



Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League

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Activists Dub McAuliffe “The Pipeline Planter” at Private Event held at Public State Park

Huddleston, Virginia—Protesters for both the proposed Atlantic Coast and Mountain Valley Pipelines met at the Smith Mountain Lake State Park this afternoon to mock Governor McAuliffe’s attempted greenwashing of his environmental record by planting trees in the State Park. One protester, wearing a suit and McAuliffe mask, held a dead tree in one arm with a sign saying, “I’m a tree killer.” In the other arm, he held a pipeline with a sign that said, “I’m a pipeline planter.”

Guy Buford, a retired civil engineer and member of Preserve Franklin, is very concerned about the many water crossings proposed in Franklin County. A majority of the streams which would be cut or blasted through by the proposed Mountain Valley Pipeline are tributaries to Smith Mountain Lake. The lake is a recreation and tourist destination as well as a major source of tax revenue for Franklin County. “Should it become polluted and filled with sediment from run-off, the county’s tax revenues would plummet,” stated Buford. “Not to mention, that many of us use springs and wells as our private water sources. What is the blasting going to do to our water supply?”

Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League (BREDL) Community Organizers quickly pulled people together from various communities and grassroots groups to take action and reinforce the latest low score report card on energy issues that Governor McAuliffe received. McAuliffe is well versed at spouting the talking points of energy companies, like Dominion and EQT, but has refused to sit down with landowners to listen to their concerns.

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“BREDL finds it ironic the Governor would schedule a private event at Smith Mountain Lake State Park to plant a tree, while he supports thousands upon thousands of trees to be clear cut through Virginia’s mountains, forests and farms for rights-of-way of two proposed pipelines,” stated Sharon Ponton, BREDL Community Organizer.

Several landowners and residents present for the action recently had their spirits bolstered by a visit from Jane Kleeb, nationally known as “The Keystone Killer” and founder of BOLD Nebraska. Carolyn Reilly, affected landowner and BREDL Community Organizer shared, “Today’s action is a flower blooming from the seeds of inspiration and hope that Jane shared with many in April. My goal is that we continue to grow in our efforts to activate change in our state and beyond.”

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