



BLUE RIDGE ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE LEAGUE

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The LEAGUE LINE

SUMMER 2022

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Seeking protection for our local communities is something that we must continue to pursue

By Rev. Charles Utley, Associate Director



Residents of rural communities in the southeastern U.S. must be vigilant in monitoring to prevent the ingress of new industry which is potentially damaging to their quality of life and local environment.

The communities who must be constantly be on the lookout for these polluting companies seeking to locate in their neighborhoods are, to a significant extent, Black, Minority and Poor White, leading to



Corinth Baptist Church

injustice against the less fortunate and minorities. In Augusta, Georgia where many of these types of injustices are taking place, the influx of environmentally inappropriate commerce and industry is being encouraged by those who do not live in the area.

There are churches and homes in close proximity to these facilities. Corinth Baptist Church and Fielding Spring Baptist Church in

Augusta, Georgia are both examples of minority-serving congregations located in African American neighborhoods.

What needs to happen is to make it a requirement first to get the community's approval and to provide resources to make sure that the proposed companies' previous record is one that is environmentally safe. We should not focus exclusively on company plans to hire employees, but also on what



Fielding Spring Baptist Church

the benefits may accrue to the community now and in the future, and what sources of environmental protection will be put in place.

Until companies realize that the health and safety of our communities should reign as top priority in their development, and all communities are to be treated equal, the

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2022





BREDL sending representative to Germany for peace delegation

By Jenn Galler

Jenn Galler will attend the Germany Peace Delegation at the Büchel Air Base July 11 through 17. She was invited in 2020 by NukeWatch who is in charge of the camp and reconvening for the first time since the start of COVID. The purpose of the delegation is to join peace activists from around the world in protests at the Büchel Air Base to call for the withdrawal of the 20 U.S. B61 nuclear bombs that are currently deployed. The campaign's goal is to send the existing U.S. nuclear weapons back home, and to halt production of the new B61-12 nuclear bomb to be deployed in five European countries—Italy, Belgium, Holland, Turkey, and Germany. It also aims to pressure the government and remind lawmakers of their 2010 promise to permanently remove the U.S. weapons. Jenn will be staying at a camp near the Büchel Air Base and participate in networking, vigils, and nonviolent civil resistance for this goal.

This delegation ties in with Jenn's ongoing anti-nuclear work. Most significant has been her work with the National Radioactive Waste Coalition, which is a national group

consisting of organizations all over the U.S. and Canada, BREDL included. The coalition is committed to stopping the production, reprocessing, and transportation of radioactive waste. Together, we work to hold the nuclear industry and government agencies accountable for their actions, and advocate for the responsible handling of radioactive waste to keep us all as safe as possible.

Political, Military, & Corporate Background

The following is background information on the issue provided by NukeWatch:

Despite the end of the Cold War, about 20 U.S. nuclear bombs are still deployed in Germany. German pilots are both trained and obligated to take off with these bombs in their Tornado jet fighter-bombers and, if the orders come from a U.S. president through NATO, to use them on their targets. This terrifying NATO war plan is part of the "nuclear sharing agreement" between the U.S. and Germany, and includes a first-strike option. NATO calls this nuclear proliferation "Power and Burden Sharing." In addition nuclear exercises next to the East-European Russian border — the latest was code-named

"Steadfast Noon" — with tens of thousands of soldiers and major movements of heavy military equipment.

These thermonuclear weapons are scheduled to be replaced by an expensive, new, precision-guided nuclear bomb called the B61-12. Three National Laboratories — Los Alamos and Sandia in New Mexico; Lawrence Livermore in California — designed the B61-12, and parts are being made at the Y12 complex in Tennessee, the Kansas City Plant in Missouri, and at Sandia. Final assembly will take place in Pantex, Texas. Major contractors are Boeing, Lockheed-Martin, Honeywell, and Bechtel. The Federation of American Scientists reports that the roughly 150 B61-12s planned for Europe will cost at least \$25 million apiece.

You can listen to podcast episodes by going to <https://anchor.fm/bredl> and scroll down to these episodes: Ep. 28 "Get U.S. Bombs Out Of Germany" (Aug. 21, 2020) and Ep. 40 "The U.N. Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapon's 50th Ratification" (Nov. 20, 2020).

Citizens' responsibility when it comes to pollution

By Kathy Andrews, Executive Director



Fighting fossil fuel industries is a long and arduous process involving years when it comes to major issues such as large gas, coal, and oil projects. However, pollution also affects our daily lives in small, but major ways. A polluted environment can lead to diseases, economic downfalls, and mental issues from stress. Yet, most people have no awareness of this extremely important issue and how one can make an impact. Some of us accept pollution as a natural part of life.

Everyone can play a role in limiting noise, air and water pollution. North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina recently enacted laws stopping the use of plastic bags which have a detrimental impact on sea life. Noise pollution can be reduced by passing stringent laws like restricting fireworks. Keeping an older vehicle in good condition is important so it doesn't become a source of pollution.

As a private citizen, one also has the right to question fossil fuel companies in our daily comings and goings. Recently, I walked out of my door to find a gas company getting ready to install a gas pipeline in my driveway without notification or permission. When I asked the gas

company if they had documentation or whether they had the right of way or proper easement for this small pipeline in my driveway, the gas company backed off. With the help of a friend who worked as an environmental attorney familiar with rights of way and easements, I was provided with proof that the gas company had no right in my driveway. Unfortunately, others in my neighborhood were told they had no legal right because the private gas company claimed to be a public utility. They were also unaware that their utility bills would probably

As individuals, we should not exceed the limits defined by the law regarding noise, air and water pollution, but we should question what we feel is wrong and impacts our daily lives. Often, we have more power than we could ever imagine. So, use a little hutzpah and knowledge. One person can make a difference.

Fossil fuel companies are taking note of individuals and grassroots organizations who fight back, and technological advancements like



Resident confronts illegal gas pipeline installation

increase in the future as a result of an unnecessary gas pipeline in their community.

electric cars, solar, and wind companies that make it more economically advantageous for communities to live in a pollution free environment.



EPA takes action on PFAS

By Therese Vick

On June 15, 2022, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued new “lifetime health advisory limits” for several perfluorinated chemicals—PFOA, PFOS, GenX and PFBS. The agency’s new advisory levels are not requirements that drinking water suppliers must meet; the EPA only recommends that utilities notify customers when concentrations exceed the limits. Those limits are:

Perfluorinated Chemicals under new EPA health advisory	New EPA Health Advisory limits
PFOA	0.004 ppt
PFOS	0.02 ppt
GenX	10 ppt
PFBS	2000 ppt

*Note 1 ppt (part per trillion) =1 ng/L (nanogram per liter)

Perfluorinated chemicals are a group of substances that are used to manufacture non-stick coatings, food packaging, common household goods, and more. They are designed to resist breaking down -- and are known as “forever chemicals”. One source of human and environmental exposure to these chemicals is the manufactured products containing them. In the process of

manufacturing perfluorinated chemicals and the various products they are used in, air emissions, groundwater contamination, wastewater discharges, and waste disposal can further contaminate the communities surrounding those plants. Because they are difficult to break down and remove from drinking water or the air, this added exposure further threatens public health.

For example, in North Carolina the Chemours facility has contaminated groundwater up to twenty-five miles from the site, impacted drinking water downstream, and air emissions affect water and land. GenX and related perfluorinated chemicals have been detected in fish, plants, honey, and people.

EPA is “releasing PFAS health advisories¹ in light of newly available science and in accordance with EPA’s responsibility to protect public health. These advisories indicate the level of drinking water contamination below which adverse health effects are not expected to occur. Health advisories provide technical information that federal, state, and local officials can use to inform the development of



monitoring plans, investments in treatment solutions, and future policies to protect the public from PFAS exposure.” And “The updated advisory levels, which are based on new science and consider lifetime exposure, indicate that some negative health effects may occur with concentrations of PFOA or PFOS in water that are near zero and below EPA’s ability to detect at this time.”

For two of the chemicals, PFOA and PFOS, EPA recommends that water providers notify customers if **any amount** is present. A spokesperson of North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) explained that they are still working with utilities, counties, and municipalities on various aspects of the changes, and that they had “no mechanism” to require that consumers be informed of the presence of these chemicals in public water supplies. The City of Sanford in Lee County has been testing for

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Disenfranchisement and its impact on environmental justice

By Jason Torian

What does it mean for someone to be disenfranchised? The answer seems simple enough. Merriam-Webster's dictionary defines *disenfranchise* as “to deprive of a right, privilege, or immunity”. We most often hear this term used when referencing the right to vote.

Disenfranchisement of poor and minority voters has long been a concern for those who value social and environmental justice.

Be it through voter id. laws, political gerrymandering, closed polling places, or limited access to early voting opportunities, far too often, these individuals have had unnecessary obstacles placed in their way, with the goal of making it more difficult for them to exercise their right to vote. This kind of voter suppression is usually blatantly partisan and easily recognized. What is often overlooked, however, is another form of disenfranchisement, which is equally as damaging, but more difficult to spot.

On June 30, in the case of *West Virginia v. EPA*, the Supreme Court decided in favor of the State of West Virginia, thus limiting the EPA's ability to regulate global warming pollution. This was the third in a

series of highly controversial politically charged decisions made by the Supreme Court during its most recent session; the earlier two involving abortion rights and gun laws.

Many Americans have, not surprisingly, reacted with anger and outrage. Some have expressed anger toward Republicans in congress who re-shaped the supreme court by denying Barack Obama an opportunity to appoint Merrick Garland, while allowing Donald Trump to appoint a third conservative justice, Amy Coney Barrett. Barrett was installed just weeks before an upcoming presidential election. Others have



expressed anger towards liberal justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who chose not to resign during the Obama presidency, knowing that she was in poor health and could potentially be replaced by a Republican president. Still others have expressed anger towards

Democratic elected officials for not “doing more” to protect the environment. Some have gone as far as to use this as proof of their theory that voting is not an effective way to create meaningful change.

Voter abstention is a term used in electoral politics which refers to the act of eligible voters choosing to abstain from voting.

These are voters who have become convinced that their votes do not matter. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that in 2020 alone, this hidden form of disenfranchisement impacted around 80 million Americans. That statistic becomes even more alarming when broken

down by race. Nearly 71% of white voters cast ballots in 2020, while only 58% of non-white voters did so.¹

Many who choose to abstain from voting do not do so blindly. They often cite challenges to progress, such as partisan gerrymandering and political gridlock in

Washington, as drivers toward their disenchantment. What those arguments lack, however, is an acknowledgement that most, if not all, of those challenges were themselves created by democratically elected officials in

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(Environmental Justice—Continued from page 5)

hopes of reaching their own ideological goals. To illustrate this point, in 2010, Republican Senator Mitch McConnell infamously noted that his main objective was to ensure that Barack Obama was a one-term president. This must have been incredibly disappointing to hear for many of the Kentuckians whom McConnell had been elected to represent.

In order for a democracy to thrive, it requires participation of its members.

One of the most important ways members participate is through the voting process. When participation falters, we inevitably end up with a government that doesn't represent the views of, and doesn't pursue the wants and needs of, the greater population.

Low-income and marginalized groups are often the most impacted by climate change and environmental injustices. When people are denied the right to vote, or simply do not use their right to vote, it becomes more difficult to advocate for these communities.

Disenfranchisement through voter abstention is just as harmful as any form of voter suppression. In order to accomplish our goals, a responsive government is required. If you find yourself questioning why progress has not occurred on issues such as climate change, I would encourage you to ask yourself two questions:

1. Which individuals are bringing forth policies that move



us toward a more just climate future?

2. Which individuals are placing obstacles in the way of progress?

Millions of citizens are convinced that their votes don't matter, at a time when their votes are needed the most. While we may not be able to change the hearts and minds of those who have little desire to protect the environment, we do have the ability to ensure that they do not hold positions of power. As Thomas Jefferson once wrote, "We do not have government by the majority. We have government by the majority who participate." Use your votes, and use them wisely.

¹ [brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/large-racial-turnout-gap-persisted-2020-election](https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/large-racial-turnout-gap-persisted-2020-election)

Graphic Credit: www.clipartbest.com

(PFAS—Continued from page 4)

these chemicals, to their credit. BREDL's Environmental chapter is working on this issue. The chart below shows the levels of the four (PFAS, PFOA, PFBS, and GenX) found in the most recent City of Sanford reports BREDL has reviewed, as compared to EPA's new advisory levels.

DEQ must find a way to require water providers to notify their customers about this public health threat. If you are on a water system, reach out to the municipality, county, or company that provides your

water. For more information contact Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League.

¹ <https://www.epa.gov/sdwa/drinking-water-health-advisories-has>

Photo Credit: Drinking water photo by Kier In Sight on Unsplash

Perfluorinated Chemicals under new EPA health advisory	New EPA Health Advisory limits	*Sanford Finished Water Results Samples Received: 01/06/2022 Report Issued: 01/27/2022	*Sanford Finished Water Results Samples Received: 02/08/2022 Report Issued: 02/24/2022	*Sanford Finished Water Results Samples Received: 03/02/2022 Report Issued: 03/23/2022	*Sanford Finished Water Results Samples Received: 04/12/2022 Report Issued: 05/16/2022
PFOA	0.004 ppt	7.56 ng/L	6.37 ng/L	8.30 ng/L	6.14 ng/L
PFOS	0.02 ppt	9.61 ng/L	8.29 ng/L	10.7 ng/L	9.60 ng/L
GenX	10 ppt	0.117 ng/L	N/D	N/D	0.0950 ng/L
PFBS	2000 ppt	9.58 ng/L	4.19 ng/L	5.79 ng/L	3.85 ng/L

*Note 1 ppt (part per trillion) =1 ng/L (nanogram per liter)

Solar panels in parking lots

The alternative to large-scale solar development on agricultural and forest land

By Ann Rogers



All across the globe, including all the states in which BREDL has chapter organizations, there is a burgeoning interest in the use of solar panels to generate electrical energy. This interest in the generation of electricity using solar panels is pursued in large part as a way to combat climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emitted through the burning of fossil fuels. In this article, we examine some of the environmental problems increasingly associated with large-scale solar developments on agricultural and forest land, and offer an alternative that appears to have no detrimental aspects besides initial cost.

Problems with massive solar development on rural lands

According to an article by Richard Conniff, published in November 22, 2021 in *Yale Environment 360*, titled, “Why Putting Solar Canopies in Parking Lots is a Smart Green Move”, the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) foresees that by 2050, the use of solar development to supply 100% of the country’s need for electricity would require ground-based solar on 0.5% of our nation’s land, or 10.3 million acres. According to the NREL study, this percentage could go as high as 5% in some states as a result of the need to generate power at sites that are close to consumers. The NREL study adds that an additional 5 million acres would need to be covered in solar panels to

power all the vehicles in the U.S., if all our cars and trucks were battery powered.

University of California at Davis ecologist, Rebecca Hernandez, is cited in the Yale study saying that developers tend to bulldoze sites in preparation for large-scale installation of solar panels, “removing all the above-ground vegetation”, which Hernandez says is “bad for insects and the birds that feed on them,” adding, “The tendency to cluster solar facilities in the buffer zones around protected areas can confuse birds and other wildlife and complicate migratory corridors.”

Hernandez offers two examples of massive solar development in California whose environmental impact is widely recognized as detrimental. The first is the 530-megawatt Aratina Solar Project near Boron, California, which would “destroy almost 4,300 western Joshua trees, a species imperiled, ironically, by development and climate change.” Hernandez also notes that in California, endangered desert tortoises must be relocated during the process of solar development, and the impacts to the species resulting from this relocation are as yet undetermined.

Virginia Mercury author, Sarah Vogelsong, has been a keen-eyed observer of the impacts of utility-scale solar development in Virginia.

In her November 1, 2020 article titled “As solar farms multiply across Virginia, officials reckon with land use challenges”, Vogelsong shares a “rule of thumb given current technology” that it takes 10 acres of rural land covered in solar panels for each megawatt of power generated. Furthermore, Vogelsong relates that Virginia Department of Environmental Quality has calculated that the 50 solar developments already permitted in Virginia (as of November, 2021) represent 27,000 acres of solar development and that, if all 70 proposed utility-scale solar projects advance to construction, “that figure will rise to almost 100,000 acres”.

Panelists at the Virginia Solar Summit, held earlier this year in Richmond, are cited in Vogelsong’s May 2, 2022 article in the *Virginia Mercury* as stating, “Virginia should do more to encourage developers to site solar on brownfields rather than prime agricultural and forested land.”

And in an April 18, 2022 article in the *Virginia Mercury*, Vogelsong reported on Virginia DEQ’s increasing cognizance regarding water quality impacts of solar development:

The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality late this March abruptly rolled out several major changes to how Virginia will manage stormwater runoff

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from solar farms, saying prior policies may have underestimated water quality impacts.

Previously, Virginia had considered only the foundations or bases of solar panels to be impervious surfaces, or those unable to absorb runoff. But under Gov. Glenn Youngkin's administration, the solar panels themselves will begin to be classified as impervious surfaces, albeit unconnected ones. The distinction could have significant effects on solar development in Virginia.

But while the solar industry worries that the sudden policy shift could dampen efforts to build out renewables, some local officials and environmental groups say it could help better account for how precipitation, which is increasing in both frequency and intensity due to climate change, interacts with solar farms.

Vogelsong offers examples of recent stormwater violations resulting from large scale solar developments in Virginia. One in Essex County led to a settlement with former Attorney General Mark Herring's office and a \$245,000 fine. Another, the Belcher Solar facility in Louisa County, was serious enough that the owner, Dominion Energy, formally apologized to the Louisa County Board of Supervisors for the project's water quality impacts.

Building solar panels in parking lots

Looking once again at the article in

Yale Environment 360, author Richard Conniff describes the advantages of siting utility-scale solar development in parking lots instead of on agriculture or forest land. He says, "The appeal of parking lots and rooftops, by contrast, is that they are abundant, close to customers, largely untapped for solar power generation, and on land that's already been stripped of much of its biological value. A typical Walmart supercenter, for instance, has a five-acre parking lot, and it's a wasteland. Put a canopy over it, though, and it could support a three-megawatt solar array."

Conniff adds, "If Walmart did that at all 3,571 of its U.S. super centers, the total capacity would be 11.1 gigawatts of solar power – roughly equivalent to a dozen large coal-fired power plants."

Examples of utility-scale solar development on parking lots, as shared by Conniff, include:

Washington D.C. Metro transit system's canopies at four rail station parking lots

New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport 12.3 megawatt canopy costing \$56 million

Evansville (Indiana) Regional Airport's two canopies covering 368 parking spaces, costing \$6.5 million, and earning \$310,000 profit in its first year of operation based on premium pricing of those parking spaces and the sale of power at wholesale rates to the local utility

Rutgers University's Piscataway, NJ campus, with a 32-acre

footprint, an 8-megawatt output, and a business plan that the campus energy conservation manager called "pretty much cash positive from the get-go".

At what cost?

The Conniff article reports that building solar panels on parking lots can cost two to five times as much as it would cost to build a comparable solar development on open land. However, according to Solarize Virginia's website, commercial operations installing solar infrastructure will be able to deduct from federal taxes up to 10% of the cost of installation. This allowance remains in effect permanently. Joshua Pearce at Western University, Ontario, as cited in the Conniff article, counters the idea that the initial cost should be a deterrent to building solar panels in parking lots. Pearce says it's a smart investment "if I can give you a greater-than-four-percent return on a guaranteed infrastructure investment that will last for 25 years minimum."

Empire Renewable Energy, LLC is a firm that designs and builds parking lot solar canopy installations for malls, airports, hospitals and other facilities with large parking areas. This firm's website says that solar panels on parking lots provide many advantages in addition to generated electricity, including:

- shade for parked vehicles resulting in reduced AC and fuel consumption
- drastically reduced energy bills for businesses who own the parking lots

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BREDL welcomes Jan Haagensen as Development Director

I am an ex-academic and a retired lawyer. As an undergraduate I attended a small liberal arts college in Virginia, Sweet Briar College. I was a scholarship student. I loved both the English Department and the riding program. The land held by the college was wide open, and extremely beautiful. After Sweet Briar, I was accepted into a doctoral program at the University of Connecticut at Storrs. I had a graduate fellowship in the English Department; Storrs is where I started my teaching career as a graduate assistant. The English Department gave me permission to publish a book of poems as my thesis. I spent two years in Iowa City in the Poetry Workshop; Donald Justice was my thesis director. All of this made me think I would have a career job teaching English.

After leaving Storrs, I taught for a year or two at Youngstown State University in Youngstown, Ohio. No full time jobs were to be had; at that point I went into the law school at University of Pittsburgh. I was there with a lot of older students, almost all of whom were English, history, French, philosophy and Latin majors. I did a lot of independent study and

did enjoy some of the legal writing. But jobs were scarce. After graduation, I did volunteer work at Neighborhood Legal Services in Pittsburgh. This meant that I almost immediately started to work in federal court with other Legal Service lawyers. We represented the poor and middle-class families who could not afford any form of legal representation.

I did as a solo practitioner almost exclusively civil rights and environmental cases. I worked with the American Civil Liberties Union when police accused me of “harassing” trespassing hunters (the police were in fact the trespassers). They and a good civil rights lawyer and I had a spectacular victory at the appellate level, after losing in the trial court. I could never have done it alone; the experience taught me the great value of team work in a fight where the



deck appears to be stacked. I have always had a good relationship with my individual clients, many of whom knew a great deal of law without ever having been near a law school. I am now looking forward to working with the activists who want to help BREDL win its battles.



IN OUR BACKYARD



PODCAST

BLUE RIDGE ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE LEAGUE

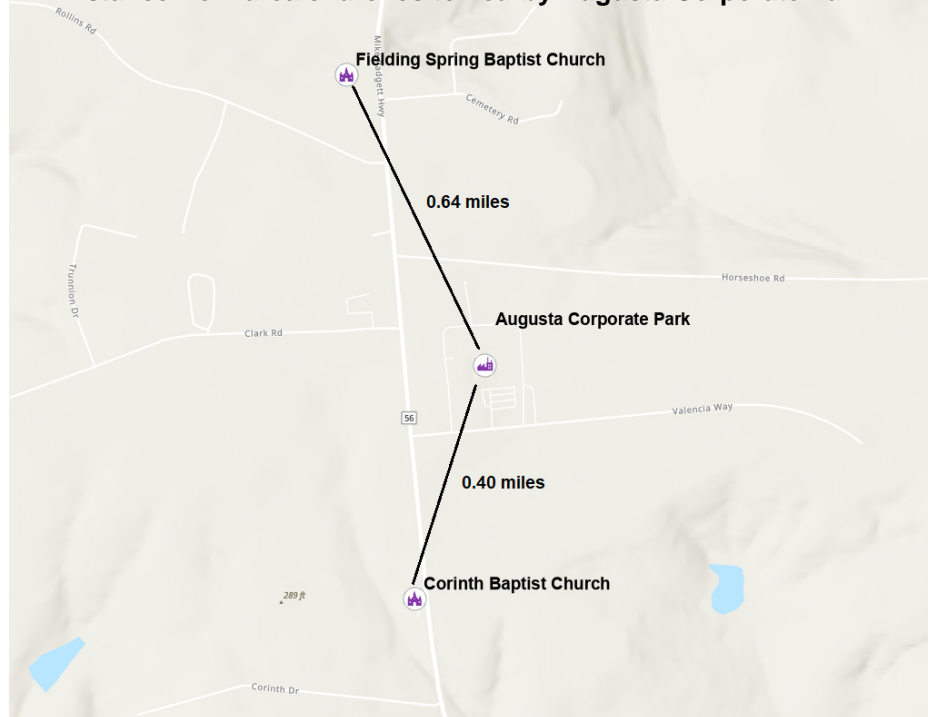
In Our Backyard is BREDL’s Podcast where we discuss environmental issues that are right in our backyards. Topics include coal plants, fracking, pipelines, and much more. This podcast takes a deep dive into these topics and talks with people who are on the ground fighting for the health and safety of their communities as well as protection of the planet. Host Jenn Galler always interviews great guests! Search for “In Our Backyard Podcast” on your podcast app or go to <https://anchor.fm/bredl>

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planning process is incomplete and insufficient. The people must speak up and stand up. They must not allow companies to destroy, for the sake of money, what has been earned through hard work and a long history of dedication to the future of families, communities, congregations, and local environment.

Photo Credit: Photos courtesy of Corinth Baptist Church and Fielding Spring Baptist Church

Distance from area churches to nearby Augusta Corporate Park



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- sufficient electricity to power parking lot owners' commercial, industrial, or municipal operations during peak sunlight midday
- cooling of pavement on sunny days, to reduce the heat island effect of parking lots.

Next steps – toward the parking lot!

On July 19, BREDL staff will attend and make comments at the Franklin

County, Virginia public hearing during which the Board of Supervisors will receive public feedback on its newly minted Solar Facility Ordinance. At this meeting, BREDL staff will invite Franklin County to join us as we explore options for building solar panels in parking lots. BREDL staff are also conducting outreach to Roanoke County and City of Roanoke administrative offices to request opportunities for dialog and collaboration with them on this topic.

The research, outreach, analysis, and communication associated with this effort currently focuses on the Commonwealth of Virginia and its unique geographic, economic, and regulatory frameworks. BREDL staff will seek to develop a clear, concise, and practicable template on the why's and how's of this innovative utilization of parking lots, which we will then adapt for use in all states in which BREDL has chapter organizations.

BREDL Grassroots Mini Grant Program

The BREDL Grassroots Mini Grant Program (GMGP) is a grant being offered by BREDL to its chapter organizations and other grassroots groups who need cash for the purpose of developing, expanding, enhancing, promoting, or otherwise improving their campaigns to protect the environment in the communities where they live. The GMGP will be offered in amounts ranging from \$500 to \$2,500 to applicant organizations who are successful in raising matching funds equal to the amount of grant funding requested.

For more details, please contact Kathy Andrews (843-698-9816, kandrews@bredl.org) or Ann Rogers (540-312-3104, amelvin3@verizon.net).



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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 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, North Carolina. Further, with our chapters we have protected air quality by blocking scores of asphalt plants, four medical waste incinerators, a PVC plant and a lead smelter, and passage by local governments of eight polluting industries ordinances. Our work on nuclear power and coal plants laid the groundwork for our new Safe Energy Campaign. Victories over twenty-four mega-dumps have resulted in our affirmative Zero Waste Campaign. Guided by the principles of earth stewardship and environmental justice, we have learned that empowering whole communities with effective grassroots campaigns is the most effective strategy for lasting change.

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Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League (BREDL)

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**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 nonprofit 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.

Annual Membership is only \$20

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 form and use your credit card at
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Janet Marsh Zeller Honorary Fund

The BREDL Board
of Directors
established this
fund to honor the
work of Janet



Marsh Zeller, who founded the Blue Ridge
Environmental Defense League and
served as its executive director for over
two decades.

**The honorary fund supports BREDL's
endowment and our long-term ability to
serve communities.** Individual gifts are
accepted throughout the year. All
donations to BREDL are tax deductible.
Contributions to the fund will benefit the
organization and honor the woman who
gave so much to make our world better,
one community at a time.