



BLUE RIDGE ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE LEAGUE

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24-Hour Vigil for Justice Calls on Governor Northam and AG Herring to Protect Creation and Life Over Pipelines

By Sharon Ponton



On a windy March day with overnight temperatures dipping into the 20's, BREDL chapters Concern for the New Generation and Protect Our Water with our Richmond allies Virginia Pipeline Resisters held space outside the Virginia's Governor's Office in Richmond in a Vigil for Justice. For 24 hours we prayed and petitioned our elected officials to protect creation from greedy corporations who care only about profit for their shareholders, not about the environment which sustains life on earth.

The Mountain Valley Pipeline (MVP) has received over 300 violations, is being sued by Virginia's Attorney General and is under criminal investigation. Yet, on March 1, the State Water Control Board (SWCB) rescinded its December 2018 decision to move forward with the process to revoke the Upland 401 Water Quality Certification. We petitioned Mark Herring asking why Condition 14 of the Upland 401 water quality certificate, which plainly states the permit can be revoked, advised Virginia's SWCB that it cannot revoke that permit. We also insisted he issue a Stop Work order to stop the massive devastation occurring every day in southwest Virginia to the streams, groundwater and land of communities along the MVP route.

The proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline has lost seven permits through legal challenges filed in the 4th Circuit Court of Appeals. The court has indicated repeatedly the federal agencies didn't fulfill their responsibilities when issuing the permits

and therefore vacated them. The cost of the project has now risen to as much as \$7.75 billion and Wall Street is questioning its viability. This cost of the project will be borne by the ratepayers of the subsidiary utility companies of Dominion Energy, Duke Energy, and the Southern Company, while the companies and their shareholders will rake in a 14% profit. Notably over 58% of the census blocks through which the ACP would traverse are considered environmental justice communities. Dominion Energy, the partner charged with building the pipeline has blatantly chosen two communities with large African American populations to build their compressor stations...Union Hill in Buckingham County, VA and Northampton County, NC. Finally, the pipeline terminus is to be in Robeson County, NC, the poorest county in North Carolina and home to the indigenous Lumbee Tribe.

We asked Governor Northam to end the blatant environmental racism in Union Hill by stopping the compressor station from being built in the historic majority African American community of Union Hill. We offered to work with landowners so Governor Northam could tour and see, firsthand, the desecration of the land and water being perpetrated by construction of the MVP. For 24 hours, we prayed, we sang, and we read landowner statements while peacefully petitioning Virginia's elected officials to put creation and life before corporate greed. ■

With the Governor's Mansion behind us, we began our prayerful, peaceful 24-hour Vigil for Justice.





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BREDL: Who and what we are

In March 1984, fifty citizens of Ashe and Watauga Counties met in the Mission House of Holy Trinity Church in Glendale Springs, North Carolina. Teachers and farmers, home-makers and merchants listened to the report of the Episcopal Church Women on the US Department of Energy's siting search for a high-level nuclear waste dump in the rain-rich east.

Recognizing that the North Carolina mountains were a region at risk, the assembled group organized the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League (BREDL) to protect their own backyard and those of other threatened communities.

Grassroots organizing was a cornerstone of our early all-volunteer organization. One of our first multi-county boards of directors adopted our credo, which embodies our mission statement:

BREDL Credo

We believe in the practice of earth stewardship, not only by our league members, but by our government and the public as well. To foster stewardship, BREDL encourages government and citizen responsibility in conserving and protecting our natural resources. BREDL advocates grassroots involvement in order to empower whole communities in environmental issues. BREDL functions as a "watchdog" of the environment, monitoring issues and holding government officials accountable for their actions. BREDL networks with citizen groups and agencies, collecting and disseminating accurate, timely information.

BREDL sets standards for environmental quality, and awards individuals and agencies who uphold these standards in practice.

Moving into the future

Since then, the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League has grown to be a regional community-based, nonprofit environmental organization. Our founding principles - earth stewardship, environmental democracy, social justice and community empowerment - still guide our work for social change. Our staff and volunteers put into practice the ideals of love of community and love of neighbor, which help us to serve the movement for environmental protection and progressive social change in Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama and Tennessee.

Grassroots Campaigns

Nothing creates hopefulness out of helplessness like a successful grassroots campaign - and our chapters have a history of winning. For over twenty-eight years Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League chapters have protected their communities by stopping dangerous facilities and promoting safe alternatives.

In the 1980's and 1990's, BREDL prevented a multi-state ThermalKEM hazardous waste incinerator, a southeastern nuclear waste dump and a national nuclear waste dump. In the 2000's, our coordinated grassroots citizens' campaigns have had further victories. We won a legislative victory with the passage of the NC Solid Waste Act, effectively blocking at least four multi-state mega-dumps. Our Person County chapter convinced their Board of Commissioners to reject expansion of the Republic Services landfill. Our Cascade, Virginia, chapter shut down a huge hazardous waste incinerator. We eliminated mercury waste from the Stericycle incinerator, shut down a tire incinerator in Martinsville, won the landmark environmental justice court decision in Greene County, NC. Further, with our chapters we have protected air quality by blocking scores of asphalt plants, four medical waste incinerators, a PVC plant and a lead smelter, and passage by local governments of eight polluting industries ordinances. Our work on nuclear power and coal plants laid the groundwork for our new Safe Energy Campaign. Victories over twenty-four mega-dumps have resulted in our affirmative Zero Waste Campaign. Guided by the principles of earth stewardship and environmental justice, we have learned that empowering whole communities with effective grassroots campaigns is the most effective strategy for lasting change.



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2019

A quarterly publication of:

**Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League
(BREDL)**

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Whatever it takes

A reporter writing about BREDL's work in 1995 asked our founding executive director Janet Marsh, "Can you win?" Without hesitation, Janet replied, "Yes, without a doubt. Whenever a group of people put together a citizens' action campaign and develop and implement strategies and ask themselves how far they'll go and what they're willing to do; as long as the answer is 'Whatever it takes,' they can't possibly lose."

On March 15, 2019, BREDL celebrated its 35th anniversary. The Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League has chalked up many victories during that time. Defeating a national radioactive dump for commercial nuclear power plant waste was the first. Other victories followed, halting ThermalKEM's multi-state hazardous waste incinerator, the Southeast Compact's eight-state radioactive dumpsite for so-called low-level waste, a series of chicken manure-fueled power plants, several nuclear power plants, a plutonium fuel factory and scores of polluting incinerators, megadumps, asphalt plants and other toxic projects throughout the region. Throughout these hard-fought campaigns, our guiding principle was doing whatever it takes.

Each success took months, years, even decades to realize. Some were accomplished together with allied groups, others we did alone. Some were accomplished despite outright disagreement from our peers; for example, the goal of improving regulations for incinerator ash was never acceptable to us. We put all our efforts into preventing the incinerator, whatever it took.

This is BREDL's DNA. We prepare no backup positions. We do not curry favor or keep the door open to compromise — an in-case-we-lose defense — because that is a strategy of defeat, one which divides resources, weakens resolve and causes some to take their eye off the ball, instead of committing to do whatever it takes.

We go to extraordinary lengths to work with people in places which are secure and accessible to them — conference rooms, libraries, fire departments, fellowship halls in their communities — on weekday evenings and weekends as needed. Our history brackets the advent of the Internet, providing auxiliary means of organizing, allowing us to render long-distance assistance as far away as South Africa, Ireland and New Zealand. But on our home turf, now six southeastern states, we go to the communities requesting our assistance, not merely to talk or exchange information, but to meet people, to inquire, to see first-hand the places which are in harm's way and to get a feel for their daily life and circumstances. Whatever it takes.

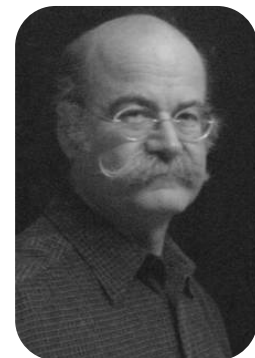
Presently, the fossil fuel dinosaur continues to thrash its tail in the death throes of coal-fired power plants and natural gas pipelines. Despite backsets, members of our local chapters have never relented. According to the pipeline industry's plans, both the Atlantic Coast and Mountain Valley lines were to have been in operation by now. But the never-give-up attitude of residents in scores of communities has brought them to a standstill. In acts of wanton destruction and callous disregard designed to extinguish hope, pipeline

contractors have leveled forests and laid waste to pristine streams and rivers. But every day that the gas is delayed the power companies lose money. Investment managers are getting skittish. At some point the financial spigot will run dry. Whatever it takes.

A recent victory which portends much in the fight for climate justice is the adoption by the City of Augusta, Georgia, of a 100% clean, renewable energy goal. This is a visionary program. The climate crisis calls upon us to do all we can, to not accept half-measures or compromises even if it means leaving untouched much of the oil, natural gas and coal in global reserves. Whatever it takes.

Though she has passed away, our Founder's words and principles serve us well: answering calls from those in harm's way, recognizing the innate power of organized people, translating goals into action, and building an organization ready to do "whatever it takes."

Lou Zeller



David vs Goliath: North Carolina Landowners Continue to Win in Federal Court against the Atlantic Coast Pipeline

By Therese Vick



You may have heard about some of the fierce legal battles in Virginia on the Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP), but there are other legal battles being waged against the endeavor. North Carolina landowners are standing strong against the behemoth project. Several Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League (BREDL) Chapter leaders – Valerie Williams (Concerned Stewards of Halifax County), Celena and Robert Bissette (Wilson County No Pipeline), and Marvin Winstead (Nash Stop the Pipeline)—are among those fighting attempts by ACP to obtain access to their land.

The ACP is a partnership between two energy giants- Dominion and Duke Energy as well as Piedmont Natural Gas and Southern Company and has almost limitless legal resources. ACP first took Marvin Winstead to federal court in March 2018 attempting a “quick take” of his property; essentially asking to access his property before all court cases have been concluded, including an eminent domain decision. Marvin was represented by attorney Cathy Cralle-Jones of the Raleigh firm Bryan Brice. It was a dramatic scene- on one side almost a dozen

people there representing the ACP in one way or another, on the other Winstead’s attorney and Virginia attorney Chuck Lollar who was representing his Halifax County client. Federal Circuit Judge Terrence Boyle heard the case and decided in Winstead’s favor. This decision essentially stopped the pipeline in its tracks because no tree felling could occur between the end of March and November. Lisa Sorg made the long trek to Elizabeth City and reported on the proceedings and the decision: [BREAKING: Federal judge rules in favor of two landowners in Atlantic Coast Pipeline case.](#)

As November approached, ACP renewed attempts to force landowners to give them access. In response, Cralle-Jones (now also representing the Bissette’s and Valerie Williams) motioned the Court for a stay. In the motion filed she argued:

“Pushing forward with construction in North Carolina while permits in West Virginia and Virginia and the first 150 miles of the route are unsettled, is like a contractor installing a roof on a building whose foundation is unstable, and the walls have not been raised. If the roof

cannot be completed, the harm to the contractor is not from the incomplete roof, but from trying to place a roof before the foundation and framing are complete.”

On November 14, 2018, Judge Boyle granted the landowners a 90-day stay!

Early in 2019, Judge Boyle directed the parties to prepare for a status conference prior to the stay running out. The hearing was held in Raleigh on February 28 th . As before, there were many “suits” representing the ACP, and on the other side the landowners’ attorney. Judge Boyle asked good questions, and on March 1, he again granted a 90-day stay. This stops any tree-felling until November 2019, further hampering ACP’s plans.

The Court has ruled three times in landowner’s favor against a giant conglomerate. Communities continue to fight this ill-conceived project, in the courts and on the ground. ■



The Importance of having an Environmental Justice Program at the Community Level

By

Charles N. Utley, Associate Director and EJ Coordinator

There are many injustices that are taking place in our world today that we have no control over. However, when we have an opportunity to have an Environmental Justice Program active in our communities it's an assist to that community. This is an area that I have noticed over the last forty plus years that wherever communities have the voice of Environmental Justice, speaking their concerns helps in their community plight.

We must remember that Environmental Justice spans the globe, it is the door of opportunity to equity and equality of life. It is the fight for the next generation to have access to a healthy and safe community. There are many who have doubt that our world's climate is being affected by the way we live. Therefore, we must move to close the knowledge information gap through our youth by providing them with the needed tools both in our communities and in our schools.

BREDL's Internship with Paine College helps us to provide training and support to a student each year. Therefore, closing the gap by providing up to date statistical data that is gathered by the student. This data is then presented in a way that the community can understand their own environment, the places where they live. These future scientists,

community organizers, and environmentalists will gain a wealth of knowledge beyond the classroom, providing a way to implement their findings through continued research and personal contact with the community.

The continual research from the student intern combined with known actual scientific facts will enhance each community's true knowledge of what Environmental Justice really represents. Therefore, the student gets an opportunity to work hand and hand on issuers and concerns in our communities. Our Intern has an opportunity to work in the communities, with those who are experiencing environmental injustice on a daily base. They will know what it is like to live in a community where there is an elevated cancer rate that is continuing to grow. They will see what it means to have the giant towers from nuclear plants spewing out unknown debris over their homes twenty-four hour a day seven days a week.

There is a growing demand from communities for this type of assistance that we provide through our Internship Program at Paine College. The expertise that is provided through the knowledge of those at Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League is in synonymous with the values of our communities where we

work, keeping their goals in mind. Environment Justice must continue to serve as the gateway that provides equal justice for all communities.

An example of the effectiveness of having Environmental Justice at the community level is evident in the successful relocation of the Hyde Park Community in Augusta, Georgia, although it took approximately twenty-five years to achieve. Therefore, we will now be addressing the health concerns of the former residents of the area. We cannot forget that this community has been exposed to numerous carcinogens, contamination and environmental injustices from its beginning in the early 1940s. Now that the residents have been relocated to new homes, away from the immediate problem, we must not forget them. Therefore, our internship program will also include reaching out to those residents and checking their health status. This will be a part of our Environmental Justice at the community level.

I look forward to continuing these endeavors through the support of Dr. Jerry L. Hardee, President of Paine College and Mr. Louis Zeller, Executive Director of Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League. ■

Compressor Station's Toxic Fluctuations

By Pastor Cary Rodgers



April 5, 2019

For the last five years during the fracking boom bonanza of natural gas that as devastated the environment and health of many communities there has been a lot of talk about the dangers of compressor stations. What are compressor stations and why is difficult to adequately monitor its true pollution output?

Natural gas when it is transported through hundreds miles pipeline has to maintain a concern amount of pressure from its origin to its final destination. Compressor stations also know as “pumping stations” that are placed along the pipeline route between 40 to 100 mile intervals to help maintain the pressure as the natural gas travels through it. For example, the Atlantic Coast Pipeline that is proposed to transport “fracked” natural gas at a pressure of 1400 psi for over 500 miles from West Virginia, through Virginia, to North Carolina is projected to have three compressor stations. 1400 psi is about 40 times greater than the pressure in a car tire.¹

A compressor station keeps the gas highly pressurized by using multiple turbines, motors, or engines that has to run 24/7. The Atlantic Coast Pipeline is projected to use at least four large gas powered turbines at its compressor stations that will produce the horsepower of over 200 race cars and will emit toxic pollution that is equivalent to an average of 500 or more diesel bus running 24

hours a day, seven days a week.²

Compressor stations are industrialized polluting machines that emit toxic pollutants such as methane, nitrogen oxide (NO_x), and carbon monoxide (CO) that can harm the health of individuals and families who live nearby. These compressors stations are also extremely loud and noisy.

For about five years BREDL has helped the citizens of Anson County oppose and keep track of an active natural gas compressor station in Wadesboro, NC owned by Piedmont Natural Gas (PNG). This facility currently operates four large natural gas fired combustion engines at 4,735 horsepower.

BREDL's analysis has found that the compressor station in Wadesboro has emitted much more pollution than projected and permitted by North Carolina Department of Air Quality (NCDAQ). They have found that the emission of pollution fluctuates greatly depending the amount of load is placed on the engines. In layman's terms, a load is the amount of “throttle power” low or high on an engine. For example the further you press the gas pedal down on a running car to increase speed you are increasing the load on the engine. When you ease foot off the pedal you are decreasing the load on your engine.

US Environmental Protection Agency air pollution factors predict these engine load fluctuations at the compressor station in Wadesboro. The following table shows the fluctuations of the emissions of NO_x and CO pollutants depending on the load the engine. (Emissions shown in pounds per million BTU heat input)

Notice that the differences indicated on the chart are in opposite directions. For example, NO_x levels are higher at about 100% load and CO levels are higher when the load is below 90%. As a result these changes in load have major variation air pollution emissions.

These emission variations at compressor stations makes compliance to air permit limits extremely difficult for state air regulators to adequately monitor the true output on total pollution.

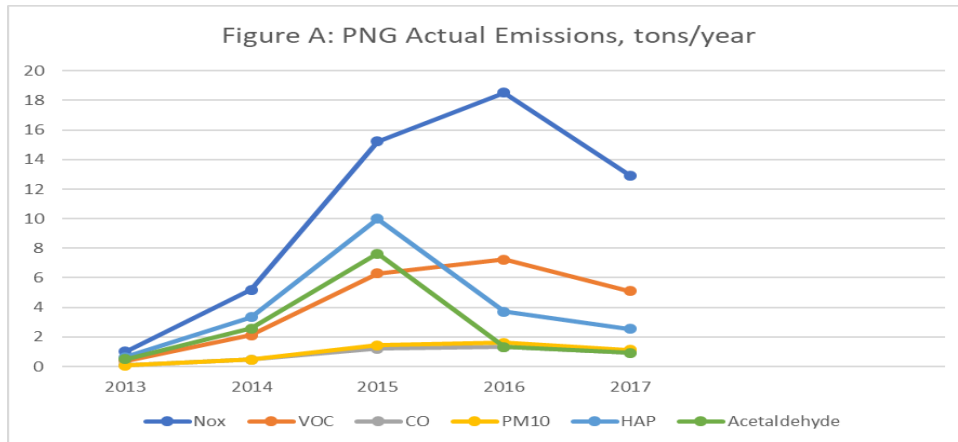
References: 1 & 2 - <http://www.friendsofbuckinghamva.org/friends/learning-center/compressor/>

Pollutant	90-105% Load	<90% Load	Difference
NO _x	4.08	0.847	482%
CO	0.317	0.557	76%

Environmental Justice Failure by North Carolina

Executive Director Lou Zeller

As Pastor Rodgers points out, toxic fluctuations in air pollution occur in all pipeline compressors. And PNG wants to double the size of its Wadesboro compressor station, adding four more units. To counter this, BREDL has obtained North Carolina permit documents which record total *actual emissions* at the Wadesboro compressor station for the years 2013–2017. Those data, presented here, illustrate that enormous fluctuations in emissions have indeed occurred during the five-year period of operation with four units. The record bears out our prediction.



	Nox	VOC	CO	PM10	HAP	Acetaldehyde
2013	1	0.39	0.11	0.08	0.6264	0.4929
2014	5.19	2.13	0.48	0.48	3.35	2.58
2015	15.22	6.3	1.2	1.43	9.99	7.64
2016	18.51	7.24	1.31	1.6	3.71	1.33
2017	12.92	5.09	0.94	1.11	2.54	0.9302

The PNG Wadesboro compressor station is in a county with a plurality of African American residents and a high level of people below poverty level. Anson County's population is 48.5% black, 48.2% white, and 22.2% of the people are below poverty level, compared to the statewide level of 16.8%.

A study by Duke University's Nicholas School of the Environment found significant relationships between race, poverty and excessive levels of air pollution. It concludes:

Focusing on PM2.5 and ozone, we find that within areas covered by the monitoring networks, non-Hispanic blacks are consistently overrepresented in communities with the poorest air quality.... Rural areas are typically outside the bounds of air quality monitoring networks leaving large segments of the population without information about their ambient air quality. These results suggest that substantial areas of the United States lack monitoring data, and among areas where monitoring data are available, low income and minority communities tend to experience higher ambient pollution levels.²

This study indicates higher risk to public health in Anson County, which, in addition to the Piedmont Natural Gas compressor station, is the site of several other major sources of air pollution. North Carolina Environmental Equity Policy requires the state to "Address environmental equity issues in permitting decisions potentially having a disparate impact on communities protected by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964."³ Based upon the presence of a natural gas compressor station and pipeline, the prospect of fracking and other factors, North Carolina must do what it has so far failed to do: evaluate cumulative and secondary air pollution impacts.⁴ ■

²"Making the Environmental Justice Grade: The Relative Burden of Air Pollution Exposure in the United States," Miranda ML *et al*, *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health* 2011, 8, 1755-1771, 25 May 2011

³NCDENR Environmental Equity Initiative, Secretary Holman, Effective Date Oct. 19, 2000

⁴North Carolina Environmental Policy Act of 1971, Chapter 113A, §§ 113A-1, *et. seq*

Clean Water Act Under Attack

One Step Forward, Two Steps Back

By Ann Rogers, April 2019



On February 14, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Department of the Army (USACE) published for public comment a proposed rule defining the scope of waters federally regulated under the Clean Water Act. This proposal was initiated by President Trump's 2017 executive order titled "Restoring the Rule of Law, Federalism, and Economic Growth by Reviewing the Waters of the United States Rule." The administration's stated intention in this rulemaking was to "increase CWA program predictability and consistency by increasing clarity as to the scope of 'waters of the United States' federally regulated under the Act."

This action to redefine the definition of "Waters of the US" (WOTUS) is the latest in a continuum of such efforts on the part of the courts, EPA, and USACE since the 1972 Clean Water Act amendments were promulgated. The February 14 Federal Register notice seeking public comment on the new Trump version of WOTUS chronicles the evolution of the definition of WOTUS through regulatory revisions in 1975, 1977, 1986, and 1993, after which came *Rapanos v. United States* (547 U.S. 715). In the 2006 *Rapanos* decision, the U.S. Supreme Court interpreted WOTUS to "include

only those relatively permanent, standing or continuously flowing bodies of water forming geographic features that are described in ordinary parlance as streams . . . oceans, rivers, [and] lakes, and wetlands with a continuous surface connection to a relatively permanent water."

In 2015, the Obama administration revolutionized the idea of WOTUS using a highly nuanced and quantitative set of definitions, and actually used the idea of how a body of water functions within its local aquifer and ecology as one of several scientifically developed bases for determining whether it has "significant nexus" with navigable waters, and thus status as WOTUS and protection under the Clean Water Act.

The Trump order now seeks to take a step backward toward the *Rapanos* interpretation, defining WOTUS exclusively as above-ground geographic features, rather than on their function within an aquifer or local ecological system, as defined in the Obama rule.

Many water resources get left out of

WOTUS as a result of the Trump revision, including ephemeral streams and other water bodies that only contain water during, or in response to rainfall, and groundwater. The biggest losers under the Trump rule would be wetlands, which cannot be protected as WOTUS unless they abut jurisdictional waters (i.e., waters that visibly connect to navigable waters) or have an above-ground connection to jurisdictional waters in a typical year.

It appears that wetlands emerging from groundwater, such as the famous wetlands of Bent Mountain, Virginia, will now be excluded from protections under Trump's version of Clean Water Act.

It is difficult not to view the furor over WOTUS with skepticism when one observes how the Clean Water Act process, as administered by Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, has failed miserably to provide protections for hundreds of tributaries crossed by the Mountain Valley Pipeline and Atlantic Coast Pipeline – all of which were considered WOTUS from the very beginning of the environmental review processes for these destructive pipelines. ■



Mountain Valley Pipeline construction in Franklin County, VA, January 2019

New Chapter Forms in Rabun Gap, Georgia

Hey, Let's Put a Public Water Treatment Facility on a Hazardous Site. Yeah, That Sounds Great.

By Mark Barker



Rabun Gap, Georgia is a beautiful mountainous community in Rabun County that sits in the Northeast corner of Georgia bordered by North Carolina to the north and South Carolina to the east. The Eastern Continental Divide runs through Rabun County, which is home to Georgia's second and third highest peaks (Rabun Bald at 4,696 feet and Dick's Knob at 4,620 feet).

Rabun County is also home to two sites listed on the Georgia Environmental Protection Division Hazardous Sites list. GA EPD is a division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. The two hazardous sites are the Rabun Apparel (formerly Rabun Mills) in Rabun Gap and A.I.D. Company in Clayton.

A few citizens created the Rabun Gap chapter of BREDL in January to focus on the concerns surrounding these hazardous sites. Cherie Faircloth and Tom Resta are two of the residents driving this new chapter. At the forefront is the local water treatment plant that is located on the Rabun Apparel site. I met with Cherie and Tom in Rabun Gap on November 4. During my visit, we toured Rabun County as they pointed out some of their concerns.

The Rabun Apparel site was the home to Burlington Industries, carpeting manufacturing, from circa 1955 until the summer of 1992. Shortly after, in September 1992 Fruit of the Loom announced the purchase of the old Burlington facility. Fruit of the Loom ended its operations in Rabun Gap in 2006. During the Burlington years of operation, the company released trichloroethene (TCE) - a known carcinogen- and chlorine on site. This has resulted in groundwater contamination. On June 29, 1994 GA EPD listed Rabun Apparels on the Georgia hazardous site list. EPD listed 13 toxic substances that were released into the soil and groundwater. On March 17, 2003 EPD issued an Enforcement Order requiring a revised compliance status report and plans for corrective action. In February 2007, the contractor Duncklee & Dunham prepared a Corrective Action Plan which the EPD approved.

Site: Rabun Apparel

GA EPD Number: 10281

Substance Released	GW	Soil
1,1,1-Trichloroethane	✓	
1,1-Dichloroethene	✓	
bis(2-Ethylhexyl) phthalate	✓	
Chloroform	✓	✓
Naphthalene	✓	
Trichloroethene	✓	✓
Zinc	✓	
1,1-Dichloroethane	✓	
Barium	✓	
Carbon tetrachloride	✓	
Ethylbenzene		✓
Phenol		✓
Xylenes		✓

Source:
Georgia
Environmental
Protection
Division

In December 2007, Rabun County purchased the water and sewer treatment facilities of the former Rabun Apparels facility. Then, in January 2008 Rabun County entered into an agreement with the Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority (GEFA) to borrow up to \$6.4 million to purchase the existing water supply and wastewater treatment facility located on the former Rabun Apparel site. The project consisted of rehabilitation and conversion of existing facilities, a new water treatment plant, new pipe line so that these facilities can provide municipal water supply and wastewater services. By June 21, 2012 Rabun County had completed the project for municipal water and wastewater services.

Hazardous site documents, including the Compliance Status Report and the Corrective Action Plan, are not made easily accessible to the public. BREDL and our chapter are planning a trip to the GA EPD to review the facility files in Atlanta. We are aware of several areas of concern. As with most hazardous sites, the groundwater is not being evaluated and monitored off site. Thus, we have no indication of how far the contamination has travelled. In addition, there has been no air monitoring surrounding this site. TCE is known to induce vapor intrusion, where chemicals in contaminated soil and groundwater vaporize into indoor air. In addition, PFAS have been used in the carpet industry for stain resistant and water repellant purposes. PFAS could be another group of harmful chemicals in the area groundwater. PFAS are not commonly tested for during drinking water supply testing. PFAS which are per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances includes hundreds of chemicals, some of which have known health impacts.

The chapter is planning a strategy and organizational meeting once additional information is gathered from our EPD visit. This will also include gathering additional information on the A.I.D. Company hazardous site in Clayton. ■



Rabun County, Georgia

Site: A.I.D. Company

GA EPD Number: 10172

Substance Released	GW	Soil
Cis-1,2-Dichloroethene	✓	
Trichloroethene	✓	
Tetrachloroethene	✓	✓
Vinyl chloride	✓	

Saving the Jewel of the Blue Ridge

Emily Sontag, Sustainable Madison

Madison County, known as the “Jewel of the Blue Ridge,” is home to the historic towns of Marshall, Hot Springs, and Mars Hill, which have all seen a renaissance in the last 10 years. Our rejuvenated downtowns are now attracting art, music and food lovers from all over the world and outdoor enthusiasts flock to our area for clean air, pristine mountain vistas, and healthy rivers. So, when we learned of French Broad Paving’s plans to install an asphalt plant in a stone quarry, the community launched an active campaign opposing the plant.

The proposed plant site is less than a half-mile from vulnerable populations for whom exposure to air pollutants is particularly dangerous. Some of these facilities include the Madison County Childhood Center, Elderberry Health Care nursing home, the Madison County Health Department; the Mashburn Medical Center; and the Marshall Senior citizens center.

The site is just over one mile from the historic downtown of Marshall, only 1400 feet from the French Broad River and surrounded by established residential neighborhoods.

Although the company applying for the permit to build the plant maintained a low profile, concerned citizens who learned of the plans reacted quickly, forming Sustainable Madison and becoming a chapter of BREDL. Our group launched an energetic movement to get the word out and stop this plant from becoming a reality. As word started to spread, our group experienced an overwhelming outpouring of support in a very short time. We launched a website, email list and Facebook pages, and we held a wildly successful informational and fundraising event at a local brewery featuring music, food, and a silent auction. An information table allowed the community to speak directly to our board members and take home information to further spread the word. Within the first months Sustainable Madison was able to obtain over 1700 signatures on our petition opposing the plant and raise over \$35,000 towards our anticipated legal fees.

Sustainable Madison energized the community to attend our local government and board meetings, breaking attendance records for the Board of Commissioners meetings, which 400 people attended. We lined

up dozens of speakers for public comments, and our local newspaper has had op-eds opposing the plant every issue. We proposed changes to our land use ordinances, formally asked our local government to enact a moratorium, and implored our county boards and commissioners to take a stand. We were successful in many of our efforts—appealing to the town of Marshall for a resolution opposing the plant, obtaining letters opposing the plant from the Downtown Marshall Association, the Hot Springs Tourism Association and many large employers—but the Madison County Commissioners chose not to take a stand.

We are now preparing for the Board of Adjustment hearing, which begins on April 22nd, where the conditional use permit will either be granted or denied. Regardless of the outcome of this hearing, Sustainable Madison intends to maintain a presence, advocating grassroots involvement in our community on environmental issues. Our focus is on preserving the health and beauty of “The Jewel of The Blue Ridge Mountains” for future generations. ■



BREDL Welcomes New Staff Members Renee Cail and Jenn Galler

As president of Citizens for a Healthy and Safe Environmental (C.H.A.S.E.) my initial contact with Blue Ridge Environmental League (BREDL), occurred while we were in a raging battle with Green Energy Partners to keep a bio-mass plant out of our community. The organization has maintained a partnership ever since.

BREDL provided staff support and shared valuable information when it was requested. BREDL's resources in community organizing has proved to be invaluable contributing to our continued quest for a safer planet and an enhanced quality of life.

I am anxious to learn more about moratoriums and how to pressure politicians into changing zoning laws and ordinances that harm communities instead of strengthening them. I look forward to working on the devastation of fracking, coal ash, the Atlantic pipeline and its many harmful effects on the environment and community. I would like to acquire more information in these critical areas.

Environmental justice work is important to me because I

have a responsibility to help initiate change as our world is in great danger. The actions and sharing of information have proved to be an awesome tool as we must educate each other about ways to eradicate polluting industries and improve the lives of others.

I am motivated observing people working together to develop innovative methods of sustainable and renewable energy. I value the challenges associated with this work as it inspires me to learn as much as I can in order to impart this information to the community with emphasis on our young people. It is awesome to know that I can show others that they have the power to change a world that has so much beauty and affords so much opportunity. ■



Renee Cail

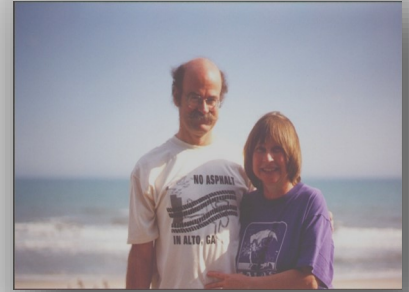
Jenn graduated last year from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga earning her degree in Public Administration and Nonprofit Management. While at university, she studied abroad in Australia for Sustainability and Environmental Policy/Action and that is where she found her passion for environmental activism. She interned with a Protect Our Parks campaign as the Grassroots Coordinator where she organized community events, collected petition signatures, and built a broad coalition of local groups to protect the Antiquities Acts, Land & Water Conservation Fund and other laws protecting natural places. Upon graduation she became the Regional Organizer with Southern Alliance for Clean Energy throughout the cities of Knoxville and Chattanooga building volunteer led groups and hosting community events to advocate for clean, affordable energy in Tennessee. A highlight of her work for SACE was organizing the "0.5k Run-

Around" at Tennessee Valley Authority headquarters to protest the renewable energy runaround ratepayers are getting from TVA. Also, she served on the board of the Sierra Club Chattanooga Chapter with Sandy Kurtz and Sandy referred her to the Community Organizer position. Jenn is now located in Knoxville, TN and beyond excited to start with BREDL on a variety of environmental issues! ■

Jenn Galler



BREDL
PO BOX 88
Glendale Springs
NC 28629



**Contact BREDL to help organize your community and
plan events to educate others about your issue and
expand your membership so you can win!**

BREDL is a regional, community-based non-profit environmental organization founded in 1984. BREDL encourages government agencies and citizens to take responsibility for conserving and protecting our natural resources. BREDL advocates grassroots involvement in environmental issues. Protecting children's health from environmental poisons, empowering whole communities to engage in crucial decision making, and changing the balance of power to prevent injustice are key components of our work.

**Visit www.bredl.org to view our interactive timeline that spans 30 years of
environmental work across the southeast.
Your donation will help us to carry on for years to come!**

Thank you for supporting Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League
It's easier than ever to **join**, **renew** and **donate** online.
Check out our secure online donation forms and use your credit card at **www.BREDL.org**.
Or send your check to: BREDL PO Box 88 Glendale Springs, NC 28629
For more information contact BREDL at 336-982-2691.
All donations are tax deductible.

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