A publication of the **Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League**

The LEAGUE LINE

www.bredl.org

Summer 2010

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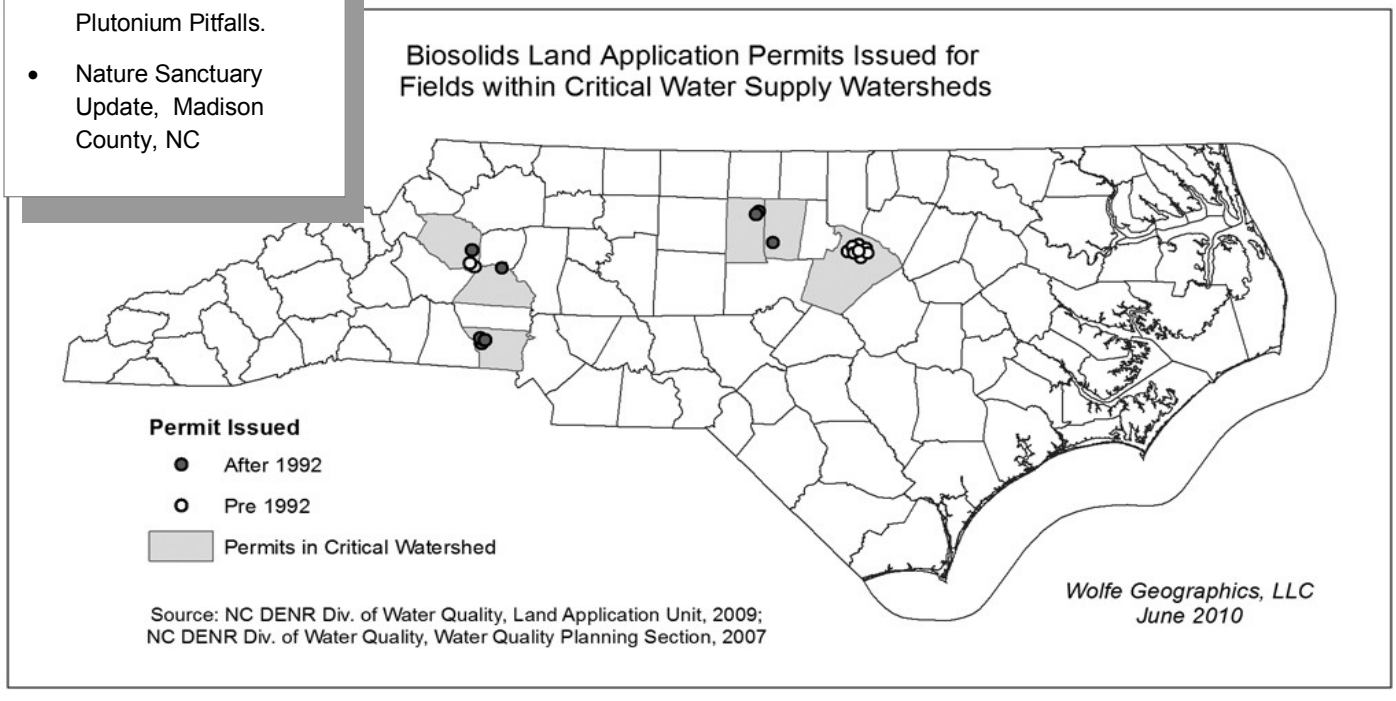
League demands protection for NC drinking water from Sewage Sludge Spreading

By Sue Dayton, NC Healthy Communities

Spreading sewage sludge from wastewater treatment plants on farmlands contaminates soil, runs off into surface waters and poses a potential risk to public health.

Thanks to services provided to BREDL by geographic information system (GIS) analyst and volunteer Kathy Wolfe, of Wolfe Geographics, we know that the state has also permitted sludge fields in critical watersheds in six counties in NC: Alamance, Orange, Gaston, Wake, Caldwell, and Catawba. Drinking water is supplied to numerous towns and cities located downstream from these critical areas.

Kathy's digitalized maps were instrumental in revealing that the NC Division of Water Quality (DWQ) had erroneously permitted a number of fields in critical watersheds for the spreading of municipal sewage sludge. She recommends that the state require farmers to submit a digitalized map which shows the location of field with their application for a permit to spread sludge. "By having field boundaries available in a format that can be added to a geographic information system," Kathy explained, "both regulators and the public can determine whether conditions established to protect public health and the environment are being enforced." *(continued on page 6)*



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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PVC, the Poison Plastic
Unhealthy for Our Nation's Children and Schools

Guest Editorial By Mike Schade, PVC Campaign Coordinator

Center for Health, Environment & Justice (CHEJ)

Healthy schools free from toxicants are critical to a child's health and well-being. Most of the time spent during the years that children's bodily and intellectual capacities are developing is spent inside school buildings. Due to funding crunches across the nation, our schools are in trouble and many are actually threatening our children's health and ability to learn on a daily basis by using unhealthy building materials and products. An emerging toxic plastic of concern, polyvinyl chloride (PVC or vinyl), is used widespread in schools across the nation.

PVC – the Poison Plastic
PVC is the most toxic plastic for our health and environment. No other plastic contains or releases as many dangerous chemicals, and there's no safe way to manufacture, use or dispose of PVC products.

PVC and Dioxin - One of Most Toxic Chemicals Studied
PVC's lifecycle is uniquely responsible for the release of Dioxins, some of the most toxic chemicals ever studied. Dioxins are a class of chemicals unintentionally created from the manufacture and disposal of PVC products. Dioxin is a potent cancer-causing agent and is considered to be a "known human carcinogen". Dioxin also causes a wide range of non-cancer effects including reproductive, developmental, immunological, and endocrine effects in both animals and humans.

Phthalates in Schools
Phthalates are chemicals used to soften or plasticize PVC products such as flooring, which can be released from PVC into the air inside schools. Over 90% of all phthalates are used in PVC products including many found in schools. Some phthalates have been linked to reproductive problems including shorter pregnancy duration and premature breast development in girls and sperm damage in boys. While phthalates have been banned from toys, they're widespread in PVC used in schools.

Are Schoolchildren, Teachers, and Custodians at Risk?
Asthma is a serious, sometimes life-threatening respiratory disease that affects 7 million American children. An average of one out of every 13 school-age children has asthma. In fact, asthma is a leading cause of school absenteeism. In recent years, a number of studies have found a correlation between phthalates emitted from PVC building products and asthma. One study published in 2009 found that children who live in homes with vinyl floors are twice as likely to have autism.

PVC Flooring and Unhealthy Cleaning Products
PVC flooring often requires the use of toxic cleaners to keep it durable and shiny. This wax and strip maintenance has long been a source of health concern due to the toxic VOCs used in the maintenance products. While some PVC manufacturers have formulated "no wax" finishes for some of their flooring products, many PVC flooring products still require the use of toxic maintenance products.

Where is PVC Hiding in Your School?
PVC is found in many building materials and other products in schools including

Flooring; Roofing; Carpeting; School supplies such as 3-ring binders, backpacks, lunchboxes, and raincoats;

Office supplies such as binders, computers and paperclips; Playground equipment; and more!

What Can I Do? Take Action for Healthy PVC-Free Schools

Safer and cost-effective alternatives are already available for virtually every PVC product in our nation's schools. **Here's how you can help today:**

- **Encourage your school district, county or state** to adopt a healthy PVC-free policy to avoid the use of PVC building materials and office supplies in favor of safer cost-effective alternatives.
- **Educate parents, teachers and students! Organize a screening of Blue Vinyl and Sam Suds** for your PTA, teacher's union, or concerned students.
- **Back to school – go PVC-free!**
- **Learn more** by visiting http://www.pvcfree.org ■





Our Energy Policy in Hot Water

Director's Report: Janet Marsh, Executive Director

Sometimes our American government seems determined not to learn from past mistakes. While families in West Virginia mourn the deaths of 29 miners and with oil gushing into the Gulf of Mexico, the Obama Administration and the US Congress lament the weaknesses in federal regulations and the coziness between energy producers and energy regulators. Many tout more nuclear power as the answer to our energy woes.

The truth is that no energy sector in this country is regulated less than nuclear utilities. After the near meltdown of Three Mile Island in 1979, the nuclear industry pushed for and Congress granted one-step licensing, "streamlining" of power plant permitting and the near elimination of the rights of the concerned public. After Chernobyl blew in April 1986, the nuclear industry jumped out front to declaim that America has no Chernobyl-like reactors. That spring the Union of Concerned Scientists identified eight US nuclear reactors with Chernobyl flaws. Three of these reactors Duke Energy operates today at the Oconee nuclear station in South Carolina.

While the Congress debates lifting the $75 million cap on oil company liability for spills, the nuclear utilities enjoy a $95.8 million liability cap per nuclear reactor, even though worst-case accident damages could exceed half a trillion dollars.[a] Moreover, a nuclear meltdown would leave a large swath of land unusable forever. The federal government—we taxpayers—are the only real insurers for a nuclear disaster. If nuclear power is so safe, shouldn't the marketplace and private insurers step up?

Congressmen daily blast the Minerals Materials Services for their failures to regulate the oil industry. No energy sector has a cozier relationship than that of the nuclear utilities and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Anyone interested in knowing what the NRC will propose in their next policy statement needs only to go to the website of the Nuclear Energy Institute. In every legal brief filed by NRC staff attorneys, they are playing Tweedle-dum to industry's Tweedle-dee.



For example:[b]

The Duke Energy lawyers say: "As demonstrated below, this Proposed Contention, in essence, is an objection to the longstanding requirement that a petitioner propose contentions based on the license application at the commencement of the NRC Staff review thereof, rather than after completion of the Staff review."

The NRC lawyers say: The contention, in essence, is an objection to the long-standing NRC requirements that a petitioner file proposed contentions based on the license application at the start of the Staff review, rather than after the Staff review is completed.

(continued)

Further:[c]

Virginia Power lawyers say: "To the extent that Contention One is intended to raise an environmental issue [low-level radioactive waste disposal], it is barred because the environmental impacts of the fuel cycle and solid waste management for light water reactors were addressed and resolved in the ESP proceeding.

NRC lawyers say: The inability to dispose of low-level waste by land burial, as asserted in proposed Contention 1, should be considered a matter resolved in the proceeding on the application…for the North Anna ESP site.

Imagine a courtroom scene with the representatives of environmental organizations like ours sitting alone on one side. The embarrassing truth is that until I shamed them into sitting in the middle of the courtroom, NRC lawyers not only made the same arguments as industry lawyers, they actually sat with them in court.

While nuclear power proponents assert that the next generation of nuclear power plants will be safer and more efficient, the NRC actually voted 4-1 this year to reinstate the lapsed permit for a mothballed nuclear reactor in Alabama. The decision grants permission for the Tennessee Valley Authority to proceed with a 1970s-era Babcock and Wilcox reactor despite corrosion, structural failures and the dismantling of much of the incomplete plant's internal parts. So much for the nuclear renaissance!

Although there is probably no actual sex involved, as in the case of the Louisiana MMS, the NRC is certainly in bed with the nuclear industry. The five members of the all powerful commission have multiple ties to the industry and their lobbyists. The proof is in their decision making. They *always* vote with the nuclear industry, even overturning decisions made by their own hardworking Atomic Safety and Licensing Board.

While Massey had inadequate ventilation in their coal mines leading to the deadly explosion and fire, every day that nuclear reactors operate they emit radioactive poison. While the US Environmental Protection Agency enforces a standard for air pollution, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's rules are far less stringent. EPA permits polluting industries with the requirement of one cancer death in a million. The NRC allows a cancer death rate more than one hundred times greater. These radionuclide emissions happen with normal operation. If nuclear power is so safe, why not hold Duke and Progress and Southern Company to one-in-a-million?

Now here comes the Kerry-Lieberman bill which, instead of solving our energy problems, would make them worse. The legislation would dole out tax breaks upwards of $3 billion for each new nuclear reactor plus over $35 billion in additional government-backed loan guarantees to commercial nuclear power companies.[d] If nuclear power is such a good deal, why isn't Wall Street stepping up?

An infamous whitewater raft guide from western North Carolina takes his unfortunate passengers down the most dangerous rapids with a bucket over his head. The inevitable happens and everyone winds up in the water. To our nation's "nuclear regulators," to our US House and Senate members, and to the misguided environmental groups which support the expansion of nuclear power, I say: "Take the bucket off your head."■

[a]Public Citizen Fact Sheet: Price-Anderson Act–The Billion Dollar Bailout for Nuclear Power Mishaps, http://www.citizen.org

[b]Answers to BREDL's petition to intervene filed by Duke Energy Carolinas and NRC re: William States Lee III Nuclear Station, Docket Nos. 52-018 and 52-019, July 22, 2008

[c]Answers to BREDL's petition to intervene filed by Virginia Power and NRC re: North Anna Power Station Unit 3, Docket No. 52-017, June 3, 2008

[d]*Review of selected nuclear tax subsidies in the American Power Act*, Koplow, Earthtrack, June 17, 2010, http://www.earthtrack.net

(continued from page 1) The DWQ was alerted to the illegal sludge fields through Kathy's initial research; however, instead of removing the fields from the permits, the DWQ sent a letter to the municipalities "encouraging" them not to not spread sludge on the illegally-permitted fields with a "request to consider removing these fields from the permit and from use as soon as possible." To date only the City of Newton in Catawba County has removed their field from a critical water supply area.

Allowing permitted sludge fields in critical watersheds is a violation of the 1992 Water Supply Watershed Protection Act. To make matters worse, a bill passed in the 2009 state legislature extended five-year permits for sludge spreading to eight years leaving a huge gap in time leaving public drinking water supplies open for possible contamination from sewage sludge.

Kathy's mapping investigation additionally revealed that sludge fields permitted in Wake and Caldwell counties were "grandfathered" in under a loophole in the 1992 Water Supply Watershed Protection Act. Sludge spreading is actively taking place in critical watersheds in Wake County by pharmaceutical manufacturer Mallinckrodt, Inc. in Raleigh, and in Caldwell County by Huffman Finishing Co., a hosiery manufacturer, in Granite Falls.

Sludge spreading is taking place in close to 70 counties in NC. Sewage sludge from wastewater treatment plants is given to farmers free of charge to use as a fertilizer. Farmers are told that sludge (also known as "biosolids") contains nutrients beneficial to crop growth. However, farmers are not told that sludge contains a multitude of contaminants that are not regulated, tested or removed by the wastewater treatment process.

Emerging contaminants in sludge include pathogens; pharmaceuticals; hormones; steroids; endocrine disrupting chemicals; PCBs; pesticides; polymers; flame retardants (PBDEs); dioxins; nonylphenols, phthalates; heavy metals; radioactive substances; industrial solvents; and landfill leachate.

Many of these chemicals destroy the reproductive systems of fish and other aquatic life. The long-term impacts of sewage sludge on public health and the environment are not fully known, but scientists have voiced extreme concern over the use of sludge as a fertilizer on farmlands and its impacts to surface water.

NC Healthy Communities Coordinator Sue Dayton, along with Pam Groben and Beverly Kerr, members of BREDL's *Sewage Sludge Action Network* chapter, met with Senator Ellie Kinnaird to alert her to the presence of sludge sites permitted in critical watersheds.

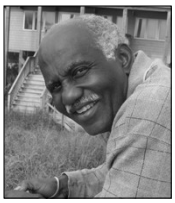
NC Healthy Communities held a press conference in Raleigh on Monday, June 21, sponsored by Senator Ellie Kinnaird. The League and Senator Kinnaird are recommending that the DWQ take immediate action on the following measures:

- Enactment of moratorium by the Director of the NC Division of Water Quality on sewage sludge spreading on all fields located in critical watersheds permitted prior to 1992 on the grounds that it poses an imminent hazard to public health and the environment.
- Immediate removal of all sludge fields from permits issued after 1992 to satisfy the legal and protective requirements of the 1992 Water Supply Watershed Protection Act.
- A comprehensive review by DWQ using digital information to identify locations of existing sludge fields to ensure they are not located in a critical watershed.
- Requirement that new permittees submit a digital file to DWQ with the permit application showing the locations of newly proposed sludge fields.
- Requirement that existing permittees submit a digital file to DWQ showing the locations of existing sludge fields.
- Increase in the distance of 100 ft. to 1,000 ft. from sludge fields to private and public drinking supply sources, and surface waters which include intermittent and perennial streams, perennial water bodies, wetlands, ephemeral streams, waterways and ditches.

Kudos to Senator Kinnaird for her commitment to public health and the environment by calling for a moratorium on sludge spreading in critical watersheds in NC. Kudos to BREDL volunteer Kathy Wolfe, whose expertise and commitment to a healthier environment will help bring a halt the spreading of sewage sludge in critical watersheds.

The DWQ needs to live up to its mission in protecting human health and the environment by removing sewage sludge from public drinking water supplies. BREDL's commitment to protect NC's drinking water will make sure this happens.■

Visit www.bredl.org to see Kathy's digitalized maps showing permitted sludge fields in critical water supply areas in six counties



National Grassroots Summit and Forum On Radioactive Waste Policy

by Charles Utley, Community Organizer

The National Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future (BRC) was created by President Obama to evaluate the nation's nuclear waste policy. It was this new commission that spurred grassroots organizations from across this country and abroad to visit the shores of Lake Michigan for the National Grassroots Summit and Forum on Radioactive Waste Policy."

The Summit drew together some seventy five to eighty environmentalists whose work is centered around Radioactive Waste. Individuals came from Australia, Canada, Washington, Mexico, California, Georgia, Maine and many locations in between. These individuals came to the Loyola University Chicago Campus for an intensive three days of brainstorming sessions. Included was the development of a Green Ribbon Commission or some other grassroots committee to keep watch over the policies and recommendations that would come out of the Blue Ribbon Commission.

There was a yearning to find out the things that we all have in common. We discovered: 1.We all share in a common enemy; industries and nuclear giants who pollute our communities, land, air and water. 2. We must come to an agreement on a solution. 3. The voice of the grassroots organizations must have representation on the Blue Ribbon Commission decision making process. 4. We must be able to empower those at the local grassroots level to have a voice in the decision making process.

The decision making process includes repository site selection, fuel storage and reprocessing, minimizing transportation and maximizing security. It is imperative that whether the group is called "the Green Commission" or not, the grassroots organizations must come to a decision to make an impact upon the Blue Ribbon Commission policies recommendation and decisions on Radioactive Waste.

After looking at all the options, we found the most important issue to be that none of our communities would be contaminated if we put a stop to the development of new nuclear waste. The focus should be on renewable energy. We must take the initiative to explore renewable energy that would not cause destruction to our natural resources and to human health.

We agreed to continue investigating the possibility of creating a Green Ribbon Commission to express the desires of all the grassroots organizations to the BRC. The Green Ribbon Commission would work with the Blue Ribbon Commission by serving on their subcommittees. These subcommittees have already been put into place by the BRC, and we will be seeking representation to serve on them.

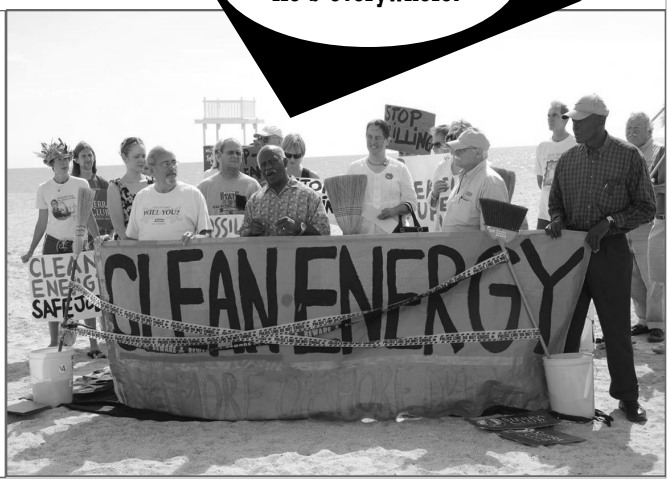
Our work has just begun, but we have made a global step in bringing together environmentalists who share in protecting our world from radioactive waste. I invite you to join BREDL and me in continuing to support the grassroots work that is so vital to our world.■

Rev Charles Utley, He's everywhere!

May 2010 : **Rev Charles Utley** second from the left during *Hands Across the Sands* demonstration.

Standing on black fabric laid on the beach to simulate oil, the Rev. Charles Utley of Augusta called the ever-worsening Deepwater Horizon spill in the Gulf of Mexico "a wake-up call" for the need to be better stewards of the Earth.

"It shows that offshore drilling is risky, dangerous and can ruin our beaches and living things," said Utley, of the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League. "It is our duty on this Earth to care for the resources we have been blessed with."





The Timber Beasts Are Back

By David Mickey, Clean Energy Campaign Coordinator

They're back. In 1998 the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League and the Hickory Alliance, our chapter in Stokes County, fought back against the spread of satellite chip mills across the South. Overseas demand for North Carolina wood chips led to an expansion of clear-cutting and the conversion of natural forest to pine plantations. Large-scale clearing of trees for chip mills sparked local campaigns to stop the practice. New chip mills were effectively stopped when the state adopted individual permit requirements.

The new timber beasts wear the green suits of renewable energy and promote "woody biomass" from forests as a "carbon neutral" (it's not) replacement for fossil fuels such as coal. First claiming that the residue of conventional timber harvests would be used to fuel power plants, biomass proponents now admit that only by chipping whole trees can power plants meet the state's statutory renewable energy requirements. Twigs and branches are not enough; they need the whole tree.

The current battle is being waged at the North Carolina Utilities Commission. On March 1, 2010, Duke Energy Carolinas filed a registration statement with the Utilities Commission asking that it's co-firing of whole tree wood chips in test burns at the Buck and Lee Steam Stations be accepted as renewable energy certificates (RECs) and that the two coal-fired power plants be certified as renewable energy facilities when co-firing biomass. In their pre-hearing brief and direct testimony filed on May 24, Owen A. Smith, Managing Director, Renewable Strategy and Compliance for Duke Energy Corporation, stated that Duke Energy's strategy is "to co-fire wood fuel with fossil fuel at existing Company facilities and to repower units at certain Company facilities to burn only wood to generate electricity."

In the same filing, Peter Stewart of the consulting firm Forest2Market provided analysis stating that only by chipping whole trees could the utilities meet their renewable energy requirements. As Stewart states, "The volume of forest residues in the projected procurement area will simply not support the fuel needs of Duke Energy Carolinas' co-firing or repowering generation projects."

The projected procurement area covers parts of North and South Carolina, Georgia and Virginia.(See Docket E7, Sub 939 on the NC Utilities Commission website www.ncuc.commerce.state.nc.us)

The implications of Duke's "brownfields biomass" strategy are far-reaching and uncertain. Whole tree harvesting and chipping will encourage expanded clear-cutting of mixed hardwoods, particularly in Duke's projected sourcing area. In addition to pressure from the biopower sector, biofuels interests are moving forward with liquid fuels from both trees and energy crops. The Department of Energy has recognized that impacts to watersheds resulting from these developments are unknown and is awarding research grants to access those impacts.

While doubts surrounding the use of biomass for fuel continue to grow, the utilities and their friends in the forest products industry are pushing utility regulators to approve wood chips from whole trees. Both the NC Farm Bureau and the NC Forestry Association intervened on the side of Duke Energy. For those who remember the campaign against chip mills, the scene is disturbingly familiar.

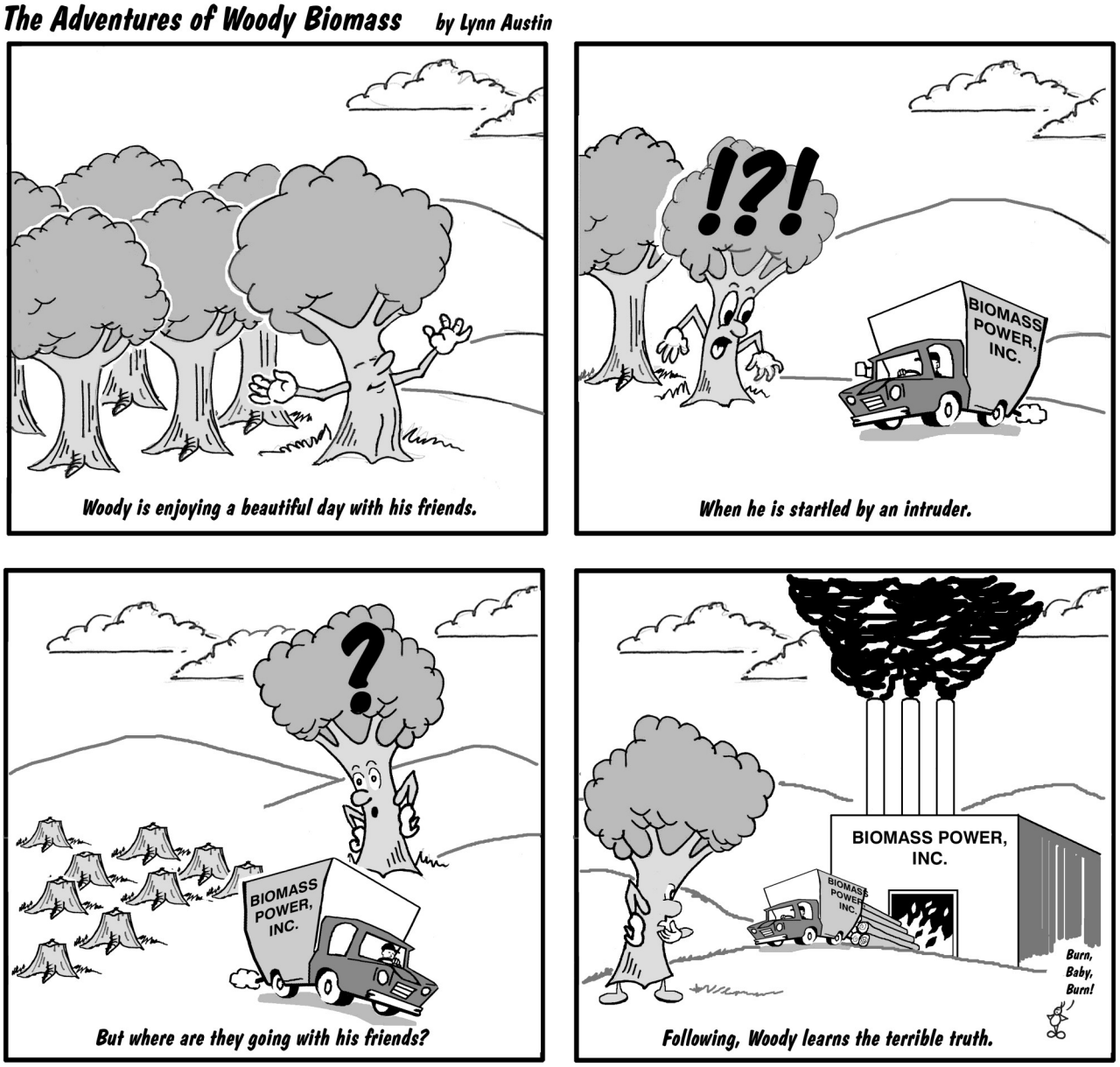
The NC Utilities Commission will hear testimony from the various parties on July 14 in Raleigh. Their decision could set the stage for new battles to protect forests from the timber beasts who see only fuel and profit in the woods. ■

[1]Direct Testimony of Owen A. Smith Duke Energy NC Utilities Commission May 24, 2010 Docket E7, Sub 939 and Sub 940 page 4.

[2]Ibid Docket E7, Sub 939 and Sub 940 Stewart Testimony page 10.

[3]Ibid. Stewart Exhibit 1.

[4]Development of Methodologies for Determining Preferred Landscape Designs for Sustainable Bioenergy Feedstock Production Systems at a Watershed Scale June 2, 2010



Chapter Updates!

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

Scotland County of Tomorrow (SCOT), The Scotland County chapter of BREDL contributed to a successful conclusion to a five year campaign against a mega-landfill, in May of 2010.

The 2005 proposal for a Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) landfill, which was placed on hold because of the Solid Waste Management Act of 2007, was brought back at the January, 2010 meeting of the Scotland County Board of Commissioners.

The proposal was for a modification of an existing permit at the Construction and Demolition (C&D) landfill. The rationale was that the 21 acre leaking landfill can be remediated by constructing a 236 acre landfill, using existing landfill material as cover. The proposed landfill would have a footprint of 236 acres, be 240 feet tall, and would receive 3,000 tons of garbage a day. The location was ½ mile from the Town of Maxton, 2-3/4 miles from the Laurinburg-Maxton Airport, and 3 miles from the City of Laurinburg.

In March, SCOT hosted an open meeting with Neil Seldman, President of Institute for Local Self Reliance, to speak about the positive alternatives to landfilling, such as recycling hubs. Copies of the video were given to local officials and leaders. Besides our website, we circulated various printed materials including door hangers and posters with a map showing the location, asking people to ask where commission candidates stood, and to vote in the May primary.

The Town of Maxton hosted a forum in which 16 people, including other BREDL chapter members, spoke against the landfill, and the Maxton Commissioners voted unanimously to send a resolution in opposition to the landfill. The Laurinburg-Maxton Airport Commission also sent a resolution, as the landfill would be too close to the runway.

At the June 2010 Board of Commissioners meeting, a motion to stop landfill activity in the county passed unanimously, as did “A Resolution Clarifying the Position of the County of Scotland as to Waste Disposal”, shown below.

BREDL, especially David Mickey, has been a significant factor in our successful campaign. Being a BREDL Chapter enabled us to coordinate with other BREDL Chapters over landfill issues; to engage outside speakers and experts; and to have assistance with campaign materials and legislative matters. David made many trips to SCOT meetings, and spent many hours on the phone with our members. The campaign in Scotland County was a test case for the state’s Municipal Solid Waste Act of 2007. BREDL’s significant contributions to our victory benefit the entire state.

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Citizens for Marlboro County (CMC) : The MRR Sandhills Landfill was recently denied a permit by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) to locate in Marlboro County, S.C. near the North Carolina line. However, this does not mean the battle is over.

Quite the contrary, DHEC is likely to do everything they can for MRR. It's almost as if there is a "love affair" between the two. DHEC could not get around the Marlboro zoning, but they have "stuck" to their wrong decisions on need and consistency with the plan. We feel that we will win the zoning lawsuits that MRR Southern filed against Marlboro County if the Marlboro County Council holds firmly to the zoning.

Over 100 signatures, including comments by BREDL were sent to DHEC requesting a public hearing on DHEC’s final decision and it has been granted. We do not know as yet when it will take place, but we are hoping for a large turnout as before. We will keep everyone at BREDL updated as it is announced.

WELL SAID, GRACE GIFFORD!

Horry Environmental Action Team (HEAT) member, Grace Gifford quoted in The State, Columbia, SC news,

“The disclosure of noxious industries within a mile of properties for sale should be mandated.”

Hundreds gather to protest plant proposed for Hart County

Louis Zeller, administrator and clean air campaign Coordinator for the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League, speaks at a meeting about a proposal to bring to Hart County a plant that turns chicken litter into energy.







The Rev. Charles Utley, Savannah River Site campaign coordinator, encouraged the group opposing the plant to stay focused and united. *.."As the Scripture says, 'Where there are two or three gathered together in My Name, touching and agreeing on anything, there I am in the midst of them.' I see you touching and agreeing. Put them on notice that you will not sit idle."*

Citizens Alliance for a Clean, Healthy Economy (CACHE)

Members of **CACHE** are still celebrating their victory against Fibrowatt in Surry County. This July 10 party on the Mitchell River featured lots of food, music, conversation and a renewed commitment to protect the environment. Check out the next League Line to learn how CACHE did it and the chapter's plans for the future.

Congratulations CACHE!

Citizens for a Healthy Environment (CHE), will be holding two upcoming training sessions in July and August in their continued work to shut down the Matthews medical waste incinerator BMWNC. A "bucket brigade" training will be taught by Lou Zeller on July 24th to instruct chapter members on taking their own air quality samples. On August 14th, Janet Marsh and Lou Zeller will conduct a "cancer count" training, based on Bredl's similar work done in the past in Salisbury and Wilkes County. Members of CHE then plan to go door-to-door with the health survey beginning in September, in an effort to document the escalating numbers of cancers in neighborhoods closest to the incinerator.

As of December 17, 2010, SSAN is no longer a chapter of BREDL.

Sewage Sludge Action Network (SSAN) has had a busy spring, and the pace continues into early summer. The members continue to meet monthly, and stay in contact by email on a regular basis. We are looking into fundraising ideas, and planning to have a documentary film made about the land application of toxic sewage sludge and its effects. We successfully tabled at the recent Haw River Festival. We are investigating the sewage sludge spreading across the road from Sylvan Elementary School in Snow Camp, NC. Betty Cross [Co-Chair] and Myra Dotson [Chair] are close to completing the Weaver Street Market Sewage Sludge Informational Card.

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Protect Onslow County Neighborhoods, The PON Foundation is a group of concerned citizens whose main goal is to protect our neighborhoods from environmental and health issues. Community empowerment through education and responsible stewardship is our focus. We are dedicated to protect and preserve our quality of life. For updates and newsletters contact ThePONFoundation@gmail.com and visit our site at protectonslow.blogspot.com

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Welcome to our newest BREDL Chapter! **Clean Air Now (CAN)** Our work is aimed to completely stop incineration at Stericycle, located in Graham, Alamance County, NC. We want Stericycle to implement "clean" disposal methods. We also educate and influence Stericycle's customers to choose safe alternatives to incineration. ■

Need organizing help?

Visit **www.bredl.org** or email **bredl@skybest.com** Or call **336-982-2691**

www.bredl.org

BREDL and TERC
'What a team!'

www.terc.edu.

BREDL is fortunate to have a working partnership called Statistics for Action (SfA), led by TERC, a nonprofit in Cambridge, MA.. Statistics for Action (SfA) is available to assist adults when they confront environmental issues in their communities. Together, we share resources with all our environmental friends and supporters. This means *you* have access to an abundance of material that helps all our BREDL Chapters in their environmental work.

Recently, in Alamance County, NC, one of our environmental groups requested help with soil testing around a steel galvanizing plant. BREDL and TERC came to the rescue with helpful material. Here is a small part of a powerful 51 page Soil Guide, courtesy of our good friends at TERC.

An Overview of Soil Testing: Why have soil tested?
Tests can confirm the presence of contaminants. You or others might:

- suspect a particular business (current or closed) polluted the soil.
- want to find out if a rash or other health problem is linked to contaminated soil.
- want to confirm that pollution is causing something unusual to happen to the plants or soil.
- want to make sure the soil is safe before buying or developing a property.
- fund and design a clean-up plan based on the extent of contamination found.

What can community members do before testing begins? Get involved!

- Find out **past and current uses**.
- Take note of **health problems** in the community that seem to be related to soil contamination. These could be direct and dramatic (like getting a rash from touching the soil) or long-term and subtle (like high cancer rates.)
- Take note of **unusual signs or smells** on the site and nearby, such as plants growing in some areas but dying in others or animals avoiding the area.

Track ownership. In some states, owners are legally responsible for contamination on their property, whether or not they caused it. The owner may or may not be easy to locate.

Determine:
Who is the point person? Find out who will communicate with community group members or the public about what contaminants will be tested for and why, results, and timeline.

- *What might happen if test results show minimal or no contamination*? Could information be used against community?
- *If the test results come back showing contamination, will that reduce property value of nearby homes?*
- *Are there allies who can help?* Contact an environmental non-profit, faculty at a local university, or the public health department to ask for advice or resources.

Educate the neighbors and explain what soil testing will and will not do.

Soil Testing CAN help you:

- Identify levels of concern for contaminants
- Identify hot spots of soil contamination
- Compare contamination levels in your community to other communities.

Soil testing will NOT directly:

- Tell you levels of pollution in the air or water, or in your home
- Tell you who will get sick
- Result in money for health care or cleanup
- Indicate if a lawsuit is a good idea

Based on soil tests, you CAN:

- begin making public statements about the limits and levels of concern for contaminants like lead.
- use data to make a case to push for testing and clean up.

TERC
2067 Mass Ave.
Cambridge, MA 02140
617-547-0430

(continued)

Did you know that according to the US Environmental Protection Agency, soil contaminated with heavy metals can pose a public health risk, especially for children who might play, and inadvertently swallow it.

Recent tests reveal elevated levels of pollutants in the community around South Atlantic, chemicals which are known to come from galvanizing operations. The soil levels of four toxic heavy metals are above normal.

Pollutant	Sample A	Sample B	Sample C	Sample D	Intnl. Mg/kg	NCDA ppm
Cadmium	1	2.3	8.6	8	0.5	0.1
Chromium	30.3	43.3	86.6	40.6		0.2
Lead	13.8	23.7	23.2	14.5	5	4.2
Zinc	84	181	30.1	258	25	27.2

In the table above, test results from four sites around South Atlantic Galvanizing in Graham, NC are compiled along with international standards, the North Carolina background levels and the Agency for Toxic Substances Disease Registry (ATSDR) minimal risk levels.

In the table below, all four heavy metals emitted from galvanizing plants—cadmium, chromium, lead and zinc—are elevated far above background levels.

Pollutant	Level Above NCDA Average
Cadmium	49.7 times above background
Chromium	251 times above background
Lead	4.2 times above background
Zinc	5.1 times above background

Tables provided by A Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League Technical Report by Louis A. Zeller, Science Director

For more information, contact Beverly Kerr | BREDL

☎: 336.376.9060 | ✉: beverlykerr@triad.rr.com



League Line: Nuclear Issues Update

By Louis Zeller, Science Director



TVA Nukes Itself

In Alabama, the Tennessee Valley Authority is second-guessing its proposal to build two new Westinghouse AP-1000 nukes at Bellefonte by asking the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to re-instate lapsed construction permits for two mothballed reactors on the same site. The Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League, which had already challenged Bellefonte Units 3 and 4 (NRC Docket 52-014 and 52-015), doubled-down and filed a legal challenge against the new-old proposal. Major safety problems include the 1970's-era Babcock and Wilcox design and containment structure corrosion at the unfinished plant. We warned NRC that this "points to further problems at Bellefonte if the Commission were to allow the completion of the virtually moth-eaten 35-year old reactors following years of salvage operations and lack of maintenance and oversight." The League submitted to the NRC evidence of similar failures at Bellefonte dating back three decades. In May TVA issued a Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Statement with a preferred alternative of re-building the B&W Unit 1. On June 21, 2010 the League and its chapter Bellefonte Efficiency & sustainability Team (BEST) submitted extensive comments opposing the nuclear option and supporting energy efficiency and clean, renewable solar and wind power.

Plant Vogtle Takes the Baton

In 2007 the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League and others intervened in the proposed expansion of Southern Company's Plant Vogtle near Augusta, Georgia (NRC Dockets No. 52-025 and 52-026). In 2009 the company announced it would become the Reference Site for its two proposed Westinghouse AP-1000 reactors. Reference sites provide up to 80% of the standards for all subsequent plants of the same make. TVA's Bellefonte had been the reference site. Reasons for the switch: effective grassroots opposition and poor TVA management. Sadly, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission appears to be playing along and ignoring its regulatory responsibilities. Early in 2010 President Obama paid a visit to the region and promised $8 billion in loan guarantees to Southern Company for this project. Spearheading the opposition, BREDL community organizer and lifelong Augusta resident Charles Utley, said, "It is imperative that a stand against such environmental injustices toward our communities be taken."

Plutonium Pitfalls

Plutonium is flammable, toxic and radioactive. During the Cold War, about 39 tons of plutonium was produced at the Savannah River Site weapons complex in South Carolina. Today, scrapped plutonium pits, the fundamental components of nuclear missile warheads, are a waste product with no beneficial use. For over a decade, the US Department of Energy has promoted converting plutonium into fuel for commercial nuclear power plants, and would build a factory to manufacture it at SRS. And for about as long, the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League has opposed plutonium power. We published studies, did testing, held community meetings, spoke at public hearings, worked with other organizations and testified at the United Nations. In 2004 the League challenged the license amendment requested by Duke Energy to test plutonium fuel in its Catawba nuclear power plant. Our experts showed that Duke had failed to account for critical differences between the behavior of plutonium fuel and typical uranium fuel. Plutonium fuel fails at far lower temperatures—400 to 570 degrees-F lower—than conventional uranium fuel. The metal sheath, or cladding, which holds a fuel rod together, can form balloons which block cooling water, leading to a meltdown. Despite the evidence, the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board approved the license amendment and four plutonium fuel assemblies were tested at Catawba. But not for long. In 2008 Duke Energy aborted the tests because of unexpected changes in the fuel—"excessive" growth in the assemblies—and removed them. By year's end Duke dropped its contract to buy the fuel from the unfinished factory at SRS. But despite the warning signs, in February 2010 Tennessee Valley Authority signed an agreement with DOE to study the use of the plutonium fuel in its nuclear reactors. The timeline for the DOE's plutonium fuel factory at SRS has first fuel deliveries in 2018. We've got at least eight years of work ahead of us. ■

BREDL Moves Closer to Creating Nature Sanctuary in Madison County, NC

By Ann Rogers



BREDL's planning efforts are moving forward for development of a proposed nature sanctuary on 52.6 acres of mountain land overlooking the French Broad River near Marshall in Madison County, NC. The land, donated in 2000 by BREDL supporters, Ginny Lentz and the *Jubilee! Community*, is composed of three separate tracts, one of which is very steep and has no access for vehicles or hikers. That tract is planned to be left undeveloped in perpetuity as a nature preserve. Of the other two tracts, one has topography lending itself to what BREDL envisions as an environmental education center which would contain scientific instruments for the gathering of data on both air pollution and wind energy. The data collection process from these instruments will be used for public education on pollution and wind energy to be offered to government agencies, environmental organizations, and nearby schools. Also envisioned as part of the same development is a rural retreat facility where local citizens and out-of-town visitors may partake of the quiet repose to be found in the ancient forested slopes of the southern Appalachian Mountains of North Carolina. The rural retreat facility will feature passive solar, photovoltaic, and micro-wind power generating equipment, and will be used as a demonstration project for those technologies.

Currently, options for improving site access and various cost and funding scenarios are under consideration.

BREDL envisions involvement of local civic and church groups to assist with groundskeeping and maintenance and local volunteers to host educational and recreational excursions to the site.■



Scenic view from proposed nature sanctuary on 52.6 acres of mountain land overlooking the French Broad River near Marshall in Madison County, NC

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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(Please be sure we have your email address so we can send you updates and alerts!)

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