



BLUE RIDGE ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE LEAGUE

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The LEAGUE LINE

SPRING 2020

Inside Line:

List of articles inside.

Director's Reports:

"Where there is no vision, the people perish."

A message to the staff, chapters, volunteers and board

Non – ionizing radiation good or bad?

BREDL's new podcast: In Our Backyard Podcast

Anderson and Prospect Hill join forces in a new BREDL chapter, "Protect Caswell"

Chapter Updates:

Madison County Clean Power Coalition works for statewide ban on burning creosote railroad ties for energy

Chatham Citizens Against Coal Ash Dump and EnvironmentalLee

Southgate as segment: a BREDL perspective

Zero waste through the spirit of our youth

MVP contractor not adhering to Virginia Governor's emergency orders

2020



North Carolina landowners fight Atlantic Coast Pipeline invasion during pandemic

By Therese Vick

On Friday afternoon, March 27, 2020, an attorney representing Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League (BREDL), Cathy Cralle-Jones, received a phone call from an Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP) attorney requesting that an out-of-state real estate appraiser be given permission to visit several eastern North Carolina properties on Monday, March 30, as part of eminent domain proceedings for the ACP. BREDL and the landowners refused to allow this.

ACP offered to have their appraisers wear personal protective equipment (PPE) while visiting these properties, an act which would have further diminished the already dwindling supply of this equipment so desperately needed by our health care providers, first responders, and other essential services in light of the continuing COVID-19 pandemic. Now that permission has been denied for the March 30 appraisals, we strongly suggest that ACP and their representatives donate their supply of PPE to their local health care providers and first responders.

Regarding ACP's request for appraisal visits during the COVID-19 pandemic, Ms. Cralle-Jones said, "The Atlantic Coast Pipeline is continuing to push condemnation proceedings in North Carolina even though the FERC route in

Virginia has been stopped by the 4th Circuit and is pending decision by the Supreme Court of the United States. As a part of those proceedings, ACP is seeking to have appraisers travel across several state lines in order to enter onto private property so they can conduct their appraisals to support their court testimony and unbelievable conclusion of no impact to any areas outside the pipeline easement. This is risky, inappropriate and unnecessary pipeline intrusion onto private property that must stop."

This flagrant attempt by ACP to exploit the dire circumstances that communities across North Carolina are facing is appalling and must be stopped. This action also demonstrates exactly how much care and concern ACP has for the communities they are forcing the pipeline through. Governors in three states (North Carolina, Virginia and West Virginia) impacted by the ACP should take immediate action, telling ACP – as they are telling thousands of other businesses and residents – to Stay Home.

Landowners who are facing the same or similar tactics by Dominion/Duke Energy's ACP are asked to contact BREDL staff.



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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 three decades 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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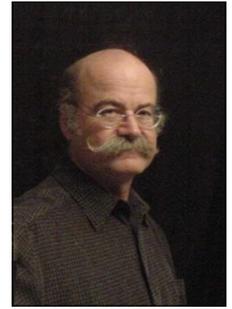
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“Where there is no vision, the people perish.”

Proverbs 29:18

The death rate of the COVID-19 coronavirus is greatly increased by air pollution. According to a recent study done by the Harvard School of Public Health, “A small increase in long-term exposure to PM-2.5 leads to a large increase in COVID-19 death rate....” PM-2.5 is microscopic particulate matter of 2½ microns in diameter, or one-thirtieth the diameter of a human hair. PM-2.5 is an air pollutant directly caused by combustion of fuels—coal, oil, natural gas, biomass—or formed in the air by pollutants such as sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides emitted from power plants, industries and automobiles. Its small size allows the pollutant to penetrate deep into the lungs where the damage is done.

The Harvard study collected data from 3,000 counties across the United States covering 98% of the population. The analysis compensates for behavioral and

socioeconomic factors including obesity and smoking.* The study concluded, “We found that an increase of only 1 µg/m3 in PM2.5 is associated with a 15% increase in the COVID-19 death rate...” With the expected death toll caused by COVID-19 in the United States ranging from 100,000 to 254,000, this would mean that a one microgram per cubic meter difference in fine particle pollution makes a difference of some 15,000 to 36,000 deaths.

In the mid-Atlantic and Appalachian region of the United States, the midrange level of PM-2.5 is 11.35 µg/m3, according to the US Environmental Protection Agency. In urban areas the level can reach 19.2 µg/m3.

Three years ago, the same Harvard school revealed that exposure to airborne PM-2.5 even at levels below National Ambient Air Quality Standards then in force increased

the risk of premature death. And that blacks and low-income populations had risks upwards of three times as high. Conversely, they found that by lowering the level of PM-2.5 by 1 microgram per cubic meter about 12,000 lives could be saved annually nationwide.

But by abandoning the Paris climate accord, revoking America’s Clean Power Plan, repealing corporate average fuel economy standards for automobiles, and sabotaging other environmentally beneficial programs, the current Administration is creating a human tinderbox. The match is the coronavirus.

We must be the bucket brigade.



*Exposure to air pollution and COVID-19 mortality in the United States. Xiao Wu, Rachel C. Nethery, Benjamin M. Sabath, Danielle Braun, Francesca Dominici. medRxiv 2020.04.05.20054502; doi: <https://doi.org/10.1101/2020.04.05.20054502>

A message to the staff, chapters, volunteers and board regarding the COVID-19 pandemic

I write to thank you all for being steadfast and hanging in there in the face of this ordeal. As if the threat of a contagious virus was not bad enough, the troubling statements about it made by Internet trolls and some public officials are disconcerting. We

should always expose the fears generated by such things to the sunlight.

I was feeling low on Saturday last, thinking about our ongoing situation: constraints on our projects, limits on gatherings,

foreclosed opportunities. So, I decided to do what seemed possible. I called a few of my neighbors in Glendale Springs and asked if they needed anything from town, that I was going to the

(Continued on page 4)

(A Message from Lou—Continued from page 3)

grocery store. Shirley Craven said thank you but the church had just brought her and Tommy some things. I called Linda Taylor, very early member of BREDL, and she said “yes!” could you bring me a cabbage head. I said sure. Five minutes later she called me back and asked for a 5-pound bag of potatoes too. Of course. Another five minutes and Linda called again, saying, “Just shoot me, Lou” (a local way of saying sorry to bother you). She said, “I called Leslie and she needs two gallons of milk and a bag of taters too.” So, I went to town, got the groceries (and some for myself), thanked the clerk, separated the bills so as to dispel notions of hoarding, returned home

and delivered the items. I had not seen Linda in some time, so we had time to catch up at six-foot apart. She and her husband Larry don’t get out much. In the 80’s Larry would mind Janet’s goats and milk cow when she was gone on BREDL trips. You know, I would not have thought to do this except for the novel corona virus. Nor would it have been received in the same way.

As ever, our Monday morning staff calls continue. And plans, programs and new initiatives continue apace. I am as proud as I can be of the dedication and sheer determination that you all continue to display. I see in you the spirit which brought the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League from a group of 50 farmers, homemakers and business people with a mission to the multi-

state powerhouse it is today. Thank you.

“Does what's happened keep you from acting with justice, generosity, self-control, sanity, prudence, honesty, humility, straightforwardness, and all other qualities that allow a person's nature to fulfill itself? So, remember this principle when something threatens to cause you pain: the thing itself was no misfortune at all; to endure it and prevail is great good fortune.”**

—Marcus Aurelius

**Marcus Aurelius. AZQuotes.com, Wind and Fly LTD, 2020. <https://www.azquotes.com/quote/862599>, accessed April 12, 2020.

Non – ionizing radiation good or bad?

By Renee Cail



Non-ionizing radiation is a relatively low-energy radiation that does not have enough energy to ionize atoms or molecules. It is at the low end of the electromagnetic spectrum. The lower the frequency, the lower the energy. Although it is considered less dangerous than ionizing radiation, over exposure to non-ionizing radiation can cause health issues. Put simply, non-ionizing radiation differs from ionizing radiation in the way that it acts on materials like air, water, and living tissue.

Unlike x-rays and other forms of ionizing radiation, non-ionizing radiation does not have enough energy to remove electrons from

atoms or molecules. Non-ionizing radiation can heat substances. An example is the microwave radiation inside a microwave oven, which heats water and food rapidly.

We are exposed to low levels of non-ionizing radiation every day. Of great concern to many is the health effects to workers in the workplace who are exposed to huge amounts of non-ionizing radiation.

Examples of non-ionizing radiation are as follows:

- Radiofrequency (RF) used in many broadcast and communications applications
- Microwaves used in our homes

- Infrared radiation used in heat lamps

- Ultraviolet (UV) from the sun and tanning beds.

In summary, try to mitigate the risks of non-ionizing radiation. Pay attention to the following examples:

- The retina is the part of the eye normally considered at risk from light hazards.
- Decrease the use of microwave ovens.
- Use precautions regarding large static magnetic fields, such as MRI devices.



BREDL’s new podcast: In Our Backyard Podcast

By Jenn Galler

This February, BREDL released its new “In Our Backyard Podcast”. This is a new media platform that

we believe will benefit our chapters’ work and inform a broader audience on environmental issues that are unfolding right in our backyards. This is different from any other media or news outlet because it is conversational. You can hear through people’s voices and tones the passion, anger, grief, intensity, and a whole range of emotions that are hard to portray any other way. It shows how powerful our voices are. It’s also a form of personal storytelling which evokes an emotional response from the audience, hopefully prompting them to get involved and take action.

What is a podcast? Good question,



New episodes come out every Friday at 10 AM so be on the lookout. You can listen at <https://anchor.fm/bredl> or anywhere you listen to podcasts.

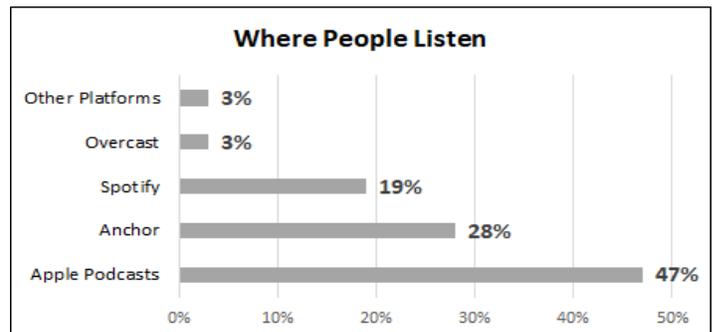
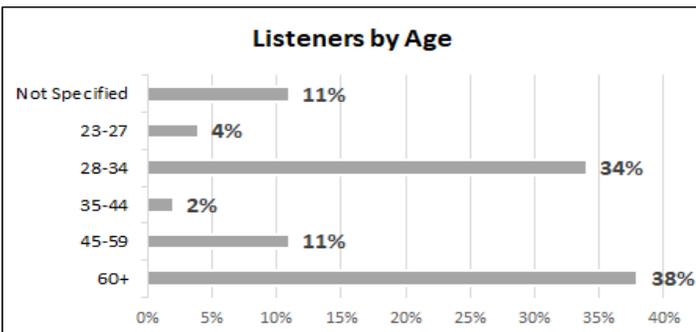
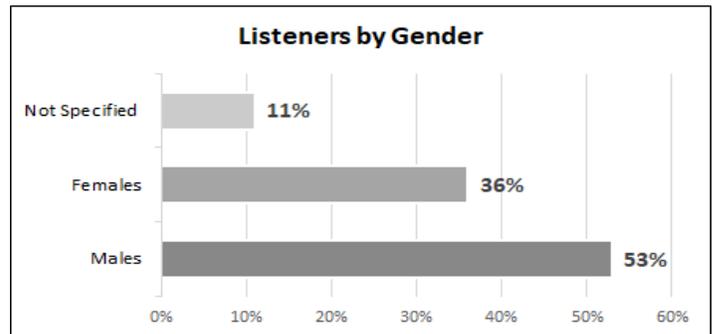
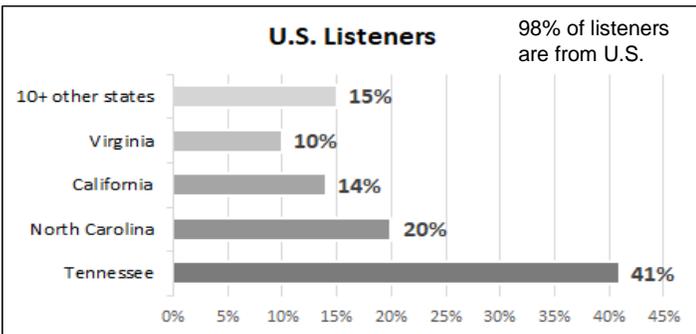
it’s an audio show, spread across a series of episodes, which can be downloaded from the Internet and listened to either on a computer or smartphone. The term “podcast”, coined in 2004, is portmanteau of “iPod” and “broadcast”.

I talk with activists, experts, and people on the ground covering and

fighting these issues. The In Our Backyard Podcast highlights a wide array of people and injustices that are happening on local, national, and even international levels. Through interviewing and talking with these people, I’ve learned about the complexity of the issues these communities are facing and am inspired by all that is going on.

Currently, there are 10+ episodes out, with topics including PFAS, coal ash, nuclear weapons, proposed mining sites and much more. There is an estimated audience size of 30 people who listen consistently. We offer listener stats, below.

If you know of anyone in or outside of BREDL chapters who would be good to interview, please let me know. You can connect us via my email, jgaller1112@gmail.com.





Anderson and Prospect Hill join forces in a new BREDL chapter, "Protect Caswell"



By Sharon Vinson Photos by Evangeline Vinson Gaudette

Residents of Caswell County, NC recently learned that a company that originated in New York and is now headquartered in Raleigh, NC is planning to put a rock quarry, three hot mix asphalt plants, and three truck mix concrete plants in our quiet, rural county. The communities that will suffer the most detrimental effects of such toxic intrusions are Anderson and Prospect Hill.

Two locations have been designated in Prospect Hill. The site at 1238 Wrenn Road has been chosen for the quarry and one asphalt/concrete plant. Another asphalt/concrete plant is planned for 4266 Wrenn Road. The site selected for the third asphalt/concrete plant (known as the Burlington North site) is the beautiful grounds and former residence at 12971 NC Highway 62 in the Anderson community. This site is located less than 200 feet from the nearest residence in this neighborhood.

and Water Supply II). Also very worrisome is the possibility of damage to surrounding foundations and structures of nearby homes from blasting, as well as injuries from flyrock and disruptive noise. Damage to crops from dust, and respiratory problems for humans, pets, wildlife, and livestock are also major concerns, as well as damage to historical sites and to old abandoned cemeteries on the property. Another problem is the increase in heavy truck traffic causing damage to local roadways. A very dangerous situation will be created for schoolchildren as they wait along the roadside for the arrival of school buses and as they disembark from the buses.

longer be able to enjoy spending time out of doors even in our own yards. Dust produced by concrete plants, as well as toxins from these plants is also a major concern. A very



Sign protesting the quarry in Prospect Hill

upsetting aspect is the fact that all three asphalt/concrete plants fall within the same ten mile radius, which compounds many of the above factors.

By the time the residents of Caswell County found out about the plans this company had for our communities, the process of applying for and receiving permissions and permits from various agencies had advanced too far for the citizens to have any meaningful input into the situation. The lawyer for the asphalt firm, along with our county manager, county commissioners, and planning board, all communicated to us that these monstrous intrusions into our neighborhoods were a "done deal", that there was nothing we could do to stop this disaster.

The NC Department of Environmental Quality has yet to approve the mining permit for the quarry. The air quality permit for the

(Continued on page 7)

Major issues concerning the proposed asphalt plants include both imminent and long range health risks caused by emission of toxic fumes. Other worries are of noise, odors, and the risk of fires with the extremely toxic chemicals used to extinguish these types of fires, as well as contamination of wells. There are also fears that our abundant wildlife will be driven away. Another worrisome aspect is the devaluation of homes and property in the vicinity of these plants. Of great importance to our residents is quality of life, which will severely deteriorate, as we will no



Sign protesting the Anderson asphalt/concrete plant

Major concerns about the proposed quarry include the significant risk that it will cause residents' wells to go dry, contaminate well water, and contaminate Sugartree Creek in the Roanoke River basin (which is classified as High - Quality Water

(Protect Caswell-Continued from page 6)

Prospect Hill asphalt/concrete site at 4266 Wrenn Road was approved in 2018, long before the residents knew of the plans. The air quality permits for the remaining two asphalt/cement plants have been drafted, and the NC Division of Air Quality will make a final decision as to whether to allow or deny the permits after a public hearing that was to have been held in March, but which has been postponed due to COVID-19 until a date to be determined later.



Anderson (Burlington North) asphalt/concrete plant proposed site

Anderson and Prospect Hill have joined forces to fight this toxic invasion by the same company. We are pursuing several different

avenues that we believe may hold promise to prevent the construction of the asphalt/concrete plants and quarry. We will (a) seek accountability for health risks to residents with pre-existing health conditions that will be worsened by pollution from these plants, (b) enumerate environmental justice concerns, and (c) document required legal steps or actions omitted or neglected by the company.

Chapter update:

Madison County Clean Power Coalition works for statewide ban on burning creosote railroad ties for energy

by Ruth Ann Tesanovich

Citizens of Madison County, Georgia became outraged in the summer of 2019 when a new biomass plant, Madison Georgia Renewable Power (GRP), broke their promise to burn only clean forest products and instead began burning creosote treated railroad ties. We saw our air, land, and

water being polluted, our health and property rights violated. We united to form the Madison County Clean Power Coalition (MCCPC) in November, 2019. Our mission is to protect the environment and advocate for communities polluted by the processing and burning of carcinogenic creosote treated wood. At this time, we began to work closely with a citizens' group from neighboring Franklin County, GA who shared similar concerns. The



Georgia Renewable Power biomass plant toxic creosote emissions

“twin sister GRP Biomass Plants” in our two northeast Georgia counties are the only plants in Georgia burning creosote railroad ties for power generation.

MCCPC held public educational meetings, started

social media and website pages, and organized hundreds of concerned citizens. We wrote letters to our local newspapers, attended and spoke out at county government meetings, donated time and money, placed hundreds of Stop Burning RR Ties signs along roadsides, signed over 2500 petitions, and protested. We became citizen watchdogs on the plant operations and filed complaints, accompanied by photos, to the Georgia

(Continued on page 10)



Cartoon by Lark Treadwell, Winterville GA

Southgate as segment: a BREDL perspective

By Ann Rogers



In our work last summer with David Nimer, BREDL's intern enrolled in the Nicholas School of the Environment at Duke University, several factors about the history of the Mountain Valley Pipeline (MVP) and its Southgate extension were brought to our attention. What we learned was that, between the time of the issuance of the MVP-mainline's Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) in June, 2017 and the first public announcement of plans to build the Southgate in April, 2018 – a period of less than a year – the planned destination of the gas exiting the MVP-mainline in Chatham, VA was radically altered. Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) issued a Certification of Public Convenience and Necessity (“Certificate”) for the MVP-mainline in October, 2017 based on plans to have its gas

flow into the Transco pipeline system, and then within a period of only six months, an article in Business Wire announced that MVP-mainline gas would be redirected by the Southgate to “new delivery points in Rockingham and Alamance Counties, North Carolina”.

This radical change in the destination of the MVP-mainline gas gives rise to the possibility that the MVP-mainline's claimed connection to the Transco system allowed FERC to certify the MVP - mainline without having to disclose where its gas would actually flow - into the Southgate.

We question whether FERC may have known about plans to build the Southgate prior to the first public announcement of the project on April 11, 2018 and, if so, at what point the Commission's

knowledge of the Southgate should have precipitated corrective action, forcing the consideration of the MVP-mainline and the Southgate as a single project.

A letter from MVP to FERC (FERC accession # 20180503-5142) states (on page 5) that Mountain Valley Pipeline, LLC had already initiated planning and development on the Southgate in “late 2017”, which is very close to the date of the certification of the MVP-mainline in October, 2017.

The following chart illustrates the sequence of events suggesting that the MVP-mainline and the Southgate extension are really one project, illegally segmented into two:

(Continued on page 9)

| Year | Month | Document | Statements |
|------|---------|---|--|
| 2017 | June | MVP FEIS | “The MVP would deliver the identified gas volumes (2 Bcf/d) to five contracted shippers via a pooling point at Transco Station 165 in Pittsylvania County, Virginia. . . .The terminus for the MVP pipeline at Transco Station 165 is the existing pooling point for Zone 5 on Transco’s system and a gas trading hub for the Mid-Atlantic market.” |
| 2017 | October | MVP Certification | “The project is designed to provide up to 2,000,000 dekatherms (Dth) per day of firm transportation service from Wetzel County, West Virginia to Transcontinental Pipe Line Company, LLC’s (Transco) Compressor Station 165 in Pittsylvania County, Virginia.” |
| 2018 | April | 1 st public announcement of Southgate | BUSINESS WIRE, April 11, 2018 – “Mountain Valley Pipeline, LLC today announced the MVP Southgate project The MVP Southgate project, as currently designed, will receive gas from the Mountain Valley Pipeline mainline in Pittsylvania County, Virginia and extend approximately 70 miles south to new delivery points in Rockingham and Alamance Counties, North Carolina.” |
| 2018 | May | MVP letter to FERC (FERC accession # 20180503-5142) | “Mountain Valley has already initiated various planning and development work for the Project, including environmental and constructability reviews beginning in late 2017 to identify the preferred and alternative pipeline routes.” |
| 2019 | July | Southgate DEIS | “The Project would be located adjacent to Transco Pipeline System in Virginia and North Carolina from mileposts (MPs) 0.4 and 32.9. The Transco system does not connect with the Project’s proposed receipt point with the Mountain Valley Pipeline.” |

(Southgate —Continued from page 8)

As we see in the chart on the preceding page, MVP's first planning and development work on the Transco in "late 2017" coincides with FERC's Certification of the MVP in October, 2017. This coincidence of two officially unrelated events brings to mind an article by BREDL's Executive Director, Lou Zeller appearing in the Spring, 2018 League Line. The article, titled "EXPORT REPORT", says,

"There is so much natural gas in the United States that the industry is seeking new customers. One of the largest opportunities for growth is overseas markets, and the international market for natural gas is driving the construction of new interstate pipelines here in the USA. These pipelines would transport gas extracted from the fracking fields in the eastern states in Pennsylvania, West Virginia,

Virginia and North Carolina and elsewhere. . . .

Gas extracted from the ground by any means is not used at the point of origin. It must be transported to end users. . . . In the United States, the major end users of natural gas are electric power generation, industrial process, residential and commercial buildings. For the last five years, the overall domestic use of natural gas has grown but little: just over one percent annually. . . .

Experts estimate that by the end of this decade the United States will supply one-fifth of the world's liquefied natural gas. How can this be? . . .

The expansion of natural gas infrastructure in the Southeast and nationwide . . . is being driven by the commercial export market, not domestic use. . . .

According to Dominion Energy's Senior Vice President Don Raikes, more than two dozen new liquefied natural gas export facilities are either under construction or planned."

Our BREDL chapter members working in Alamance County, NC have speculated that the southern terminus as currently proposed for the Southgate extension may be yet another example of a provisional terminus that will be replaced in short order by the next segment of the MVP, conveniently aimed in the direction of the export terminals on the coast.

Plans are underway to employ David Nimer again this summer to conduct research on the Southgate, to help us determine whether the administrative record supports our suspicion that the Southgate violates the prohibition against segmentation in National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).



Chapter update:

Chatham Citizens Against Coal Ash Dump (CCACAD) and EnvironmentalLee (E-Lee)

by Judy Hogan

Since 2016 we've been in court to challenge the permits for the coal ash dump in Brickhaven, which is located within the jurisdiction of Moncure, in southeastern Chatham County, NC. Most recently Judge Lassiter ruled in our favor against the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and Charah, the company working

under contract with Duke Energy to deposit at the Brickhaven site about seven million tons of coal ash that's been transported from the Charlotte and Wilmington areas.

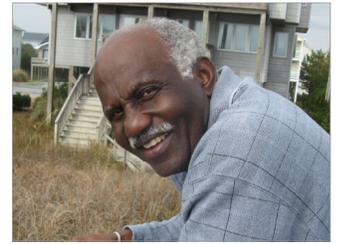
Duke is also now building a STAR processing plant to make the ash suitable for cement on the site of the old Cape Fear coal burning plant. We know that the STAR plants pollute the air.

Charah requested a delay in making their appeal to the judge's decision because of their financial problems, which was granted. So

we wait. We've been holding meetings on the first Tuesday of each month with EnvironmentalLee, the BREDL chapter in Lee County, NC. They're still worried that Charah might use the land they own in Lee County as a coal ash dump. Their county has never had coal ash deposition. The BREDL staffer who works with us, Therese Vick, helps us keep alert on both issues. Cathy Cralle-Jones of the Brice Law Firm spoke with us at our January meeting. They've been very helpful.



Zero waste through the spirit of our youth



By Associate Director Rev. Charles Utley

What impact does the COVID-19 coronavirus have on our Zero Waste Projects?

As we strive to move forward to improve the environment through the use of renewable energy and clean-living conditions, we now face new challenges.

With the closing of many facilities there is a great need to seek other means of communication and mobility. Therefore, we are opening the doors to take a closer look at our Zero Waste Program in Augusta, Georgia. Now that schools have closed, students are now faced with idle time. Although class work is still in process this is a good opportunity to reach out to students and invite them to participate in recycling. Recycling bins are something that our youth can assist with, determining what they will “look like,” because there are more than 32 million Americans who are confused about which bin to use for what item. Youth can assist in thinking of new innovative ideas for our goals, 2030 intermediate and 2050 100% clean renewable energy.

With the fight against the COVID-19 coronavirus, it makes me wonder what people have been listening to. When it comes to protecting our environment, people have been speaking about taking care of our world and safe living conditions for centuries. Now, the fight against COVID-19 coronavirus should strengthen our recommendations for Renewable Energy, Recycling, and Climate Change Remediation for the future.

It has been an uphill fight to get people to support stopping polluting industries, nuclear construction, and intrusive pipelines in our communities. Environmentalists have been speaking about contamination that you could not see but that had an effect on everyone in its pathway, regardless of race, creed, color and ethnicity. But too often the plea fell on deaf ears. So the fight continues. Now that the COVID-19 is sweeping our world and lives are being lost, gloves and masks are being put on for protection. All of this is being done because people are afraid of

something that cannot be seen. Before the COVID-19 came into existence, we faced many arguments and challenges about contamination being produced in our atmosphere. What seemed to be farfetched, impossible and unthinkable is present and is threatening everyone in the world today.

I hope that this pandemic will stimulate our youth to get involved with renewable, safe living conditions wrapped into climate justice and Zero Waste by 2050. And as our youth seek new ways of communication and mobilization, each can also serve as an eyewitness to this present struggle. As our youth gain knowledge, becoming inspired through their participation in their own future, this will provide them with the needed tools for the future goal: 2050 Zero Waste. Therefore, it is my desire to incorporate within our own Internship Program with Paine College ways to continue our Zero Waste Program with young people’s participation.

(Madison County-Continued from page 7)

Environmental Protection Divisions which resulted in air, land and water notice of violations to plant officials.

In early January, MCCPC was proud to become the first new BREDL chapter of 2020. A lot has happened since then. We thank Lou Zeller, Jenn Galler, and Renee Cail of BREDL for offering support and traveling

long distances to help us with our fight.

We are working to impose a statewide ban on burning creosote railroad ties for power generation. Those efforts have been slowed because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Stay tuned!



Stacks of creosote railroad ties at Georgia Renewable Power plant

MVP contractor not adhering to Virginia Governor's emergency orders

By Mark Barker



On **March 12** Virginia Governor Northam declared a State of Emergency to combat COVID-19. Governor Northam directed state agencies to limit in-person meetings and non-essential, work-related gatherings. Five days later on **March 17** he announced additional measures saying, "Everyone must play a role to help flatten the curve and mitigate the spread of this virus, and that starts with social distancing..."

to avoid non-essential travel outside the home. This was reinforced a week later on **March 30** when the Governor issued a Stay at Home order effective until **June 10**. According to the state press release, this order is "to protect the health and safety of Virginians and mitigate the spread of the novel coronavirus, or COVID -19." It directs all Virginians to stay home except in extremely limited circumstances.

essential travel involved. It does



ESI vehicles parked off a rural road in Franklin County, VA on April 7

On **April 7**, many employees of an out of state MVP contractor, who specializes in environmental studies, were observed working along the incomplete MVP route in Franklin County. Our chapter Preserve Franklin observed several Environmental Solutions and Innovations (ESI) vehicles, mostly with Ohio tags.



ESI workers in Franklin County, VA on April 7

On **March 23**, Governor Northam took further steps to slow the impacts of COVID-19. He ordered the closure of certain non-essential businesses and urged all Virginians

It's hard to imagine why an incomplete natural gas pipeline would qualify as an essential business. Not to mention the non-

no good for Franklin County citizens to follow Governor Northam's orders to stay home when outsiders, who could very well be carrying the COVID-19 virus into our rural communities, are moving throughout the area. The ESI workers were also observed not following social distancing guidelines.

This is just another blatant example of MVP not following the rules and endangering communities along its path.

BREDL's Lou Zeller honored for Environmental Services

The Richmond County Neighborhood Associations Alliance consists of 32 local communities in Augusta, GA. On February 28, 2020 the alliance held their Twenty-Fourth Annual Leroy Steed Education Scholarship Banquet to honor local high school seniors for their achievements. For the first time the alliance was able to honor 10 deserving seniors with a \$1,000 scholarship. The banquet is also an

opportunity for each community to recognize those who have gone beyond the call of duty in their community. This was the first time that an individual was recognized by three organizations for demonstrating exemplary work in Environmental Services in the Central Savannah River Area. The award was presented to Louis A. Zeller, Executive Director, Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League



by the Richmond County Neighborhood Associations Alliance, CSRA Brownfields Commission and the Concerned Citizens of Shell Bluff.

BREDL
PO BOX 88
Glendale Springs, NC 28629

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

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

**Visit www.bredl.org to view our interactive timeline that spans over 35 years of environmental work across the southeast.
Your donation will help us to carry on for years to come!**

Thank you for supporting Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League
It's easier than ever to **join**, **renew** and **donate** online.
Check out our secure online donation forms and use your credit card at **www.BREDL.org**.
Or send your check to: BREDL PO Box 88 Glendale Springs, NC 28629
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