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The LEAGUE LINE

Spring 2011



Sustainable Economic Development The Alternative to “No”

Organizations often center on opposition. So, what do we say “yes” to? Having a positive alternative is an important means to develop civic engagement and democratic decision-making.

Decision Makers

Ask who makes economic decisions for your county or state. Most people never visit the local chamber of commerce or economic development board. See how they market your community. Often, you can see their plans and maps before it is too late to change them.

You can create a vision for your community.

Here's how.

Develop a plan and implement a strategy

Bring people together to engage in discussion on economic development. The process begins with thinking about the reasons the community is targeted for undesirable industry—nuclear plants, asphalt plants, incinerators—in the first place.

Needs

Jobs and money for schools are typical goals of economic development boards. So, make a list of what else need, something beneficial for the community. These would be environmentally friendly needs.

Assets

Take stock of what the community already has. For example: lakes, scenery, highway access, crossroads, climate, history, etc. Next, think about what business could use these assets and fill the needs.

Visit the chamber or board office and talk about who makes the decisions. Talk about what your community group has found. Economic development meetings are often public. If you attend, you will usually meet industry representatives there who have something to sell. This is the beginning of a dialogue. What do you have to promote? This is where we can present what we want our economic development agency to do.

Town Hall Meetings

Finally, hold your own meetings. Bring along small business leaders, faith-based groups and health professionals. Next, return to the economic development group with your plans, needs, and ideas for new economic growth. This is a time consuming process, but it is a means to engage your community to take a second step to find a better way.



This guide is based on an online workshop led by Lois Gibbs, Executive Director, and Anne Rabe, BE SAFE Campaign Coordinator of the Center for Health, Environment & Justice on February 15, 2011.



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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 twenty-six 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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Therese Vick



30% GENUINE
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PAPER



BREDL Welcomes Community Organizer, *Therese Vick*

By Beverly Kerr, BREDL Communications Coordinator



BREDL is delighted to welcome Therese Vick as our newest community organizer.

Therese will coordinate our growing NC Sustainable Economic Development Project, she will coordinate our statewide campaign to prevent land application and incineration of sewage sludge, and she will assist our Science Director, Lou Zeller, with our ongoing anti-biomass incineration campaign.

Therese has a distinguished history as a volunteer and a professional community organizer. Her greatest achievement was the defeat of the ThermalKEM hazardous waste incinerator in Northampton County, NC. In addition, she has experience as an advocate for environmental justice.

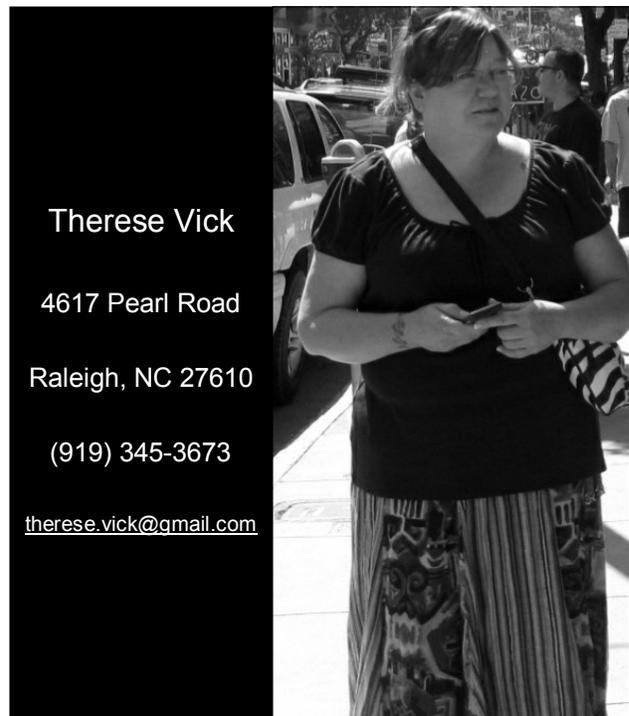
Therese first became active in environmental issues in late 1990 when her county was threatened by the location of a hazardous waste incinerator. Her involvement in this struggle acquainted her with BREDL, and in 1992 she applied for the position of community organizer with BREDL. Her primary focus was the incinerator issue and corporate hog operations. She also worked on solid and nuclear waste and environmental justice.

Working from our new office in Raleigh, Therese has already begun making connections with our chapters across the state. She describes working for the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League as more than a job, as a calling.

Therese shares her home in Raleigh with her cat Savannah, her bunny Stella, and Stanley the Siamese fighting fish. She relocated to Wake County in 2009 in order to pursue a degree in Human Services. Her son Michael, age 27, lives in San Francisco and is working towards his degree in psychiatry. Her son Mark, age 23, is an emergency medical technician for the county EMS and a volunteer firefighter in Rich Square

Therese says she appreciate the opportunity to work with BREDL again and considers it an honor and a privilege. She looks forward to reconnecting with old friends and meeting new ones.

All of us at BREDL are happy to have Therese on board and look forward to working with her.



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Nuclear Déjà vu

We must do it all over again

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

By Janet Marsh



1984—2011

Then

The federal government was looking for a place to dump high-level nuclear waste from the nation's commercial nuclear power plants.

Now

The federal government is looking for a place to dump high-level nuclear waste from the nation's commercial nuclear power plants.

Then

I was here on my small farm minding my own business. The US Department of Energy added my home county to the potential dump list; they were looking for crystalline rock formations (granite-like) to build a mined geologic repository to isolate the nuclear waste from the biosphere for 10,000 years. I and fifty of my friends organized the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League to stop the dump. We soon expanded to work in Tennessee to work against the proposed above-ground storage depot for the high-level waste. We traveled to Virginia and Georgia to alert the public. We organized in the Blue Ridge Mountains. DOE moved on to identify twelve semifinalist rock bodies for the granite dump—seven in the Southeast.

Then in 1987—bowing to public pressure—the US Congress suspended the eastern dump program and named Yucca Mountain, Nevada as the nation's only high-level nuclear waste repository. Yucca Mountain was chosen not for scientific but for political reasons.

Now

Our Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League is 27 years old. I sit here in the same place facing the same problems all over again. For scientific rather than political reasons, the Obama Administration has named the Yucca Mountain site unsuitable. The President's Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future is eyeballing the Savannah River Site near Aiken, South Carolina for the above-ground storage depot for high-level nuclear waste which we had defeated in Tennessee. Many South Carolina and Georgia officials have put out the welcome sign. In late June or early July, the Blue Ribbon Commission will issue a draft report. Should the Savannah River Site be selected, for logistical and not scientific reasons the DOE may turn again to crystalline rock and move forward with a nuclear waste repository search in North Carolina, Virginia, Georgia....

Then

Eighty-five percent of the nation's nuclear power plants were along the east coast. Three Mile Island in 1979 and Chernobyl in 1986 had turned the people against nuclear power. Without US taxpayers subsidies, Wall Street refused to bankroll new nukes.

Now

Eighty-five percent of the nation's nuclear power plants are along the east coast. Without US taxpayer subsidies, Wall Street still refuses to bankroll the proposed new generation of nuclear power plants—almost all of which would be in the Southeast.

The nuclear disaster which is ongoing in Fukushima, Japan *should* turn Government and industry against nuclear power. Experts say that a nuclear accident anywhere is a nuclear accident everywhere. Southeastern nuclear utilities are forging ahead to get new nuke permits despite earthquake zones, unsafe reactor designs (like the AP1000) and environmental injustice.

Then

My constant refrain was, "nuclear waste is coming, nuclear waste is coming!"

Now

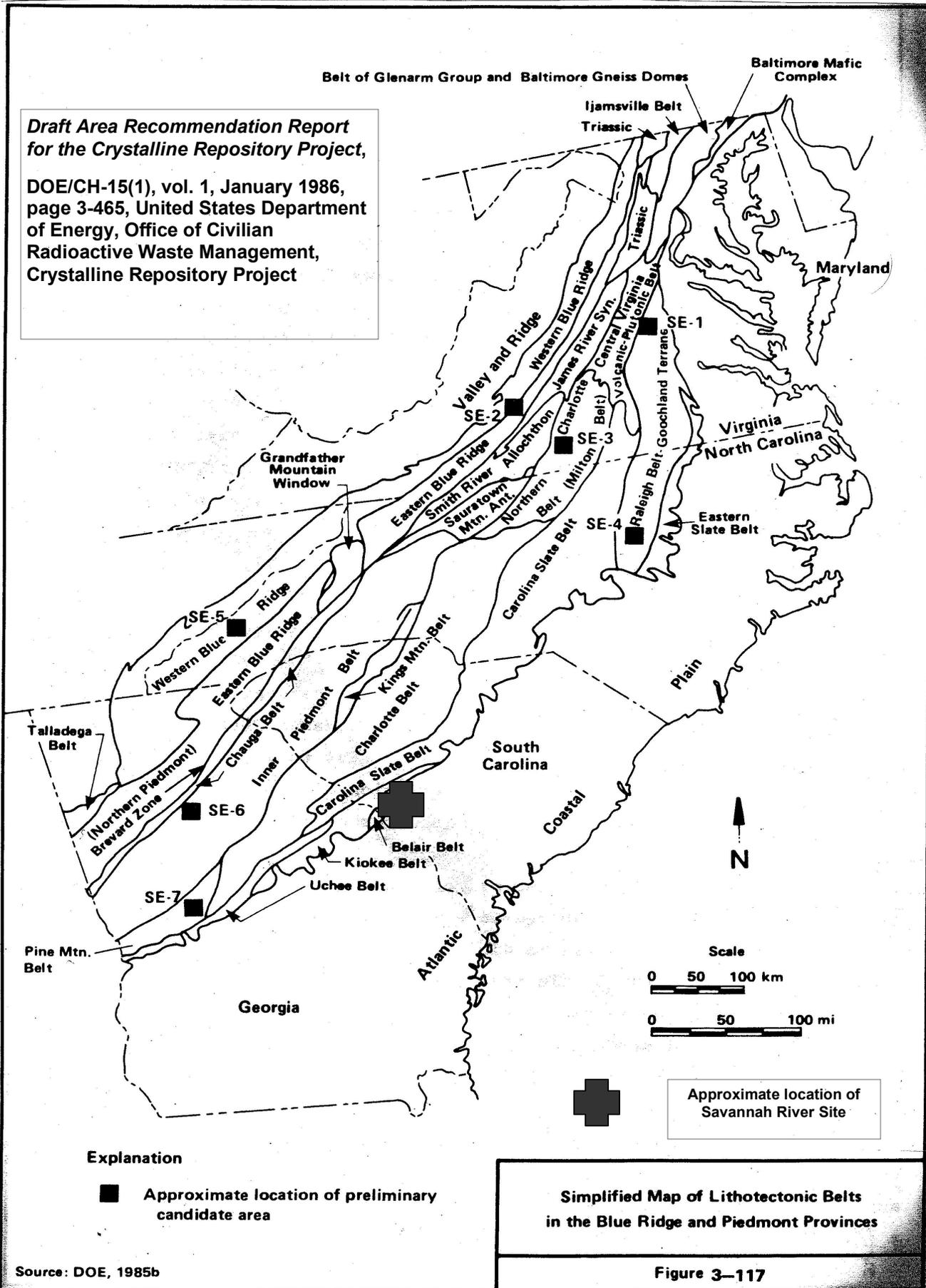
Déjà vu.

Please note:

The map on the opposite page shows targeted rock formations in NC, VA and GA which have never been eliminated for a high-level nuclear waste dump.

**Draft Area Recommendation Report
for the Crystalline Repository Project,**

DOE/CH-15(1), vol. 1, January 1986,
page 3-465, United States Department
of Energy, Office of Civilian
Radioactive Waste Management,
Crystalline Repository Project



Explanation

■ Approximate location of preliminary candidate area

**Simplified Map of Lithotectonic Belts
in the Blue Ridge and Piedmont Provinces**

Figure 3-117

Source: DOE, 1985b

Toxics and Disability



By Daisy O'Nan

"After being injured in a severe pesticide exposure at the age of two, these are some of my experiences:

The painful death of our animals from sarcoma cancer (linked to Chlordane).

The callous treatment by doctors who refuse to consider injury by toxics because they have no training in toxicology. There is nothing worse than feeling awful and being told that it is not so. This medical denial leads to friends and family questioning the cause of your chronic illness as well.

14 years of litigation and a forced settlement of only a fraction of the funds spent on keeping us from court.

Repeated invasive and humiliating medical tests demanded by the poison defendants.

The unkindness of people who feel entitled to challenge ones health with pesticides, aerosols, cigarette smoke or strong fragrances to see if will it trigger a physical reaction.

Years of fighting for more than 3 hours of a so called equal education per week. Denial of assistance and education by my school when I reached the age of needing specialized teachers, resulting in my mortifying failure to graduate from high school after testing in the 99th percentile of the nation in scholastic ability.

Being weak and ill for days after simply going to the grocery store, or a meeting.

Being chronically ill and not being able to go places or visit friends because of potential exposures that make me worse.

Health that continues to debilitate and the promise of an isolated, bleak and challenging future.

Seeing political forces ignore the problems of the chemically disabled and the failure to provide for their needs despite having caused their injuries and disabilities by refusing to regulate chemicals.

Hearing again and again the depression, desperation and adversity of people injured and disabled by pesticides and other chemicals and their failure to find justice, medical care, housing, or education.

Hoping against hope that someday we shall stop the poisoning and bring justice and help to the poisoned."

The nightly news reports rising occurrences of disabling health concerns on an almost daily basis. These range from the startling rise in childhood autism, asthma and allergies, adult onset diabetes, to a 40.77% probability that we will develop cancer at some point in our lives in the United States as of 2007. Also alarming is the increase in disabling injuries directly resulting from exposures to poorly regulated chemicals.

The incidence of disability is increasing, up from 21.5% in 1999 to 25.3% in 2001, subsequently putting financial strain on our strapped public budgets. However, little consideration seems devoted to prevention by controlling the toxic contaminants produced and added ubiquitously to our daily lives. These toxics are known to exacerbate and even further, strongly suspected to instigate many of these disabilities.

If prevention is mentioned, it is in the form of healthy eating, exercise, not smoking, etc. While these self-regulated measures are proven to support and improve health under certain circumstances, regulatory agencies seem to target these supportive health measures, while instituting casual regulation at best of toxic chemicals, while blithely advising those effected that it is their own fault for failing to take care of their bodies. Often times the very advice to quickly loose as much weight as possible is dangerous in that it fails to take into account that fat is often the bodies method of sequestration of toxics which when released can do more damage.

It is all too easy to blame ones "bad" genes, irresponsible behavior, gluttony or poor exercise habits for our rising rates of disability. This viewpoint becomes startlingly cruel when directed at our own bodies and others as it becomes apparent that a considerable percentage of disabilities are likely caused by the careless regulation of many contaminants and chemicals.

Previous generations were all susceptible to overeating and the dangers of smoking and alcohol, however what their bodies did not have to contend with was a constant bombardment of toxic chemicals that were capable of interfering and damaging the very building blocks of genetic code as well as hormonal mimicry. Further, there is no current regulatory testing that requires chemicals to be tested under real life conditions in which multiple contaminants are encountered at the same time, often times exacerbating the damaging effects. On any given day the average person is exposed to a myriad of dangers that could be regulated to greatly reduce the risk to health.

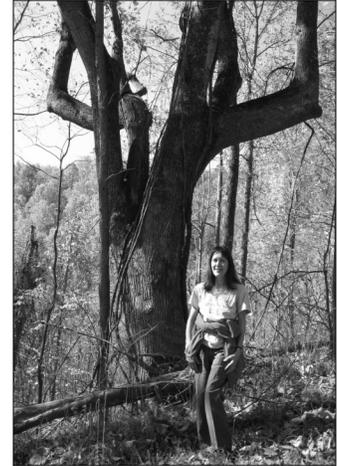
Unaddressed lies the effect of genetically damaging chemicals and their effect over several generations. What might have been repaired in the next generation by an unaffected parent, is all too often not repaired, as the other parent has been exposed to the same genetic damage. Additionally, the misguided practice of allowing inclusions of previously banned, recycled hazardous waste and radioactive materials as ingredients in pesticides is another instance of untested and unregulated dangers to our overall health as well as our genetics.

Regulation of anything has been seen as a danger to our economy for a long time. As a country we seem to have collectively forgotten the hard won battles fought for regulation at the beginning of the 20th century, resulting from the egregious and harmful additives and fillers used by companies more concerned with profits than the welfare of their customers. When we compare the costs of healthcare, lost wages, lost productivity and the tragic, although undervalued, loss of quality of life, the cost benefit analysis sways in the other direction.

Brought to mind is a quote, often attributed to Albert Einstein, "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result." We have seen the effects of our current regulations and if we allow our regulation to be determined by avaricious and nearsighted judgment that considers only immediate profit, our health will continue to be a depreciating resource and not the well maintained backbone of a healthy economy and population. ■

Let Science Speak Now in the Uranium Mining Debate

By Ann Rogers, BREDL Community Organizer



Let science guide the decision whether or not to lift the ban on uranium mining in Virginia that has been in place since 1982. We need to focus the clear gaze of reason on this debate, say pundits on both sides of the argument. Never mind that mining industry money is paying for the study being performed by National Academy of Sciences (NAS), due to be released in December, 2011, or that Virginia Uranium, Inc., the company paying for the scientific study, has made \$55,150 in campaign contributions to Virginia General Assembly members and spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on lobbyists to support lifting the ban. Trust the process, trust the science.

Fortunately for the people of Virginia, the Internet brings a world of information to our fingertips, including literature on how science, government and industry are addressing the environmental risks posed by uranium mining and milling throughout the world. A document published in 2004 by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), *The long term stabilization of uranium mill tailings* (www-pub.iaea.org/MTCD/publications/PDF/te_1403_web.pdf) reports on how 13 countries, including the United States, are grappling with the legacy of millions of pounds of radioactive waste left over from the milling process whereby crude uranium ore is transformed into “yellowcake.” Fortunately, the document is written in clear, non-technical language, making its points readily accessible by the ordinary reader. It describes in fascinating detail the processes that countries have developed to isolate these waste products, known as uranium mill tailings, in various types of above-ground and below-ground containment structures, to prevent their radioactivity from escaping into the air and water. The report offers information, summarized below, that hopefully will enlighten the debate on whether or not to lift the ban in Virginia:

- The report states that satisfactory containment of mill tailings may be required for 10,000 to 100,000 years to guarantee effective isolation until levels of radioactivity have declined significantly. Currently the U.S. government requires a design life for containment structures of only 1,000 years. Which begs the question, who protects the inhabitants of Virginia for the 99,999 years not covered by U.S. regulation?
- While no catastrophic failures have been reported for uranium tailing impoundments for more than 20 years, the study says, “Chronic releases of radon, dust and contaminated water and the associated potential health impacts and environmental contamination are a concern at many sites around the world.”
- “There is no such thing as ‘fail-safe’ facilities for tailings management,” the study claims. “Neither regulations, design specifications, nor management systems can be relied upon in

isolation to provide assurance against containment failure: all three must be applied, in a framework of quality assurance and post-closure care and maintenance, to deliver a high probability of tailings containment security. Examples exist of failure related to containment not being built as designed; regulators not checking that all requirements were provided for in construction and operation, and worst-case scenarios not being taken into consideration in deriving design specifications.” The likelihood of human error occurring at least once during the 100,000-year containment period would be funny if it weren’t so tragic.

- “Clearly,” the report says, “water management is a critical issue for risk reduction. Dams can fail after closure, mainly as a result of earthquakes, geotechnical factors, and overland flooding.” On March 9 and 10, the National Weather Service issued a flood warning and flood watch for Coles Hill, the proposed uranium mine/mill site. Pittsylvania County residents have long memories – and even videotapes – of the floods that have deluged the areas around Coles Hill over the years.
- The report continues, “The placement of tailings below or under ground is likely to provide the best long term management solution from the point of view of both reducing potential liability and providing the greatest long term environmental safety. However, the possibility of leaching and suffusion by permeating ground waters has to be considered.” Thus underground storage, which is the method that Virginia Uranium, Inc. now claims it will use to store tailings, cannot be considered fail safe due to the risk of frequent flooding at the Coles Hill site.

The article ends by discussing promising new technologies for isolating uranium mill tailings, called “ecological design” and “stabilization based on high-tech polymers and sophisticated organic chemistry.” However, it adds that these technologies are unproven and “not sufficiently developed and demonstrated to allow the potential benefits, costs, and operational requirements to be evaluated.”

Virginia Uranium, Inc.’s assumption that the operation of a uranium mill can be done safely at Coles Hill appears to be, in light of the IAEA’s research report, highly speculative. If the company has proprietary technology assuring 100% isolation of uranium mill tailings for 100,000 or even 10,000 years in an area prone to flooding, it is their duty to publicly disclose this information immediately. Otherwise, we must conclude they are willing to sacrifice the health and safety of the next 100+ generations of Virginians. ■

Fractures, Faults and Fission: Part One

Earth Quakes Nuclear Power



Louis Zeller, March 28, 2011

In light of the unfolding tragedy in Japan, we call upon the President of the United States, the US Congress and government agencies to re-visit all nuclear issues—power, waste and mining. Earthquakes are not unusual in

Japan. If an advanced, industrial nation like Japan with nuclear safeguards in place can be blind-sided by such an event, the United States should question all its assumptions about nuclear technology. This is the least we can do to honor the brave souls who sacrificed their lives to control the disaster in Fukushima, and to commemorate the the terrible loss of life among the innocent.

Fukushima was the fourth major nuclear accident in world history. As the *League Line* goes to press, the Japanese disaster is already more serious than those at Three Mile Island in 1979 and Windscale in 1957, and second only to Chernobyl in 1986. These four radioactive landmarks serve as warnings, signposts marking the continual failure of the most advanced technological societies on the planet to harness nuclear power. Questions abound. What did engineers in Pennsylvania, Great Britain, the erstwhile Soviet Union and Japan overlook while building and managing their respective, doomed power plants? What did they fail to anticipate in industrial facilities using radioactive fuel operating at 1,400 degrees-F and pressures of 1000 or more pounds per square inch? This first installment of *Fractures, Faults and Fission* will explore the inherent weaknesses we have uncovered at one of Tennessee Valley Authority's nuclear plants in Alabama. Subsequent articles will do the same for reactor sites in Georgia, Virginia, the Carolinas and elsewhere.

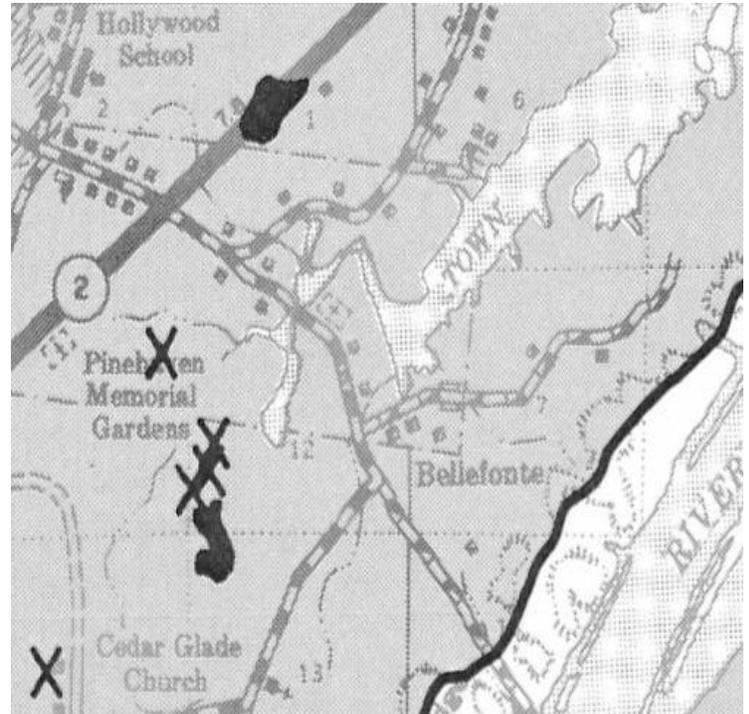
TVA's Bellefonte: Not Suitable for Nuclear Reactors

Tennessee Valley Authority's Bellefonte is the site of two unfinished nuclear reactors and the proposed site for two more. Bellefonte is located in northeastern Alabama in an earthquake zone. Sinkholes, fractured bedrock and flooding by the adjacent Tennessee River present grave uncertainties. And the nuclear reactors proposed by TVA are unsafe. In short, Bellefonte gets three F's for fractures, faults and fission.

Karst Terrain Fractures

Karst is created by the water dissolving bedrock such as limestone, forming sinkholes and caves. Because it fractures easily, building on or near it poses problems. Karst terrain is prevalent at Bellefonte. But TVA's construction plan for Bellefonte omitted these important geologic features. For example, in their license application to NRC, TVA stated: "No natural sinkholes have been identified and no enterable caves have been located."¹ But the Alabama Cave Survey database shows 58 caves within 5 miles of Bellefonte, and 1,854 caves in Jackson County. Also, TVA reports no "natural" sinkholes but fails to mention "induced" sinkholes, those produced by human activity. A report by the US Geological Survey² provides the following information:

Sinkholes in Alabama are divided into two categories defined as "induced" and "natural." Induced sinkholes are those related to man's activities whereas natural sinkholes are not. Induced sinkholes are further divided into two types: those resulting from a decline in the water table due to ground-water withdrawals and those resulting from construction. Those resulting from a decline in the water table...far outnumber those resulting from all other causes.

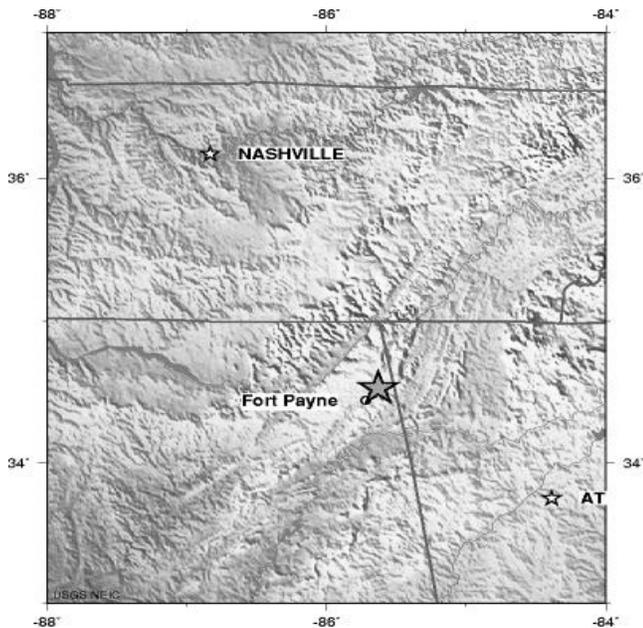


A University of Alabama map of Bellefonte³ indicates the danger. Each "X" indicates sinkholes or depressions smaller than 1000 feet across and the irregular marks (two shown in this view) indicate sinkholes or depressions larger than 1000 feet across. These features are within 1 to 2 miles of the proposed Bellefonte reactors. The League raised this issue with the NRC in 2008; however, the agency dismissed our concerns.

Seismic Fault Zone

The Bellefonte site is in one of the most active earthquake areas east of the Rocky Mountains. Studies indicate that this seismic zone may have the potential to produce large magnitude earthquakes. Critical issues for Bellefonte include ground motion, surface tectonics, seismically induced floods and waves, soil and rock stability, and cooling water supply.

The Eastern Tennessee Seismic Zone extends from southwest Virginia to northeast Alabama. Recent large earthquakes include a magnitude 4.6 in 1973 near Knoxville and the 2003 Fort Payne Earthquake, also a magnitude 4.6, one of the largest to have occurred anywhere in the southern Appalachians. This quake damaged chimneys and formed cracks in structures. Locally, these earthquakes raised concerns about the impact on essential services like water supplies and potential landslides on nearby mountain slopes.



ALABAMA

2003 04 29 UTC

Plate Boundaries in Yellow

USGS National Earthquake Information Center

The Fort Payne earthquake epicenter (shown by the star on the map) is fifty miles from Scottsboro, Alabama.⁴ The ETSZ is laced with ancient faults that developed as the Appalachian Mountains formed hundreds of millions of years ago. Today, an earthquake with a magnitude of 5.0 and higher is possible; it could cause serious damage to a nuclear plant.

Fission Reactor Designs on Shaky Ground

Construction of nuclear power reactor Units 1 and 2 at Bellefonte began in 1974 but was halted by TVA in 1988. They are Babcock & Wilcox Model 205 pressurized water reactors, designed before the partial meltdown at Three Mile Island. No B&W Model 205 has ever been completed in the United States. One B&W 205 in Germany⁵ which was completed shut down after three years because of "certain plant siting deficiencies."⁶ Although these are older Generation II-type reactor, TVA recently reversed course again and has decided to complete Unit 1, even after years of neglect, the discovery of structural problems and salvage operations for parts. Unless halted, the NRC may allow the completion of a virtually moth-eaten reactor that was not good enough when it was designed four decades ago.

In 2007 TVA applied for licenses to construct Bellefonte Units 3 and 4 using the Westinghouse AP1000 design, a Generation III pressurized water reactor. Generation III reactors are promoted as simpler, less costly versions of Generation II reactors, but, apart from fewer valves and pumps, the AP-1000 merely trades old uncertainties for new ones.

One cost-cutting measure in the AP-1000 is modular construction, assembling the reactor containment structure from many pieces instead of casting the concrete as a unit. This reduces structural integrity. Also, the AP-1000 shield building supports a water tank containing eight hundred thousand gallons of water. Relying on gravity to bring emergency cooling water may reduce reliance on

pumps, but suspending 3,334 tons of water above the reactor core introduces instability not present in other designs. For comparison, the total weight of the nuclear reactor vessel itself is only 417 tons.⁷ Finally, the AP-1000 suffers from a design flaw which during an accident could siphon radioactive gases from the reactor directly into the air.⁸ A nuclear reactor's containment structure is supposed to shield the reactor from outside events and protect the outside world from radiation releases, and we have raised all these safety problems with the NRC. In addition to the two at Bellefonte, twelve more AP-1000's are planned in the US, but the design has yet to receive final approval.

The ability of both old and new nuclear reactors to withstand potential flooding at Bellefonte is another shortcoming. Hydrology affects the movement and level of water in the Tennessee River which supplies reactor coolant. The League and others have challenged TVA's reliance on outdated information at Atomic Safety and License Board hearings, but the Nuclear Regulatory Commission appears to be deaf to these safety concerns. For example, last year Joseph Williams, a member of the NRC professional staff, stated, "Bellefonte Unit 3 and 4 hydrology review calls into question the fundamental acceptability of the Bellefonte site," and, "Since Bellefonte Units 1 and 2 are located very close to the proposed sites for Units 3 and 4, the flooding potential for these units is probably similar." TVA's analysis of hydrology at Bellefonte is a leaky vessel.

Our concerns are not limited to technical issues. There is a general failure of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to hear dissenting views. Our legal interventions are generally opposed in lockstep by both TVA's attorneys and the NRC legal staff. This dogmatic approach by NRC opens the door wide to its nuclear customers but slams it shut to others. Mr. Williams suffered similar treatment. He said, "I have also endured deliberate attempts to restrict my participation in the decision making process." "Throughout my experience, I have met significant resistance to even acknowledging issues exist, much less participating in any constructive discussion of their merit, and receiving constructive feedback."⁹ Here, by misdirection and deception, even the advice of the NRC's own expert was set aside. Nevertheless, the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League and its chapter Bellefonte Efficiency and Sustainability Team will continue to investigate, litigate, expose, and publicize these critical flaws in nuclear power. ■

¹TVA COLA Part 2 FSAR Section 2.5.4.1.3 Weathering Processes and Features

²Case History No. 9.11. Alabama, U.S.A., by J. G. Newton, U.S. Geological Survey, Tuscaloosa, Alabama

³University of Alabama Department of Geography <http://alabamamaps.ua.edu/historicalmaps/counties/jackson/jackson.html>.

⁴Map retrieved from Wikipedia April 7, 2008 at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2003_Alabama_earthquake

⁵Mulheim-Karlich Nuclear Power Plant A Reactor

⁶According to the *Safety Evaluation by the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation*, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Re: Construction Permits CPPR-122 and CPPR-123, Dockets No. 50-438 and 50-439, March 9, 2009

⁷AP1000 Design Control Document Reactor Coolant System and Connected Systems 5.3.4.1, Revision 15

⁸*League Line*, Spring 2010 issue, "Inherently Dangerous"

Empowering Youth Today For Tomorrow

By The Reverend Charles Utley, BREDL Environmental Justice Coordinator / Community Organizer



"I pledge to strengthen our Environmental Justice work though our youth involvement.."

The Reverend Charles Utley, GA, Kelton Davis, FL and Paul Smith, WV, discussing what it takes to have a complete community. Sponsored by Southern Partners Fund Social Justice Institute in Mississippi

In order to combat the spread of contamination, environmentalists today must model for our youth values that can be passed to the next generation in order to preserve Environmental Justice.

I was invited through BREDL to go to Tunica, Mississippi, where other environmentalists were gathering to discuss the social justice of our nation. I came to the conclusion that there was one thing that is inseparable; Environmental Justice and Social Justice. The activities of both are woven into the same fabric. Therefore, we must continue to invite our youth to experience the old habits of our society in order not to make the same mistakes. This is also true in our effort to stop bad habits that are terminal to a clean and healthy environment.

The Social Justice Institute made a

connection with the old to the new and made us reconstruct our thinking of previous activities that have occurred in our society. We visited the site where Emmett Till, a 14 year old boy, was slain. We retraced that awful deadly trail he had to travel. This event was one of the sparks that ignited the kindling that lead to the Civil Rights Movement in America. Environmental Justice was and still is a deadly trail that we must continue to repair and replace. Therefore, empowering our youth with the necessary tools or kindling is our focus, both in Social Justice Movements and Environmental Justice.

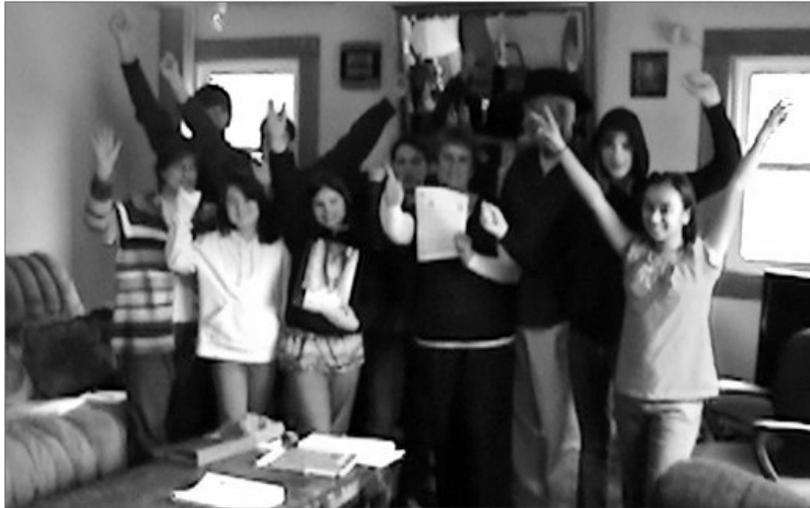
Listening to and working with the youth that were at the conference sponsored by Southern Partners Foundation was an opportunity that I would like to see implemented throughout our organization.

BREDL is a one-of-a-kind organization that understands the importance of involving our youth. Therefore, I pledge to strengthen our Environmental Justice work though our youth involvement.

BREDL is truly a beacon when it comes to implementing activities with youth involvement. Even though we all can't participate in every event, we can all provide support to our youth who are our environmentalists for tomorrow. ■



“Mighty Oaks From Little Acorns”



“Mighty oaks from little acorns” will grow, and this will be just the beginning of a growing involvement of the homeschool community in the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League.”

by Christy Bailey, Alamance County Homeschool Teacher

On Friday, February 4th, I had the privilege of taking my group of homeschooled Environmental Science students on a field trip to the Graham NC office of the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League. CAN (Clean Air Now) and NEW (Neighborhood Environment Watch) are BREDL chapters that meet regularly at this location.

Several weeks before, Beverly Kerr provided our group with back issues of BREDL newsletters. The newsletters were read and discussed in one of our class meetings. The students were keenly interested in the local environmental concerns surrounding Stericycle (the medical waste incinerator facility) and the local steel galvanizing plant.

When we arrived at the CAN headquarters, we were treated to an informational session regarding both of

these environmental hazards – complete with the history, current concerns, and a “field trip within a field trip” as we walked to the edge of the property to observe firsthand the pollution from the galvanizing plant. In the process, the group learned about “grassroots movements” and how ordinary citizens, in the context of groups like CAN and BREDL, can make extraordinary progress in addressing environmental issues.

I am so thankful for Beverly and Julius Kerr and their willingness to share their knowledge and enthusiasm with this small group of homeschoolers! I hope that “mighty oaks from little acorns” will grow, and that this will be just the beginning of a growing involvement of the home school community in the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League. ■

“In the process, the group learned about “grassroots movements” and how ordinary citizens, in the context of groups like CAN and BREDL, can make extraordinary progress in addressing environmental issues.”

Dry-cleaning Solvent Perks Up Durham Neighborhood

April 2011, Louis Zeller

On March 29, 2011 the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources came to Durham to answer residents' questions about the perchloroethylene pollution from a former retail dry-cleaning shop in the Trinity Park neighborhood. Although the shop closed in 1975, perc remains at the site 34,000 times above the state groundwater standard. The building's last tenant, the World of Faith Church, was forced out by condemnation in 2009 because perc vapors were too dangerous to hold weekly services. Residents attending the state meeting heard the remediation plan: Demolish the building. That's it, leaving an underground contamination plume which is now 350 feet long and growing, contaminating the soil and indoor air of nearby homes in Trinity Park. ■

Comments on this plan should be sent to:

Billy Meyer
DSCA Remediation Unit
Division of Waste Management
NCDENR, 1646 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699

Nuclear Updates

April 2011, Louis Zeller

Virginia

The Supreme Court of Virginia has agreed to hear Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League's appeal regarding ongoing violations of the Clean Water Act by Dominion-Virginia Power at North Anna Units 1 and 2 for discharging too much hot water into Lake Anna. In a separate case, the League's attorney John Runkle argued against Dominion's plan to add a third nuclear reactor at North Anna on top of a known geologic fault. The Atomic Safety and Licensing Board hearing was held a week before an earthquake in Japan destroyed the Fukushima Daichi nuclear power station.

Alabama

The Bellefonte Efficiency & Sustainability Team, Mothers Against Tennessee River Radiation, and parent organization Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League called for a review of all nuclear power plants because of accidents leading to catastrophic releases of radiation to air, ground, and water. Our statement calls upon the Tennessee Valley Authority to halt plans for nuclear reactors at Bellefonte. "There's no reason to add more nuclear power with its legacy for our children of radioactive waste and health concerns when there are safer and cheaper ways to produce electricity," said Gretel Johnston, MATRR founder.

Georgia

In January Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League's Charles Utley was invited to address President Obama's Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future. The Commission is conducting a comprehensive review of the so-called back end of the nuclear fuel cycle. Rev. Utley raised many concerns about nuclear power including devastating uranium mining, high plant costs, radioactive pollution and waste, concluding, "I say to you, because it is an effective thing that we must care for our neighbor. We must care for all of those who are seeking justice and injustice is being done to them."

Regional

On February 18, 2011, the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League, Riverkeeper, Inc. and the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy filed a petition in US District Court to reverse decisions by the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission on high-level radioactive waste from nuclear reactors. Attorney Diane Curran based the challenge on violations of the National Environmental Policy Act and the Atomic Energy Act. The NRC licensed the first generation of nuclear reactors, allowing sixty thousand of tons of highly radioactive irradiated fuel to pile up at reactor sites, without having any means of disposing of it. Our petition calls for a halt in nuclear power plant construction until this issue is resolved. ■

From Statistics for Action

BREDL's partners at TERC write with this news ...

One of the best moments of March 2011 for me was when the Statistics for Action website went live. For two years we have been culling through environmental reports, talking to experts, and researching the needs of community members confronting environmental contamination. The site offers resources for those new to the world of contamination and for seasoned leaders, including

The SfA Facilitator's Manual of 40 activities/workshop ideas

How to

- Warm-up to analyze environmental data
- And communicate data and statistics in a memorable way

Water Quality: Read Before You Drink
An overview of water quality testing including

- What to watch out for
- And how citizens can participate in the process

From the SfA site, you can link to other publications and data sources. Check out the *Change Agent*, a magazine with stories, data, and action ideas from around the country, including several of BREDL's own campaign issues and chapter member stories.

www.sfa.terc.edu



Martha Merson, Research Associate, is an avid community gardener.

She volunteers for the Cambridge Community Center, and edits fiction for fun. ■

Martha serves as a co-Principal Investigator at the Education Research Collaborative at TERC in Cambridge, MA. For 10 years, she has worked on formative research and curriculum design related to promoting understanding of real-world math concepts. She is also a member of the Evaluation Group at TERC.

She is currently co-PI of *Statistics for Action* (SfA). This National Science Foundation sponsored project explores how environmental organizers and the community groups they serve can deepen their own understanding of math as well as be conduits for others' understanding. Citizens who confront environmental issues such as landfill expansions or incinerator permits face a deluge of data from air, soil, and water quality reports, as well as financial and health claims about benefits and risks. SfA develops resources that are available for free



BREDL ACTION UPDATES

Let Your Voices Be Heard Through BREDL, by sharing your strategies, actions and updates.

WELCOME! Piedmont Residents In Defense of the Environment (PRIDE) VA and NC, BREDL's newest chapter. PRIDE draws its membership from Virginia and North Carolina and will actively promote keeping the ban on uranium mining in Virginia. PRIDE seeks to empower communities to bring awareness of other issues that have negative impact on citizen health, the environment and the economy. PRIDE acts as a watchdog of the environment, to monitor issues and hold government officials accountable for their actions. Visit <http://prideva.blogspot.com/>

VICTORY! People for a Clean Environment (PCE) in VA and NC, won an impressive victory fighting a municipal water supply fluoridation project proposed by Grayson County and Independence, VA and Alleghany County and Sparta, NC. The two counties are beside each other on the NC-VA state line. BREDL and PCE joined forces to make it clear that fluoride is a cumulative poison and is unnecessary to prevent tooth decay and is not wanted or needed in public water supplies. After PCE and BREDL made presentations on the dangers of fluoridation, the board came to unanimous consent that they did not wish to proceed with the fluoridation project. The people of Independence are at present safe from the hazards of fluoridation.

MAKING PROGRESS!

Wiregrass Activists for Clean Energy (WACE) Valdosta GA.

WACE is making progress with educational efforts and in keeping pressure on elected officials. The hard work is starting to pay off in regard to local opinion, protests, and an increasing number of people willing to show up to events. In sum, we already ran the Executive Director of our local Industrial Authority out of town, and his pet project (the biomass plant) will be next. WACE President, Michael Noll says, *"This biomass project looks more and more like a house of cards about ready to fall ... but until it actually does, we will keep the pressure on."*

WACE, Valdosta State University's Students Against Violating the Environment (SAVE) and the local chapter of the NAACP formed a powerful protest against the construction of a biomass facility and also showed support for the solar facility being created. Executives and city officials broke ground together at the site to the mixed cheers from the crowd of protesters:

"Hooray for solar! No biomass!"

Aside from regular visits to meetings of the City Council, Lowndes County Commission, and Industrial Authority, we also have tables at local events. This week the attached billboard will show up on a VERY busy road in the middle of Valdosta. We thought that would be a sign hard to take down, as some of our yard signs keep disappearing.



PERSON COUNTY PEOPLE RISING IN DEFENSE OF ECOLOGY (PC PRIDE) in Person County NC Chapter continues to educate the public and to encourage change to make a clean, safe and healthy environment for future generations. Recently, PC PRIDE's recycling center project has started to accept electronics. PC PRIDE's recycling program provides jobs, educates citizens and protects the environment.

CLEAN AIR NOW (CAN) in Alamance County NC is advising two Elon University students who are making a video documentary about the local medical waste incineration issue.

CAN members routinely participate in the anti-biomass telephone conferencing, and representatives attended the meeting in Durham on these issues January 28. Two members of CAN (Carolyn Cole and David Mickey) prepared a white paper, "Medical Waste in NC: The need to reduce incineration by more effective waste segregation and use of non-incineration technologies," which BREDL released January 24. A draft letter to the EMC from CAN and CHE has been written asking them to put BREDL's NC Medical Waste Incineration Report on their agenda.

CAN encouraged Mecklenburg Planning and Zoning committee not to allow any zoning change that would allow ReVenture to develop a proposed incinerator site without a public hearing.

In addition to email communication with chapter members, monthly updates are being emailed to "Friends of CAN," prospective members who have shown interest in the medical waste incineration issue. A letter has been prepared for use with medical health care providers when we become positioned to initiate contact with them. www.bredl-medwaste.org ~ Carole Troxler, Chair CAN

CITIZENS FOR A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT (CHE) in Matthews NC has begun a health survey (cancer count) in neighborhoods within three miles of the Matthews incinerator BMWNC. They will also begin air sampling with the Bucket Brigade and soil sampling for dioxins in the same areas. CHE is planning future fund raisers to help finance the sampling fees.

CHE and CAN are working together to encourage Mecklenburg Planning and Zoning committee not to allow ReVenture to develop a proposed incinerator.

NEIGHBORHOOD ENVIRONMENT WATCH (NEW) in Alamance County NC is in the process of evaluating soil sample results collected around the area of South Atlantic Galvanizing. Members are also attending Alamance County meetings focused on changes to the polluting industries ordinance. NEW continues to hold monthly meetings, send out email updates and recruit new members. Members are canvassing the neighborhood around the galvanizing plant to alert citizens of pollution from galvanizing.

FRIENDS OF THE GREEN SWAMP (FOGS) in Columbus County NC has been instrumental in combating a proposed landfill in The Green Swamp. FOGS also joined forces with the Nature Conservancy and the Lake Waccamaw State Park to purchase and preserve the Cove Swamp area of Lake Waccamaw. Recently, FOGS organized over 100 citizens to protest the proposal to apply septage to 41 acres of land located in the Green Swamp south of Bolton NC. Local news media said NC Division of Solid Waste "got an earful" when citizens shared their concerns over granting a permit to Waste Management to spread over six million gallons of waste per year in the Green Swamp.

FRIENDS OF THE DEEP RIVER (FODR) met with Haw River Assembly showing the "Gasland" film (nominated for an Academy Award) FODR also helped with Greensboro's early Earth Day celebration that was well attended and included many aspects of recycling, hybrid & electric vehicles, wildlife preservation. FODR also continues on Greensboro's Community Sustainability Council which has developed a set of energy conservation proposals for the city. A related program has secured a \$5 million grant to evaluate about 3000 buildings and help retrofit them to reduce energy consumption.

VOICES OF THE TRIAD (VOTR) although currently inactive, commends Cathy Poole's "fix it first" campaign (i.e. before building a new 4-lane, upgrade the older roads by widening, adding turn lanes etc.). Everybody doesn't have to or want to be 5 minutes from a major highway! Also worthy of mention are her climate change resolution and other work on farmland preservation.

PROTECT ONSLOW COUNTY NEIGHBORHOODS (PON) in Jacksonville NC works to protect their community from environmental and health threats. Education and responsible stewardship is their focus. In March, NC-DAQ held a public hearing on a draft air quality permit for a proposed asphalt plant in Onslow County near Piney Green Road in Jacksonville. PON organized an impressive group of over 100 protestors with over 20 powerful speakers with fervent opinions and high emotions against the public health threat of an asphalt plant in their neighborhood. ■



Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League Mission Statement

The Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League 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 to empower whole communities in environmental issues. BREDL also functions as a “watchdog” of the environment, monitoring issues and holding government officials accountable for their actions.

We are a true league of grassroots chapters working in rural communities in the Southeast. For twenty-six years the same organizing principles have guided our work: public health protection, environmental democracy, earth stewardship and social justice. Our mission is to prevent harm from air and water pollution and to create sustainable alternatives for sound waste management and economic development. 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.

It’s easier than ever to join, renew and donate online.

Check out our secure online donation forms at www.bredl.org. Help us save trees and other resources by donating online.

Yes, I support BREDL’s work! Send your check to: BREDL PO Box 88 Glendale Springs, NC 28629

or use your credit card at **www.BREDL.org**. For more information contact BREDL at 336-982-2691.

All donations help BREDLs mission and are tax deductible.

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