will fight for the abolition of strip mining completely and forever." John D. Rockefeller IV while running for governor of WV as a stripmine abolitionist.

After getting beat by republican Arch Moore with the help of concerned corrupt democrat politicians and huge contributions from coal companies, Rockefeller followed the advice of his advisors and changed his mind on strip mining and on attacking corrupt politicians in southern WV. He won the following election for Governor as an advocate of strip mining and shut up about corruption.

"We know that strip mining is tearing up the beauty of our state. We know that strip mining is not a good economic future for West Virginia and not a good economic future for our children. And we know that, whatever advantage it has now, the damage that it leave is a permanent damage." –Jay Rockefeller, 1972

March 2, 1977-- "...mountaintop removal should certainly be encouraged, if not specifically dictated." Gov. Rockefeller's testimony to the U. S. Senate Subcommittee on Energy and Natural Resources, March 12, 1977.

Southern Mountains Community members speak out against the atrocities of surface mining in Appalachia.

<http://www.wvphotovoice.org/>
www.plunderingappalachia.org
www.burningthefuture.com
www.oncoalrivermovie.com
<http://lowcoalexPLICIT.org/>
www.coalcountrythemovie.com

We know we have options and that we do not have to blow up our mountains and poison our water to create energy. This was our idea. Hopefully it will catch on.

www.thelastmountainmovie.com

We will continue to demand better for our children's future in all that we do.

Here is a short list of the [impacts of coal on our lives nationally](#). It would benefit all our children if we take this very serious and fix this problem right away. We can no longer excuse the fact that coal is a finite resource and we are running out.

Enforce the stream buffer zone rule and protect the very existence of a culture of people known as Appalachians. We have witnessed the history that the coal industry has left in its path. Let me say that this history is unimaginable by most people in this country. Mountaineers will never be free until this madness ends. Reinstate the stream buffer zone rule to at least the Regan Era Rule and (for the first time in history) enforce it to protect American lives from this criminal industry.

My nephew reminds me of what surface mining looks like from a child's eyes. As we were driving through our community he looks up and says "Aunt Sissy what is wrong with these people don't they know we live down here?" I had to be honest with him and say "yes they know they just simply don't care."