



# BLUE RIDGE ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE LEAGUE

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## The LEAGUE LINE

AUTUMN 2018

### Resolution for Zero Waste, and Renewable Energy



From Left to Right: Michael Johnson (Concerned Citizens of Shell Bluff) Charles Utley, Mayor Hardie Davis, Jr., Lillie Wilson (CCSB), Claude Howard, Gen. Lowery (Richmond County Neighborhood Alliance)

#### Inside Line:

**Director's Report: Understanding the Dynamics of Power**  
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**Drastic Improvement Needed to Protect Historic Sites**  
*Ann Rogers*

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*Wanda Flythe*

**People's Action: From Protest to Power. The People's Assembly**  
*Mark Barker*

**Can we talk Coal Ash?**  
*Therese Vick*

On September 4, 2018, the City of Augusta, Georgia, approved a resolution supporting the city's transition to clean, renewable energy. The resolution was the result of months of meetings with city staff and government officials initiated by community leaders, including Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League, the Concerned Citizens of Shell Bluff—a chapter member based in Waynesboro, and The Richmond County Neighborhood Alliance in Augusta.

The goal of the resolution is to halt climate change. Experts in this field say that the best way to meet the goal is the plan generated by Dr. Mark Jacobson at Stanford U. and other scientists and engineers at Stanford and UC-Berkeley. Named "The Solutions Project,"

Jacobson's analysis is based on existing technology and includes specific plans for all fifty states, with jobs and economic factors supporting the goal.

Reflecting on this major step forward, Charles Utley said, "Unity and working together pays off."

The plan is to shift to 100% clean and renewable energy in all energy sectors—including electricity, manufacturing, commerce and transportation—by 2050 or sooner.

A facsimile of the resolution signed by Mayor Hardie Davis, Jr. is reproduced on page 7 of this issue of the League Line.

2018





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

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### **2018 BREDL Board Executive Committee**

#### **Co-Presidents**

Sam Tesh  
Sandra Kurtz

#### **Emeritus Vice President**

James A. Johnson

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Elizabeth O'Nan  
Pat Hill  
John Wagner  
Rev. W.B. Tomlin  
Kathie Mosley

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#### **Executive Director**

Louis Zeller

#### **Associate Director**

Rev. Charles Utley

#### **Executive Assistant**

Mark Barker

#### **Sustainable Economic Development Coordinator**

Therese Vick

#### **Environmental Justice Coordinator**

Pastor Cary Rodgers

#### **Director of Development**

Ann Rogers

#### **Community Organizer**

Sharon Ponton

## Understanding the Dynamics of Power Critically important to Winning

*"Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will. Find out just what any people will quietly submit to and you have found out the exact measure of injustice and wrong which will be imposed upon them, and these will continue till they are resisted with either words or blows, or both. The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress."* — Frederick Douglass

Winning a contest against a powerful foe requires strategies which alter the balance of power. Tactics which alter the balance of power often involve confrontation, disruption and surprise. But done well they steer participants away from fruitless fits of anger, violent outbursts and other ineffective tactics.

For example, at a recent state meeting, the official in charge threatened to close the meeting if the audience's catcalls and outbursts did not cease. The threat silenced the crowd, thereby allowing the official to regain control and, most importantly, the ability to proceed with his agenda. A vote was held and the company got its request approved. Actually, the crowded roomful of people silenced themselves. Why? Worse, the poorly orchestrated protest was counterproductive because the audience's venting resulted in a confirmation of state power. Borne of frustration, anger and feelings of powerlessness resulted.

A better plan of action is to disrupt the status quo—peacefully—without indulging in random outbursts or martyrdom. Organized, it focuses the public's anger and substitutes frustration with measured, determined resistance.

Another example, a solitary person rises to speak in a deliberate voice and calmly insists on being heard. Naturally, she/he is silenced and perhaps ejected from the meeting. As soon as things settle down,

another rises and, in the same fashion, is ejected. Maybe you have only six people ready to follow suit, but the officials in charge cannot know how many you have, six or sixty. You will look organized, and your opponent and others—including the media—will see it. If activists persist and the meeting is closed, have a plan for that. A shut down meeting can have a better result, at least in the short term, because the vote will have been delayed and the audience will have held sway. Yes, the board would re-convene, perhaps in secret. But they would return to their agenda with difficulty—with new meeting time and place—but they could not regain the day. And a closed session or secretive meeting poses its own difficulties for officials (open meeting laws) and provides the public with a new storyline to pursue (Headline: "State Officials Shut Out the Public").

Sometimes, people perceive such tactics through a narrow lens, saying "But I don't want to lose my chance to speak." Under ordinary circumstances, speaking during a public comment period is good. But in terms of relative power, such statements are in accord with the existing structure of authority. As such, they are easily dismissed and, more importantly, they do not challenge the power of the decision-makers. Many people, after submitting oral or written remarks, feel like they have been ignored. This feeling is justified.

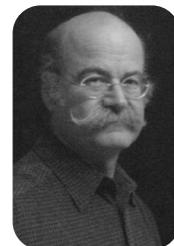
Many activists follow a pattern of investigating the facts and testifying at official meetings in hopes that it will sway decision-makers and have them take recommended actions. This approach is a starting place, but when it fails another approach is required. Most likely, the information ferreted out by diligent citizens is already well-known by decision makers and their advisors, perhaps provided by company officials soliciting them. How can you inform decision-makers and have the desired effect if they already

know what you know? What can you add to a cup that is already full? Facts alone are rarely the answer.

Only by becoming visible can the power of the people outweigh the power of officials. Every organized event presents an opportunity to display and advance people power. Of course, a single such action is not enough; therefore, the activist's strategy must continually devise new obstacles for officials, not simply duplicate the same action. The authorities will be better prepared for repeats. Setbacks and poorly managed events must be recognized quickly and steps taken to regain momentum. The power of your argument must be matched by the power of your deeds.

*"Those of us who are organizers, rabble-rousers, activists and quiet lovers of justice did not invent this struggle for a more just and humane world. The fight has been going on for thousands and thousands of years. In every one of those generations, there have been people like us, creative radicals and rebels, who believed in and worked for the possibility of justice for all. That struggle may have been driven underground. But, like the river of which Vincent Harding so eloquently writes in *There Is a River*, it has never once stopped running."*

Si Kahn, Creative Community Organizing, 2010, ISBN 978-1-60509-444-1 (pbk.)



*Louis A. Zeller*

# Drastic Improvement Needed to Protect Historic Sites

By Ann Rogers

In July, the Section 106 Coordinator for BREDL, Ann Rogers, submitted comments to Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) in response to the Commission's Notice of Inquiry seeking "information and stakeholder perspectives to help the Commission explore whether, and if so how, it should revise its approach under its currently effective policy statement on the certification of new natural gas transportation facilities to determine whether a proposed natural gas project is or will be required by the present or future public convenience and necessity, as that standard is established in section 7 of the Natural Gas Act." FERC's inquiry also sought the public's views on FERC's procedures for evaluating the environmental impacts of pipelines.

Federal law mandates consideration of impacts to historic resources under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as part of the overarching consideration of a federally-licensed or funded project's environmental impacts under National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

BREDL has been actively engaged in Section 106 for the Mountain Valley Pipeline (MVP) since 2015, when Rogers, working at that time as a volunteer for BREDL chapter, Preserve Roanoke, began talking to landowners in Bent Mountain, VA about developing new rural historic districts in areas where MVP wished to

build its pipeline. The citizens of Bent Mountain responded with a resounding "yes!" to this idea, sharing family histories, access to family records, communication with experts on local history, and assistance with surveying and mapping on the wild, rugged, steeply-sloped landscapes of Bent Mountain.

Our work resulted in Virginia Department of Historic Resources' approval of two new rural historic districts on Bent Mountain in 2017 and 2018, the Coles-Terry Rural Historic District and the Bent Mountain Orchard Rural Historic District. We were extraordinarily proud to have this opportunity to bring to FERC and MVP's attention the presence of state-approved rural historic districts in the path of the pipeline, and we genuinely believed that the rules of Section 106 would force FERC to re-route the pipeline to avoid these historically significant landscapes.

Not so, however. The environmental review process as conducted by FERC, as we were to discover over the course of 2017 and 2018, is deliberately configured to sidestep consideration of impacts to historic resources. Submitting a report in response to FERC's Notice of Inquiry gave BREDL an opportunity to bring FERC to account for its flawed handling of Section 106. Below is an overview of what we reported.

## **(1) FERC's flawed process for engaging with Consulting Parties**

As required under Section 106, FERC was supposed to have identified organizations and individuals, called "Section 106 Consulting Parties", who have an interest in identifying and protecting historic resources potentially impacted by pipeline construction.

BREDL's report devotes seven pages to chronicling FERC's systematic exclusion of important preservation stakeholders from the Section 106 process for the MVP, and enumerates the functions within Section 106 undermined by FERC's policy that actively minimizes the involvement of consulting parties. Eleven specific functions of consulting parties as described in federal regulation were conveniently sidestepped in FERC's Section 106 process for the MVP, including the involvement of affected local governments like Roanoke County, who had to use tax dollars to employ legal counsel to convince FERC to give them consulting party status. But to no avail. FERC postponed consultation with Roanoke County an abysmal 26 months after the county was finally given consulting party status. That's like throwing a party and mailing invitations to your guests the next day.

## **(2) FERC's flawed process for engaging with Indian Tribes**

National Historic Preservation Act

regulations require federal agencies “to consult with Indian tribes when they attach religious and cultural significance to a historic property regardless of the location of that property. The circumstances of history may have resulted in an Indian tribe now being located a great distance from its ancestral homelands and places of importance.”

In March, 2018, the Cheyenne River Sioux and Rosebud Sioux Tribes became involved in the Section 106 process for the MVP, first visiting Roanoke and Franklin Counties on March 4 and 5, then again May 14-19 to conduct a Traditional Cultural Property survey. Repeated entreaties -- from the Sioux Tribal Historic Preservation Officers, from Preserve Roanoke, and from our attorney -- failed to convince FERC to invite these Sioux Tribes to participate as consulting parties in the Section 106 process for the MVP. BREDL, its two chapters Preserve Roanoke and Preserve Franklin, affected landowners Mike and Liz Reynolds, and the two Sioux Tribal Historic Preservation Officers are now seeking redress in the Washington D.C. Circuit Court.

### **(3) FERC’s flawed consideration of impacts to rural historic districts**

The assessment of the MVP’s impacts to rural historic districts, as required under Section 106, was delegated by FERC to Mountain Valley Pipeline, Inc., the company seeking federal permission to build the pipeline, and they, in turn, delegated the work to a contractor.

The methods used by this contractor, and condoned by MVP and FERC, employed the assumption that the pipeline’s potential to adversely impact the districts lay exclusively in whether the pipeline would be visible from historic buildings inside the districts. BREDL’s report exposed this highly questionable methodology, saying:

“The assumption employed by Tetra Tech – and condoned by FERC – that the MVP pipeline’s potential to adversely impact rural historic districts lies exclusively in whether the pipeline would be visible from historic buildings thereon is wholly untenable. Nowhere in National Park Service Bulletin 30 is it stated or implied that a rural historic district’s significance can or should be assessed solely on the basis of what can be seen from the district’s buildings, or from arbitrarily assigned “vistas” or “key observation point”. Tetra Tech’s analysis . . . imposes an arbitrary and capricious denial of the MVP pipeline’s impacts to the landscape and topographic features of rural historic districts in Virginia. Tetra Tech’s methodology is anathema to the preservation standards supported by both the National Park Service and the National Register of Historic Places.”

### **(4) FERC needs a Section 4(f)**

BREDL’s report concluded by saying that FERC’s working model of Section 106 is rife with shortcuts, employing radical redefinition of the precepts of preservation that render it virtually powerless as a tool for

protecting historic properties in the planning of natural gas pipelines.

BREDL’s report proposed that FERC’s own version of Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act be implemented in tandem with Section 106. FERC’s own Section 4(f) would improve protections for historic resources in the path of proposed pipelines under FERC’s purview, because it would preclude project approval when a prudent and feasible alternative could be adopted that would avoid impacts to those historic resources.

With FERC’s own Section 4(f), we might anticipate drastic improvements in FERC’s overall efficiency in avoiding impacts to the beautiful historic places in rural American – like Bent Mountain – that are at risk of being drastically transformed by pipeline construction.





By Mark Barker

# People’s Action: From Protest to Power

## The People’s Assembly

May 9 – 11, 2018

People’s Action and People’s Action Institute were founded in 2016 from a merger of several national groups including Center for Health, Environment and Justice (CHEJ). They are “fighting for community over greed, justice over racism, and people and planet over big corporations.”

As part of this reorganization, The People’s Assembly met on May 9 – 11, 2018 in Chicago so Delegates from the combined membership of People’s Action, including grassroots member-leaders, could set the broad, strategic direction of the organization and elect its Board of Directors. The Assembly included progressive groups from 30 states. CHEJ was granted two delegate seats. Lois Gibbs offered one of those to BREDL. I was honored to attend on behalf of BREDL to assess how we may fit into this new organization – if at all.

The first day was mostly discussion about the purpose, strategy and role of People’s Action in the progressive movement. There was also discussion about the group’s Long-

Term agenda: Public Control of the Economy, Real Democracy, Global Sustainability, Racial and Gender Justice. There was talk of the need for strong affiliates, which correlates with BREDL’s organizational structure. Similar to BREDL, People’s Action is a central group with affiliates working on central and independent issues.

There are several shared themes that are closely associated with BREDL’s environmental work. Racial and class issues are evident in a lot of communities where BREDL is active. BREDL also endorses the “local, community control” theme that persists in People’s Action. In addition, an economy that benefits all and not just the powerful corporations is an ideal that is necessary in our environmental fight. The main environmental part of their platform – climate change – is already an approved area of work for BREDL.

A big part of People’s Action is their political platform (endorsing political candidates, raising money for candidates, etc.). As a 501(c)(3) non-profit, BREDL would not be able to

participate in these types of activities. People’s Action Institute is their 501 (c)(3) arm of the organization. CHEJ falls under the Institute.

Another part of the group’s work revolves around healthcare. While not normally viewed as part of the environmental movement, incorporating the healthcare message goes hand in hand as people coping with toxin exposure will need health care.

People’s Action and its affiliates are working more towards progressive, social and political change than direct environmental causes although that change is essential to resolving our issues. The People’s Action groups have a lot of forward thinking leaders.

While it remains unclear if BREDL should seek a permanent seat with People’s Action, one thing is clear. Utilizing chapters in our organizational structure is in step with this progressive national group’s approach.



Claire Muller, Toxics Action Center  
Lois Gibbs, CHEJ/People’s Action Institute  
Mark Barker, BREDL

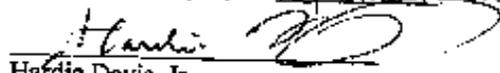


**Resolution in Support of a Goal  
of 100% Clean Energy by 2050.**

**A Resolution by the Augusta, Georgia Commission**

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Augusta, Georgia Commission endorses the following goal: that Augusta, Georgia establish a transition from fossil fuel-based economy to a 100% clean renewable energy for all energy sectors, including transportation by December 31, 2050 to avoid climate catastrophe, to promote job creation and economic growth, and to protect the Earth for current and future generations from climate catastrophe. Further, Augusta, Georgia adopts a goal to achieve 80% clean renewable energy for all energy sectors by December 2030.

Approved this 24<sup>th</sup> day of September 2018.

  
Hardie Davis, Jr.  
As its Mayor

10/22/18

Attest:  
  
Lena Z. Bomier, Clerk of Commission



# Can we talk about coal ash?

By Therese Vick



The disposition of toxic coal ash is a problem for North Carolina and the country. Recent spills at Duke Energy's Sutton and HF Lee facilities following Hurricane Florence demonstrate that current practices are not working—including so called "state of the art" landfills. Of note: the first to fail at the Sutton facility was the new lined landfill. The Brickhaven coal ash landfill in Chatham County (home to Duke Energy's coal ash from the Sutton and Riverbend facilities) also suffered from the torrential rains after Florence. This is in addition to erosion of the cover after prolonged rains in July, recent concerns about potential groundwater contamination and questions about faulty site studies that were used to permit the facility, which opened in 2015. <sup>1</sup>

What can be done? Calls to move coal ash to "safe, lined, storage" (aka landfills) do not take into consideration that this disposal method is faulty also. Inevitable liner failure, insufficient characterization of coal ash toxicity, the air quality impacts of transportation, inadequacy of groundwater monitoring systems, and environmental justice concerns tell us landfilling is not the answer.

Polluting industries choose the "path of least resistance" when deciding where to locate. Communities of color, low to moderate income areas, and rural communities are disproportionately targeted for noxious facilities. <sup>2</sup> Coal ash disposal is no exception. For example: after a devastating coal ash spill in Kingston, Tennessee, coal ash was taken hundreds of miles away to the Arrowhead landfill in Uniontown, Alabama. Uniontown is over 80% African American. In North Carolina, two coal ash landfills were permitted in record time, one in the Moncure community of Chatham County, and one in the Colon community of Lee County. The rural, moderate income Moncure community is home to many polluting industries- including coal ash pits at Duke Energy's now-closed Cape Fear plant. The consultant performing the demographic analysis for the Colon site identified an EJ community near the site. Also in North Carolina, Northampton County has been targeted by a VistaGreen for an 800-plus acre commercial coal ash landfill. Northampton County has a higher population of People of Color than the state average— with 57.7% being African American

In their 2016 report on Environmental

Justice, the United States Commission on Civil Rights found that: "...the EPA did find the percentage of minorities and low income individuals living within the catchment area of coal ash disposal facilities is disproportionately high when compared to the national average. The EPA did not fully consider the civil rights impacts in approving movement and storage of coal ash." <sup>3</sup>

Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League calls for a safer disposal method for coal ash. Storing it above ground on utility property isolated from air, land, ground and surface water is one alternative. <sup>4</sup> Judy Hogan, President of BREDL chapter Chatham Citizens Against Coal Ash Dump says it best, "As we know bitterly here in Moncure, the creating of landfills to dispose of coal ash is not a solution. It means spreading the pollution around."

The time is now for North Carolina to lead the way on just coal ash disposal.

If your community has been targeted for coal ash disposal contact Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League.

<sup>1</sup> [Link to drone footage and still images of Brickhaven coal ash landfill in Chatham County NC](#)

<sup>2</sup> Sherman, Eric. "If You're a Minority and Poor, You're More Likely to Live Near a Toxic Waste Site." *Fortune*. 4 February 2016. <http://fortune.com/2016/02/04/environmental-race-poverty-flint/>

<sup>3</sup> United States Commission on Civil Rights. "Environmental Justice: Examining the Environmental Protection Agency's Compliance and Enforcement of Title VI." September 2016. [https://www.usccr.gov/pubs/2016/Statutory\\_Enforcement\\_Report2016.pdf](https://www.usccr.gov/pubs/2016/Statutory_Enforcement_Report2016.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [Saltstone](#) Factsheet



**Gulf Creek below Brickhaven coal ash landfill September 22, 2018**



## **JAMES A. JOHNSON HONORED**

### **OFFICERS ELECTED**

In 1988, James A. Johnson founded a BREDL Chapter in Morganton, NC. Eventually he became a long-standing Board of Directors member. Then he joined the Executive Committee as Co-President. At every meeting his cheerful and encouraging countenance has always been a reminder to BREDL members that our struggles are never in vain.

Now James has determined that it is time for him to retire from his BREDL post. Thus at BREDL's last meeting, James was honored with a BREDL volunteer service award for his many years helping guide BREDL. He was also designated a BREDL Emeritus Vice-President.

As in previous years, the BREDL Board of Directors elected officers thereby proving that the organization is still in good health and will continue to protect regional communities at the grassroots level.

Elected Officers for 2018 are

#### **Co-Presidents**

Sam Tesh  
Sandra Kurtz

#### **Emeritus Vice President**

James A. Johnson

#### **Vice Presidents**

Elizabeth O'Nan  
Pat Hill  
John Wagner  
Rev. W.B. Tomlin  
Kathie Mosley

#### **Youth Representative Vice President**

Daisy O'Nan

#### **Secretary**

Tom Duckwall



**James A. Johnson, Emeritus vice President**



**James A. Johnson with Sam Tesh**

## **Revamping our Membership Program**

We are taking several steps to revamp our membership program. Our initial step was to update our membership database. That was done several weeks ago. Next, beginning in December, we will be more in tune with annual memberships. We had been rather loose with our annual memberships. Now, each month we will send out renewal letters for those whose memberships will expire that month. Each new or renewed membership will receive a Thank You letter, a mailed copy of our newsletter each quarter and a small token of our appreciation. Members will receive a clear sticker with their thank you letter. Renewing members will also receive a button pin.

BREDL membership is still only \$20 a year. The date when your membership expires will appear in the top right corner of the newsletter's mailing label. Our goals are to expand our membership and keep our members informed via *The League Line* and alert notices when warranted.

# SUCCESS!

## Northampton County Citizens Against Coal Ash

By Wanda Flythe

A premature letter... a call... then another call... a gathering... then a community meeting... it grew... and we won.

The initial letter stating that a coal ash pit was going to be placed on land adjacent to their family home raised the first red flag. Joyce Buffaloe shared her letter with the president of the local NAACP, Tony Burnette, who then contacted a local recently retired judge, Al Kwasikpui and the ball started rolling. Adding local landowner and retired chemistry teacher, Debbie Davis and an area pastor, Randolph (Randy) Deloatch, the Northampton County Citizens Against Coal Ash executive team was formed. Monthly community meetings began, the executive team grew, outside experts, Ken and Deborah Ferruccio and BREDL representative, Therese Vick, joined, and our fight to protect our county began.

Educating ourselves about the hazards of coal ash to a community, we then started educating the citizens of the county through monthly community meetings, booths at local events, yard signs and letters to the editors of our local newspapers.

Through attending our county commissioners' meetings, asking questions and talking with the planning board, we learned that a special use permit would be required before construction on this site could

begin. We later learned that a rezoning of the property from Agricultural/Residential to Heavy Industrial would be required before the special use permit could be requested. We also learned that the decision makers in this process would be our county commissioners.

Over 18 months, we acquired signatures from citizens opposed to coal ash in our county, initiated a postcard campaign to make our commissioners aware of how widespread the dissent to the project was, and established call lists for contacting citizens about important and pivotal local happenings regarding this issue. Deborah Ferruccio created a video that was shown widespread detailing the hazards of coal ash on communities like ours and Therese Vick guided us through this fight with important information. We joined BREDL, establishing our own chapter, and availing us to the array of services they offer communities facing these environmental injustice battles.

Armed with over 1400 signatures on petitions, approximately 2000 postcards mailed by citizens to each of our five county commissioners and a diverse group of 300+ citizens in attendance at the public hearing voicing their opposition, the county commissioners voted unanimously to deny VistaGreen, LLC's rezoning request.

We are grateful for many things that led to this victory. First, the premature mailing of the initial

letters, the insight of those early involved, the commitment of the executive team, the attendance and support of the citizens, but most important, the countywide zoning of Northampton County that served as the lock on our door. Without that zoning lock, VistaGreen, LLC would have moved into our county and would have been well established before we were even aware.

Please know, our fight is not over but, then, neither are we.



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](http://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](http://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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Chapter \_\_\_\_\_