

The LEAGUE LINE

Winter 2013

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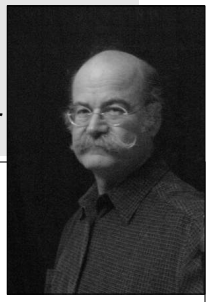
Coalition of Black Ministers Address VA Ban on Uranium Mining

Vogtle AP1000 Legal Case

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Opposing Nukes: BREDL Critical Mass

by Louis Zeller



For ten years BREDL has been fighting nuclear power plant licenses, and nuclear waste dumps even longer. But did you know that after the earthquake Dominion-Virginia Power restarted its North Anna plant without a full structural analysis? Did you know that TVA is considering using nuclear bomb waste to fuel its power plants? Did you know that BREDL has its own radioactive survey program underway? Do you know our anti-nuke chapters raised tens of thousands of dollars during the last year? The anti-nuclear movement in the US is at a turning point.

To advance the common goal of halting nuclear power, we established *BREDL Critical Mass*. The idea is simple: regular conference calls to pool our collective wisdom, update each other, anticipate events, organize our initiatives, strengthen our network and make plans for the future in order to build a critical mass of people opposing nukes. Here are some recent highlights.

Bellefonte Efficiency and Sustainability Team: on November 8 BEST and its project Mothers Against Tennessee River Radiation filed a complaint to TVA's Inspector General challenging the selection process of their new CEO, Bill Johnson. BEST pointed out that the selection did not comply with the Criteria for Notational Approvals policy and that using that process does not remove the legal requirement for the TVA Board to comply with the Federal Sunshine Act. Johnson, formerly CEO of Progress Energy, is also under fire for withholding information during the Duke-Progress merger about the rising costs at the crippled Crystal River Nuclear Plant in Florida. BEST is also tracking violations at Browns Ferry in Alabama: a fire in 2012, not reported to the NRC for two months, burned out a control room panel and points to broad maintenance problems and a major safety hazard.

Neighborhood Environmental Watch: The NEW chapter, founded to fight toxic air pollution, has expanded its mission to include the Progress Energy Shearon Harris nuclear power plant about 30 miles away. NEW is also working to halt Duke-Progress rate hikes and targeting the NC Utilities Commission Integrated Resource Plan hearing set for Feb. 11 at 7 PM in Raleigh. NEW plans a direct action campaign, building broad public support and calling for energy efficiency and clean alternatives to fossil and nuclear power. NEW is also planning a radionuclide survey project and local resolutions to expand the EPZ to 50 miles and making presentations to school and church groups.

Peoples' Alliance for Clean Energy: In 2013 PACE will celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Dominion-Virginia Power North Anna licensing process. Why? To publicize the fact that the feared "nuclear renaissance" has not gone according to the industry's plans! PACE's spearheading of the decade of delay is a considerable achievement given that Dominion had planned to have its license in hand one year ago. PACE members will continue working with Transition Charlottesville, a multi-issue coalition dedicated to local systems of food, goods, energy, communication and culture.

Safe Alternatives for Future Energy Carolinas: SAFE Carolinas is working for passage by the Asheville City Council of a resolution supporting expanded emergency planning zones. The group is meeting with the local fire chief and safety committee. Founder Laura Sorensen said, "The resolution is about the people's right to know." Recent NRC whistleblowers' reports regarding the impacts of possible Jocassee Dam failure near Oconee, SC are adding to local concerns. In addition to the February 11th IRP hearing, SAFE Carolinas is targeting Progress Energy rate hike hearings in Asheville on March 5th.

Concerned Citizens of Shell Bluff: The chapter's radionuclide survey has been training volunteers for six months. Their goal: halt the expansion at Vogtle! Charles Utley reports that local meetings are helping to convince people that, despite the news reports, "it's not a done deal." To educate the public, the group has asked their General Assembly representative for help extending emergency planning in the Shell Bluff community around Vogtle.

Uranium mining: BREDL's Virginia and North Carolina chapters have been working together to keep Virginia's uranium mining ban in place. Elena Day of PACE is working on a cable television feature. NEW's Julius Kerr testified at the state's Uranium Working Group hearing in Richmond in November saying that the impacts of mining would be "life threatening and long lasting." He said that the state officials were "slick" but that mining opponents were also well organized.■

To find out how to participate in BREDL Critical Mass, contact a member of the 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 twenty-eight years Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League chapters have protected their communities by stopping dangerous facilities and promoting safe alternatives.

In the 1980's and 1990's, BREDL prevented a multi-state ThermalKEM hazardous waste incinerator, a southeastern nuclear waste dump and a national nuclear waste dump. In the 2000's, our coordinated grassroots citizens' campaigns have had further victories. We won a legislative victory with the passage of the NC Solid Waste Act, effectively blocking at least four multi-state mega-dumps. Our Person County chapter convinced their Board of Commissioners to reject expansion of the Republic Services landfill. Our Cascade, Virginia, chapter shut down a huge hazardous waste incinerator. We eliminated mercury waste from the Stericycle incinerator, shut down a tire incinerator in Martinsville, won the landmark environmental justice court decision in Greene County, NC. Further, with our chapters we have protected air quality by blocking scores of asphalt plants, four medical waste incinerators, a PVC plant and a lead smelter, and passage by local governments of eight polluting industries ordinances. Our work on nuclear power and coal plants laid the groundwork for our new Safe Energy Campaign. Victories over twenty-four mega-dumps have resulted in our affirmative Zero Waste Campaign. Guided by the principles of earth stewardship and environmental justice, we have learned that empowering whole communities with effective grassroots campaigns is the most effective strategy for lasting change.■

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In this issue of the *League Line*, we have selected the theme "Looking Forward to Energy Campaigns" because 2013 will be a year for focusing on all kinds of energy issues—biomass, fracking, nuclear, fossil-fuel, uranium mining—and more.

Director's Report: Looking Forward to Energy Campaigns in 2013

~ By Louis Zeller

The law locks up both man and woman
Who steals the goose from off the common,
But lets the greater felon loose
Who steals the common from the goose.

Anonymous 17th Century verse of protest

The commons is an ancient concept, grounded in the belief that natural resources—air, water, land—are held in common, shared by all people. The laws of the United States reflect this belief. For example, the Clean Air Act states in its opening declarations that, "The purposes of this subchapter are: to protect and enhance the quality of the Nation's air resources so as to promote the public health and welfare and the productive capacity of its population." [i] Likewise, the Clean Water Act mirrors this concept by assuming oversight of a resource also held in common: "The objective of this Act is to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation's waters." [ii] Congress' assertions of authority of the people over the Nation's air and water derive from the Constitution's pledge to "promote the general welfare." Clearly, no person, whether an individual or a corporation, has the inherent right to foul the air or water. No personal gain or privilege can withstand the principal claim of the people over the commons. Or, at least it should not.

In remarks captured after a wave of anti-environmental legislation, a state representative was quoted as saying, "I've not even scratched the surface. It would take me a decade to get to where I would see us as being even for what's been done to me and the private property rights of citizens throughout this state." [iii] *Private property rights?* The air and water, the commons, are not private property. The legislator may have been the designated driver for a General Assembly too drunk with power to steer a proper legislative vehicle, but as a leader of an aggressive agenda opposing environmental protection, he has done much to help foul the commons. But what animates such thinking? The legislator, Rep. Mitch Gillespie, has now been appointed to help run the agency he has tried to neutralize. Of the agency he said, "It just so happens that [the Department of Environment and Natural Resources] is the issue that I've been involved with all my life, as far as regulations go." Apparently, Gillespie refers to the engineering and land development deals in which he made his fortune. He added, "It's been a major issue for me and my life. It's cost me tens of thousands of dollars over the years." Really? His work to relax standards for contaminated sites means more poison will remain in soil and groundwater fouled by industrial enterprises either poorly regulated or in violation of existing law. His success in removing air toxics limits will allow more benzene, toluene and other poisons to foul the air in city and country. And hydrofracking legislation has set in motion a whole new way to pollute the groundwater which is in ever shorter supply. It is fair to note that his financial backers in the General Assembly were political action committees tied to Duke Energy and Progress Energy, now the largest electric utility in the nation, and set to benefit directly from this legislation.

In 2013 many types of environmental contamination pose risks but remain unaddressed. For example, the groundwater of the Milford Hills community of Salisbury, North Carolina is contaminated with a variety of chlorinated solvents from a NC Department of Transportation asphalt testing lab. Groundwater is contaminated with trichloroethylene as high as 16 parts per million. The diagnosed brain cancer rate in this neighborhood was 7.6 times the expected rate. Elsewhere, a former retail dry-cleaning shop in Durham, closed since 1975, has perchloroethylene (perc) 34,000 times above the state groundwater standard. The building's last tenant was forced out by condemnation in 2009 because perc vapors were dangerous. An underground contamination plume 350 feet long and growing contaminates the soil and indoor air of nearby homes. In the backyard of a daycare center next to a galvanizing plant in Graham, NC, soil samples indicate that cadmium contamination is 140 times above the expected background level. Also, there are high levels of chromium and zinc, all known to be emitted from galvanizing plants. In many communities tons of sewage sludge is spread as fertilizer. The sludge often includes heavy metals, steroids and pharmaceuticals, endocrine disrupting compounds such as Triclosan®, and prions. Nuclear power plants routinely emit tritium as radioactive water and, in the event of an accidental release, plans for emergency evacuation and protection of the food and water supply fall far short of what is needed.

There is another verse to the rhyme about the commons which ends:

And geese will still a common lack
Until they go and steal it back.■

[i] 42 U.S.C. § 7401 Clean Air Act - Congressional findings and declaration of purpose

[ii] 33 U.S.C. § 1251 et seq. Federal Water Pollution Act - Declaration of Goals and Policy

[iii] "State House targets environmental regulations" *News & Observer*, Raleigh, NC, Jun 24, 2012

Webstats 2012 Summary Page

- 1,037,990 hits in 2012 for a daily average of 2,836 hits, 940 daily page views, and 383 daily visits. Second year in a row annual hits went over the million mark.
- February 11, 2012 – Social Media added to homepage (facebook, twitter, blog, youtube)
- June 11, 2012 – 8238 hits, 1731 visits (The Monday following the Friday court ruling on Nuclear Waste Disposal)
- August 27, 2012 – Google Analytics added to all BREDL html and asp pages.
- In 2012, for five months we had some of our highest hit totals in the past 6 to 8 years. Monthly averages for February, April, October, November and December all were higher than the last several years.
- As of Jan. 4, 2013, we are using 310.7 MB of our allotted 2000 MB of space.
- At the end of September we added a mobile version of our website. However, the automatic redirect of our main website to the mobile site for mobile users is not active. GoMobi, the software provider is working on this.
- Despite adding the GoMobi service to our website costs, the bredl website costs were less in 2012. The cost of $265.36 included domain renewals, webhosting, and GoMobi. We are no longer paying for the Google Site Search hence the smaller cost in 2012. We are now using a free, no ads non-profit version of Google Site Search which is virtually the same thing as what we were paying for.
- Waste Gasification Report had 69,145 downloads.
- According to Google Analytics for September – December, visitors included 71.60% new visitors and 28.40% returning visitors.
- Visitors came from nearly 90 countries and virtually all 50 states.
- Visitors to our website overwhelmingly use Internet Explorer (38.91%) as their browser instead of Google Chrome which is used by most internet users.

Browser	Percent of Usage Dec 2012	Percent of BREDL Visitors
Google Chrome	46.9%	17.99%
Firefox	31.1%	20.75%
Internet Explorer	14.7%	38.91%
Safari	4.2%	11.97%
Opera	2.1%	1.23%



Thanks to Mark Barker, BREDL Webmaster for these impressive web statistics.

Web-based Exploratory Mood and Well-Being Survey

By Therese Vick

After two years of work, Therese Vick has announced that BREDL's public survey on how mood and well-being are affected by existing or potential environmental threats is completed and ready for your participation. The survey will help us to change public policy.

The information collected will provide evidence to medical professionals, public policy advocates and government officials that people living with environmental contamination or facing a threat to their home and community creates stress and diminishes quality of life. Too often, this is overlooked and unaddressed by decision makers. We hope to frame the debate and facilitate the discussion of public policy with the results of the study.

We hope all who read this will consider participating. Your answers will be kept completely confidential. In fact, unless you choose to receive survey results or information specific to your group, we will not know your identity.

BREDL staffer Therese Vick is the survey author and chief researcher. She designed the survey instrument based on her training at Wake Technical Community College, with the help of an epidemiologist friend and feedback from the Technical Education Research Center's Statistics for Action Project, a BREDL working partner. Therese assures all who participate that she is fully bound by the confidentiality standards and ethics of her training to protect the privacy of all who take the survey. Additionally, BREDL webmaster Mark Barker handled the logistics of getting it on the website. To take the survey, go to www.BREDL.org ■

Forge Creek Restoration Project Benefits Entire Community

By Louis Zeller

Forge Creek is part of the Watauga River basin in eastern Johnson County, Tennessee. Like many other mountain streams, Forge Creek provides habitat for trout and other species, recreation, and water for livestock, wildlife and irrigation. Also like other water bodies, it is impaired, receiving too much silt, sand or other pollution along its 34 miles.

In order to restore Forge Creek, the Watauga Watershed Alliance, a Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League chapter since 2003, will launch its Forge Creek Restoration Project. Working with Brushy Fork Environmental Consulting in Mountain City, Alliance members will locate problem areas throughout the watershed, coordinate meetings with landowners, and perform stream surveys to assess pollutant sources and causes of impairment to the stream. The three-year project will begin with a watershed assessment, locating places with non-point sources of pollution, addressing problem areas and proposing solutions. Implementation of the watershed plan will include education about best management practices. Funding for the project has been applied for under federal Clean Water Act Section 319 Grant Cost-share Projects.

The leading cause of water quality degradation in the United States is nonpoint source pollution. It originates from scattered sources rather than a single point like a pipe outlet. Agriculture, forestry, construction, and urban activities are some of the leading causes of nonpoint source pollution. Rainfall and snowmelt pick up pollutants from the land and deposit them into lakes and streams.

For example, in many areas pasture abuts the creek and cattle cross it and use it as a watering source. This causes erosion of creek banks and streambeds. The solution would likely include shrubs to hold the bank, a fence restricting cattle access to the stream, stream crossings and watering facilities. These "solutions" will be built upon open communication with landowners. The key to success will be maintaining positive relationships with state agencies and private landowners throughout the project.

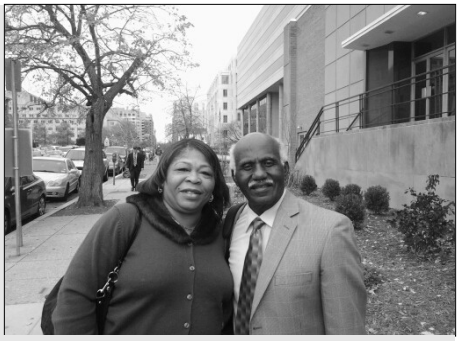
As local residents and landowners themselves, WWA members have been contacted by many landowners who understand the need to improve water quality and are willing to work with the project. The project depends on collaboration; for example, the highway department is willing to match funding with in-kind contributions of manpower and equipment time. The Forge Creek Restoration Project will bring together the necessary people and resources to lighten the burden of environmental protection.

So, hats off to the Dennis Shekinah, Adam Williams and all the members of the Watauga Watershed Alliance. The Forge Creek Restoration Project will benefit Johnson County and the Forge Creek community and will serve as a model for landowner cooperation and pollution reduction in a rural mountain community.■

A Day and a Night to Remember

The Bus Ride from Atlanta to Washington to Represent the Poor and Minorities

By Rev. Charles Utley



Sherry Dixon of Keysville, Georgia with Rev. Utley in Washington, D.C.

On a cold Sunday afternoon after church service and many hours of planning, it was now time to head to Washington, DC. A trip that had been in the works for weeks was now at hand. The bus left from Atlanta, Georgia headed to Augusta where anxious riders were waiting with great expectations to get on board. We boarded the bus at approximately 5:30 PM for our 12-14 hour trip.



As we traveled along I-95, we heard testimonies from members of the group talking about their experiences including the marches and demonstrations that they have participated in. They spoke about how this trip kindled those memories of old demonstrations in times past. It was imperative that we moved at night to reach our destinations by the break of day to be ready to march or to sit-in for Equal Justice. We find ourselves still having to travel and make appearances for Environmental Justice and represent the poor and minorities of this country.

There were many success stories told and videos shown to reflect the struggles of Hyde Park and other Environmental Justice Communities who have been struggling for years.

The Japanese Television documentary video, who interviewed members of our organizations, was shared with the group.

There were many young students who were on this trip who were not even born when many of these activities were in full swing in the 1950's—60's and had no idea of the impact the bus trips like this had on influencing Civil Rights. What they would experience and witness on this trip will forever be remembered. However, I realize for some of them this experience will kindle within them forever because the fight of Justice is always repeating itself for one reason or another.

As we arrived early on Monday morning before the break of day we began to strategize and coordinate our plans for the day.

The group made its way through the stern security at the door and proceeded to the courtroom floor. The court opened with Judge Henry T. Edwards, Judge Janice Rodgers Brown, and Judge Laurence H. Silberman. They took a swift glance at the audience with a look of amazement as they took their seats. Attorney Diane Curran assisted by Attorney John Runkle sat patiently waiting to start. The justices challenged Attorney Curran concerning her lack of new and significant evidence and nothing new to discuss. This left me wondering what in the world was going on. Before Attorney Curran even opened her mouth, the justices were firing at her. However, in a calm and composed demeanor, she opened with "There is new and significant evidence that was not addressed in the previous EIS". She began to explain the different parts of her brief with specific points and references within her brief. The room became still with everyone waiting to exhale because of the intensity in the room. Attorney Curran had maintained her point that there was new and significant information that needed to be addressed by the court. One of those references involved the 72 hours for cool-down which had failed at Fukushima.

The proceeding continued with both judicial sides responding to what was new and significant. When the justices asked the NRC attorney to explain why they were saying there was no new and significant information, he attempted to evade the fact that the points that Attorney Curran had presented were indeed facts. Justice Brown asked how it was addressed when Fukushima had not occurred. The NRC attorney's response was "It was a part of our proposed scope in the previous EIS." However, we knew that it was after Fukushima, that the proposed example of the 72 hours was not sufficient and that it had not been addressed. The judges realized this was indeed new and very significant information and should be addressed. What the out come will be, only Heaven knows. However, I was impressed with the proceedings as one member of our group applauded after a statement was made by Justice Laurence H. Silberman, which was the consensus of all of us.

Applause was given to Attorneys Curran and Runkle at the debriefing, which took place at the First Trinity Lutheran Church immediately following the hearing. We discussed the pros and cons of the hearing and decided to continue our efforts to stop the building of Plant Vogtle and other nuclear plants in the United States.

Our next stop was a visit to the White House Briefing Room for a meeting with Mr. Kevin Sammy, Environmental Quality Office of the White House, and Mr. Paul Seidler, Director of External Affairs for Environmental Management. In this meeting, we were able to request assistance in re-establishing monitoring of the Savannah River on the Georgia side. We extended an invitation to them to visit with us in the Augusta area for further discussion of our concerns. They were in agreement that this meeting should take place, and they were willing to meet with us on their next trip to Augusta, GA.

We made our final stop at the Martin Luther King Memorial to recapture the past and look forward to keeping the course with our plight to make America an anti-nuclear country. We boarded the bus to return home. ■

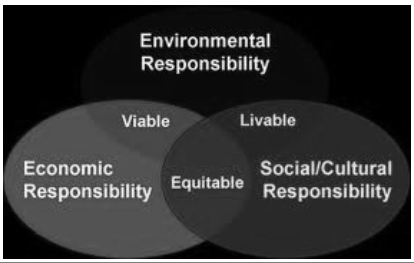


Debriefing at First Trinity Lutheran
309 E Street NW (Judiciary Square Metro)
Washington DC 20001



Mr. Paul Seidler, Director of External Affairs for Environmental Management received our request for assistance and accepted our invitation to visit Augusta for further discussion. This meeting took place in The James S. Brady Press Briefing Room, a small theater in the West Wing of the White House. It is located between the workspace assigned to the White House press corps and the office of the Press Secretary.

BREDL Goes to School



In November, BREDL staffers Beverly Kerr and Therese Vick had the privilege to speak with hundreds of students about fracking. We developed an outline and created a fact sheet. We spoke at East McDowell Junior High, West McDowell Junior High, and Southern Alamance Junior High.



Beverly generally began the presentation with introductions and giving the history of BREDL and what we do to help communities.



Then, Therese went into the meat of the presentation which consisted of Mythbusting, web presentations on the process, what communities are living with, and answering questions. She also included a segment on sustainable economic development, and pointed out that hydraulic fracturing was not the path to a sustainable energy future.

During the hydrofracking presentation, students asked BREDL staff very good questions such as:



"Where does methane come from?"

"How can they take your land?"

"Can you filter your water to remove the chemicals?"

(We got this one at every school).

The teachers were welcoming and appreciative and this experience was rewarding for Therese and Beverly both. We hope to continue this outreach in the coming New Year.

BREDL staff encourage students to do their own research - not take any information at face value. We also suggest students write or draw something about fracking and send it to BREDL for posting at www.bredl.org and on our Facebook page

www.facebook.com/BlueRidgeEnvironmentalDefenseLeague

Contact BREDL staff to schedule an environmental presentation, including tips on sustainable economic development for your school and faith community.



Electric Power Integrated Resource Plans: Dirty Power, Dirty Money

By Louis Zeller

Duke and Progress Energy Carolinas Campaign Hearings around the state on Progress Energy rate hikes:

February 19, 7 pm, Wilmington
February 20, 7 pm, Rockingham
February 26, 7 pm, Snow Hill
March 5, 7 pm, Asheville
March 13, 7 pm, Raleigh

The Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League has filed a motion to intervene in the North Carolina Utilities Commission Integrated Resource Plans.[4] IRPs are required to be filed by power companies to provide a long-range forecast of their operations. Together with NC WARN and Greenpeace, who filed similar petitions, we will present detailed information on the electric utilities' proposals for serving the state's power needs during the next 15 years. As we state in our petition, the IRPs are of vital importance in setting the future path of the utilities. Given the increasing costs and environmental problems associated with fossil-fuel and nuclear generation and the decreasing costs of energy efficiency and renewable energy, this path is clear to us. However, to the investor-owned utilities—Duke, Progress and Dominion—power translates to money and, as Frederick Douglass said, *power concedes nothing without a demand*.

Duke Energy's long-range forecast would have 82% of North Carolina's electric power provided by natural gas, nuclear and coal. Dominion would generate 85% with nuclear, natural gas and coal. Progress Energy would provide 89% with natural gas, nuclear, coal and oil. All three companies will reduce coal use but will increase natural gas by such a large amount that it will increase their global warming impacts. For example, during the next fifteen years, Dominion would actually increase its fossil fuel-generated electric energy output by 44%.

Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League opposes pollution-generating sources of power including hydrofracking, biomass, landfill gas, incineration of solid waste, poultry and hog manure, waste gasification, and nuclear. Support for fossil and nuclear power retards the growth of renewable energy sources such as solar and wind. Biomass and waste-powered plants present false solutions to global warming.

In addition to being cleaner and safer, total cost-benefit accounting for electric energy reveals that wind and solar energy are more economical than coal and nuclear. A study done for the Commission of the European Communities by Olav Hohmeyer analyzed the impacts of renewable energy compared with fossil fuel and nuclear power. The study quantified in financial terms the total costs and benefits of four major sources of electric power: coal, nuclear, solar, and wind. Hohmeyer found that the total costs to society of fossil and nuclear power are much higher than the market price would indicate and that the costs of solar and wind energy are much lower. Moreover, this skewing of rates for conventional electricity below actual costs delays the introduction of cleaner forms of power.

The costs of misguided energy decisions have been calculated and they are substantial. Continued reliance on outdated, polluting energy sources has huge public health costs which are borne by all of us. And although renewable forms of energy are growing, unnecessary and avoidable costs to society are incurred because of the failure of the utilities to introduce more renewable power sources sooner.

Finally, the general statutes of North Carolina which require the IRP analysis of the long-range need for electricity and least-cost considerations (NCGS 62-110 and 62-2) compel the Commission to require a full cost accounting of all electric generation sources. However, Duke Energy, Progress Energy and Dominion Energy are pursuing *most-cost* energy policies which are both expensive and reckless.■

[4] NC Utilities Commission Docket No. E-100 Sub 137, In the Matter of Investigation of the Integrated Resource Plans in North Carolina for 2012, November 27, 2012

Attend the hearing

on long-term Integrated Resource Plans on

February 11, 2013
at 7:00 pm.
Location:

N.C. Utilities Commission,
Dobbs Building Room 2115,
430 North Salisbury Street,
Raleigh, North Carolina

Woefully Inadequate Emergency Planning Near Nuclear Power Plants

By Louis Zeller



Federal emergency planning for nuclear power plants accidents is too little, too late and too risky. The reason is that nuclear power plant contamination spreads in unpredictable ways and can contaminate vast areas. Dave Lochbaum, of the Union of Concerned Scientists, said: "Contamination levels are not linear. Further away you don't necessarily get lower doses."[1] He explained that prevailing winds and other factors determine which areas are affected and how much. For example, after the nuclear accident at Chernobyl, areas 100 miles from that plant had radiation levels higher than areas only 10 or 20 miles away.

A report on the Windscale nuclear accident found: "Even as far as 100 miles away, levels of radioactivity in milk were nearly 40,000 picocuries per liter one week after the accident."[2] This is over eight times the United States FDA's action level of 4,600 picocuries per liter. The accident at the Windscale reactors in Great Britain ranked at severity level 5 on the 7-point scale (see photo).[3] One of the major threats to public health was radioactive iodine-131, which is taken up by the human body and stored in the thyroid, causing cancer. In 2007 the increased incidence of thyroid cancer alone from the accident was estimated to be 240 cases.

Radioactive contamination from the nuclear accident in Fukushima Japan affected air, water, soil and agricultural products over a much wider area than the Nuclear Regulatory Commission acknowledges. Nuclear power regulations remain mired in pre-Fukushima thinking. Emergency Planning Zones, or EPZs, are set at 10 miles and 50 miles from the plants. Plume exposure EPZs are 10 miles under all wind conditions. And ingestion pathway EPZs for food-borne contamination are 50 miles. For Georgia Power's Plant Vogtle, BREDL's Charles Utley said, "It should be noted that there are no shelters in place for the residents in Shell Bluff. And this rural community is not accessible to public transportation." The closest shelter is in Waynesboro, approximately 10 miles away, not far enough to be considered out of the danger zone.

To bring this system up to date, the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League is joining with residents living near existing and proposed nuclear reactors to call for improved public health and safety measures at nuclear power plants. Emergency planning should extend to an area 100 miles around nuclear power plants.

About a year ago, working with the Nuclear Information and Resource Service and three dozen public interest groups across the nation, the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League petitioned the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission for improved public safety protection in emergency planning zones near nuclear power plants. We are calling upon federal, state and local officials to:

1. Expand the radius of the Plume Exposure Pathway Emergency Planning Zone (EPZ) from a 10-mile radius to a 25-mile radius;
2. Establish a new 50-mile radius Emergency Response Zone, with more limited requirements than the EPZ;
3. Expand the radius of the Ingestion Pathway EPZ from the current 50 mile radius to a 100 mile radius; and
4. Ensure that emergency plans are tested to encompass initiating and/or concurrent natural disasters that may affect both accident progression and evacuation conduct.

The case is ongoing, but we cannot sit idly by. So BREDL chapters are developing resolutions for better emergency planning and expanded EPZs for local governments. These resolutions will educate residents to the danger, improve emergency planning and send a message to national officials that they simply must do better.■

[1] Josie Garthwaite, *National Geographic News*, March 16, 2011 http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/energy/2011/03/1103165-japan-nuclear-chernobyl-three-mile-island/

[2] *IAEA Bulletin Vol. 2, No. 5.* http://www.iaea.org/Publications/Magazines/Bulletin/Bull215/21502795459.pdf

[3] This image was taken from the *Geograph* project collection. See this photograph's page on the Geograph website for the photographer's contact details. The copyright on this image is owned by Chris Eaton and is licensed for reuse under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 2.0 license



Are You Ready for Meaningful Work and an Important Career?

BREDL is Hiring in 2013
Environmental Justice Community Organizer
For North Carolina

BREDL community organizers work to advance racial and economic justice, promote democracy, teach leadership and develop the sustainability of communities through grassroots campaigns.

Responsibilities

* Organize residents and stakeholders to take action on self identified issues
* Conduct meetings with residents and community leadership
* Organize and hold leadership trainings and recruit participants to attend
* Work closely with chapter members and volunteers to help identify issues to be addressed, conduct research, plan strategies, build coalitions, organize actions and evaluate outcomes
* Collaborate with key partner organizations
* Be aware of necessary record keeping, financial reporting, and grant compliance and make members aware of by-laws, record keeping, financial reporting and grant compliance
* Engage in fund development, including membership, grant applications and donor cultivation
* Participate in staff and board meetings
* Participate in community and stakeholder meetings
* Support the development of new projects or programs
* Perform data analysis and conduct research

Qualifications:

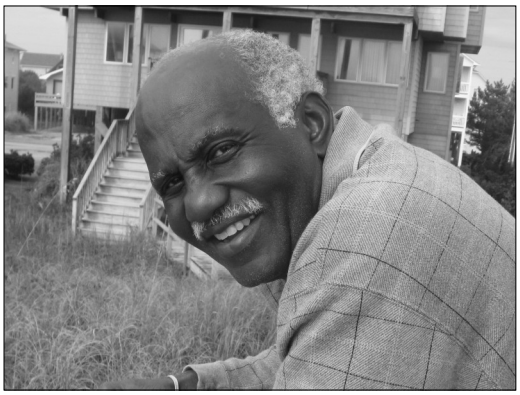
* Community organizing experience a plus
* Relate to people of diverse backgrounds
* Strong verbal and written communication skills
* Valid NC driver's license and use of a reliable vehicle
* Some NC travel is required.
* Mobile phone and computer with internet and email.
* Fluent English plus Spanish language is preferred

Send a letter of interest, resume, references and salary requirements to

beverlykerr@triad.rr.com

Subject Line: Application for Community Organizer

Employment type – Part time with full time potential



Congratulations to BREDL's Proud New Grandfather, Rev. Charles Utley

A Blessed Event



And Congratulations to Anthony, Tinisha and Malia Dawn

Coming Soon to Your Backyard: Godzilla Grasses

By Therese Vick



Remember kudzu? The pretty, green vine from Japan with the sweet smelling blooms that was going to stop erosion? I have laughingly named my habitat "Kudzu Acres" because, well I have kudzu out back that I dutifully mow to keep it somewhat under control. Responding to a push from corporations like biofuel company Chemtex, farmers in North Carolina are being persuaded to plant so -called energy crops like Arundo donax, miscanthus and other potentially invasive grasses. Not only are the potentially dangerous species being planted in their "natural state", hybrids and genetically engineered variants are being proposed, which in some cases are worse than the original version. Widely hailed as an alternative to fossil fuels; the rush to plant these grasses in North Carolina is ill advised.

Arundo donax

In a September 27, 2012 article, The New York Times series "On Our Radar: A Miracle Crop or a Pest?" quoted The News and Observer: " A biofuels center is promoting mass cultivation of *Arundo donax*, a fast-growing field grass that yields three times as much ethanol per acre as corn, for a proposed biofuel refinery in eastern North Carolina. However, some scientists and environmentalists argue that Arundo is a noxious weed that could prove as invasive as kudzu. [The News and Observer].[1] The state of California has spent more than $70 million trying to eradicate it from their soils.[2] The North Carolina Cooperative Extension States: "Giant reed (Arundo donax) invades wetlands such as ditches, stream banks, and lake shores. Giant reed competes for water, nutrients, and radiation [sun], suppresses and excludes native vegetation, which degrades wildlife habitat, increases fire risks, and interferes with flood control..." Sounds like the perfect crop to plant in heavily farmed, flood-prone eastern North Carolina.

Surry County, North Carolina, passed a resolution opposing the propagation of this noxious weed anywhere in North Carolina, which states in part:

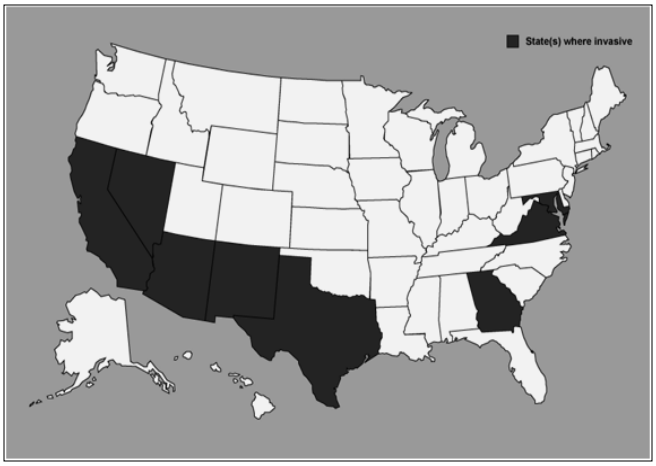
WHEREAS, the Surry County Board of Commissioners are alarmed about the invasive effects of Arundo Grass on the environment, especially near streams, ditches, and estuary's and its ability to grow up to ten inches per day achieving a mature height of thirty feet, sprout from roots buried nine feet and burrow under roadways to infest adjacent land; and

WHEREAS, farmers, landowners, and forestry officials in Surry County and North Carolina are spending billions of dollars to fight invasive species; and

WHEREAS, Arundo Grass ranks among the world's one hundred worst invasive plants;

WHEREAS, the States of Georgia, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia have also listed Arundo Grass as invasive or a noxious weed and California has spent more than $70 million on eradication programs over the past two decades; and

WHEREAS, Arundo grass invades riparian areas competing with and replacing native plants, interferes with flood control, and is extremely flammable increasing the likelihood and intensity of fires; and once established it is quickly able to invade new areas and form pure stands outcompeting and completely suppressing native vegetation, destroy wildlife habitat, and inflict drastic ecological change."



States where *Arundo donax* is reported as invasive



Spread of Miscanthus in the United States [4]



Miscanthus

Miscanthus (or Chinese silvergrass) is a potentially invasive grass that is not native in the eastern United States. Found widely planted as a decorative plant, miscanthus has spread across North Carolina. It propagates by spreading roots underground. Miscanthus is a pest, very flammable and difficult to extinguish when on fire. It has also been seen procreating around reservoirs, roadsides and in burnt out forests where it creates, yes, a fire hazard. Now, instead of limiting it to what escapes from the human landscape, thousands of acres could be planted in the state.

All of this frenzy for the next new thing makes one think of nuclear power producing energy that would be "too cheap to meter", that computers would make paper obsolete, and the famous quote from Jurassic Park:

"Your scientists were so preoccupied with whether or not they *could*, they didn't stop to think if they *should*."

Ian Malcolm, as portrayed by Jeff Goldblum

Our scientists **must** stop and think before exposing North Carolina's precious farmland to another kudzu.

What can you do? Contact your County or Town Commissioners or your County Ag Extension and ask them to do what Surry County did-

Say NO to Godzilla Grasses!

"On Our Radar: Miracle Crop or a pest?" *The New York Times.* Environment. Green Blog. 27 September 2012. Web. 9 January 2013. [http://green.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/09/27/on-our-radar-a-miracle-crop-or-a-pest/]
Murawski, John. "Energy wonder crop raises invasive fears." *The News and Observer.* 25 September 2012. Web. 10 January 2013. [http://www.newsobserver.com/2012/09/24/2367318/energy-wonder-crop-arundo-raises.html]

[3] "DCNR Plant Tutorial." *Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.* June 2006. Web. 1o January 2013. [http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/invasivetutorial/miscanthus.htm]

[4] EDDMapS. 2013. Early Detection & Distribution Mapping System. The University of Georgia - Center for Invasive Species and Ecosystem Health. Available online at http://www.eddmaps.org/; last accessed January 10, 2013.

African American Pastors Influence General Assembly on Virginia's 30-year-old Uranium Mining Moratorium



Rev. Amy Ziglar

By Ann Rogers

Seventeen African American pastors from Roanoke and southwestern and southside Virginia took decisive action on January 4 to influence this month's anticipated vote in the Virginia General Assembly on the question of whether or not to lift Virginia's 30-year-old moratorium on uranium mining. By signing a resolution asking their elected officials in the Virginia General Assembly to retain the moratorium, the pastors have joined a growing and powerful throng of voices – including local governments, environmental organizations, historic preservationists, and business interests -- all speaking in unison against corporate plans to bring uranium mining to Virginia. The pastors' resolution went one step further by asking the Virginia General Assembly to enact a permanent ban on uranium mining in Virginia, not just a continuation of the moratorium that was enacted in 1982.

In issuing their resolution, the pastors cited a recent scientific study which finds that African Americans may be more likely than European Americans to develop cancer as a result of consuming groundwater containing high levels of dissolved uranium. The study, titled "Groundwater uranium and cancer incidence in South Carolina," is available online at http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs10552-010-9669-4.

The pastors cited factors relating to the climate and hydrogeology of the proposed mine and mill site at Coles Hill, VA, all of which increase risk of chronic or catastrophic release of uranium into surface and ground water. Said the resolution, "Pittsylvania County and all regions of southside and southwestern Virginia have relatively high annual rainfall and net precipitation, and all experience frequent severe weather events including floods, hurricanes, and earthquakes. . . . The proposed mine and mill site near Chatham contains numerous springs, streams, and wetlands and is crossed by three FEMA flood zones. The Chatham Fault, intersected by numerous cross-faults, forms a boundary of the uranium ore deposit underground. These above- and below-ground features would vastly complicate the task of mine dewatering and on-site storage and isolation of uranium mill tailings, increasing the risk of chronic and/or catastrophic release of radioactive contamination into ground and surface waters."

In his remarks made at the pastors' January 4 press conference, Associate Minister of the Garden of Prayer and Roanoke City Councilman Sherman Lea said that groundwater and surface water supplies near the mine and mill tailings storage facility are likely to be depleted by decades of dewatering, which involves pumping out groundwater and rechanneling surface water in order to keep the mine and mill waste operations from being deluged. Those living in proximity to the mine whose wells dry up as a result of dewatering will have to depend on the mining company to bring them water forever. They will never be able to sell their houses.

Lea also said that minorities would be subject to cumulative risk as a result of uranium mining. Many minority community members in low-income regions rely on local food sources such as locally caught fish, hunted game, and grown or collected vegetables. These local food sources constitute exposure pathways to uranium.

The 17 pastors who signed the resolution serve congregations in the Virginia Cities of Roanoke, Salem, Martinsville, Danville, and Rocky Mount, as well as Roanoke County.

During the January session this year, the Virginia General Assembly will vote yea or nay on a bill introduced by Senator John C. Watkins, R-Powhatan, vice chair of Virginia's Coal and Energy Commission, which would lift the moratorium and begin creating new regulations for the uranium mining industry in Virginia.■



Ann Rogers of BREDL took part in the uranium mining campaign and was pleased to report multiple media hits that included positive coverage for the pastors and the campaign.

Here's an excerpt from one of eleven different media hits:

The ministers drafted their resolution with assistance from Ann Rogers, a Roanoke County-based organizer with the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League; former Roanoke councilman and environmental activist Rupert Cutler; and one-time House of Delegates candidate and Roanoke activist Freeda Cathcart.

This campaign scored media hits from eleven sources:

1. www.mining.com
2. www.slate.com
3. NBC29
4. Roanoke Star
5. Roanoke Times
6. Roanoke Tribune
7. Smith Mountain Eagle
8. Virginia Pilot
9. WDBJ TV 7, Roanoke
10. WSLS TV 10, Roanoke
11. WXii12 Greensboro, NC

Vogtle AP1000 Legal Case

by Louis Zeller

On November 19, 2012, the US Court of Appeals held oral arguments on a nuclear power case brought by nine public interest groups including BREDL.

The case centers on the failure of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to apply the recommendations from its Fukushima Task Force to Plant Vogtle, operated by Southern Company, and the AP1000 nuclear reactor, built by Westinghouse. In legal terms, the Fukushima study presents "new and significant information" that could alter the environmental analysis for Vogtle 3 & 4 and the severe accident precautions for the AP1000 design.

After the nuclear power plant disaster in Fukushima, Japan in March 2011, the NRC appointed a high-level Task Force to investigate the significance of the accident for nuclear plants in the United States. After the investigation was done, the NRC adopted the Task Force's recommendations which call for significant changes in nuclear power safety requirements. The changes would improve: 1) risk analysis for earthquakes and floods, 2) protection of the reactor and its cooling systems during major accidents, and 3) emergency planning for accidents involving more than one nuclear reactor. In fact, the NRC agreed to review its entire regulatory framework.

However, on Feb. 9, 2012, nearly a year after the Fukushima accident, the NRC decided by a vote of 4 to 1 not to require these safety precautions at Plant Vogtle Units 3 & 4. The lone dissenting vote came from then-Chairman Gregory Jaczko who said, "I cannot support issuing [the Vogtle 3 & 4] licenses as if Fukushima never happened." Clearly, the disaster in Japan provided a warning. Why was he ignored?

The outcome of the case will also affect other communities where Westinghouse AP1000 nuclear reactors are planned. Many of them are running into problems: Tennessee Valley Authority's Bellefonte plant in Alabama has been delayed for an indefinite period pending resolution of construction costs; in Florida, construction costs for two units at Progress Energy's Levy County plant have ballooned from $6 billion to $24 billion since 2006; in South Carolina, construction costs for the proposed William States Lee power station have tripled Duke Energy's estimates and could now exceed $20 billion; and in North Carolina, an emergency could require Progress Energy to evacuate over 66,000 people living within ten miles of its Shearon Harris plant.

Preparations for earthquakes, floods and emergency evacuation at nuclear power plants in the United States are inadequate. The court will rule this year. Meanwhile, we cannot allow this injustice to endanger the people of Shell Bluff, Georgia, the Southeast and the world.■

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.

We are a true league of grassroots chapters working in rural communities in the Southeast. For twenty-eight 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.

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or use your credit card at www.BREDL.org.

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