



BLUE RIDGE ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE LEAGUE

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The LEAGUE LINE

AUTUMN 2021

Inside Line:

List of articles inside.

TVA retains ownership of the Bellefonte Nuclear Plant site—Agency will not request any new licensing

The 1,4-Dioxane Dilemma

In Our Backyard Podcast new season—The Real Costs of Nuclear

Roanoke County Supervisor takes action on MVP

BREDL welcomes new chapter Coalition for a Clean Dan River Region

Photos: People vs. Fossil Fuels

A Poem: In honor of a Code Red Warning, I Harken Thee

BREDL welcomes Kathy Andrews as new executive director

Kathy Andrews has been named executive director of the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League, effective August 1. She replaces Lou Zeller, who retired after 35 years of service. Mr. Zeller will remain with BREDL as a volunteer strategic adviser.

Andrews has a wide-ranging nonprofit and communications background in Washington, D.C. and South Carolina.

After graduation from Howard University in Washington, D.C., with a major in psychology and broadcast production, she began an extensive career in journalism. She very much believes in using media to communicate. As the first Hilton Head Island bureau chief for South Carolina ETV (PBS), she interviewed developers and native islanders on the plight of native islanders to keep their land in the face of rising property taxes. Andrews went on to work as the host of a national news show on Black Entertainment TV interviewing personalities like the late Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall and actor Sidney Poitier. She covered behind-the-scenes movie productions across the country like John Grisham's "A Time to Kill", and covered the red carpet at the Academy Awards, Grammys, and

Kennedy Center Honors. Kathy was also a senior producer for America's Voices, a conservative political network, and a reporter for WJLA-TV (ABC) in Washington, D.C.

After a career in journalism, Andrews began managing communications for the United Negro College Fund in Washington, D.C., one of the nation's top nonprofit organizations. At UNCF, she worked with

companies such as Microsoft, Dell, Hewlett Packard, and General Electric to raise funds for UNCF.

It was after her return to South Carolina that Andrews began her journey as a victim advocate and social activist realizing that justice for all

is a long and enduring struggle. Andrews served with nonprofits as an advocate for sexual assault victims working with law enforcement and medical professionals to bring about changes in domestic violence, sexual assault, and the rights of abused women and men.

Andrews' experience includes working as the director of publications and marketing at Francis Marion University, handling

(Continued on page 3)



2021





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BREDL: Who and what we are

In March 1984, fifty citizens of Ashe and Watauga Counties met in the Mission House of Holy Trinity Church in Glendale Springs, North Carolina. Teachers and farmers, home-makers and merchants listened to the report of the Episcopal Church Women on the US Department of Energy's siting search for a high-level nuclear waste dump in the rain-rich east.

Recognizing that the North Carolina mountains were a region at risk, the assembled group organized the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League (BREDL) to protect their own backyard and those of other threatened communities.

Grassroots organizing was a cornerstone of our early all-volunteer organization. One of our first multi-county boards of directors adopted our credo, which embodies our mission statement:

BREDL Credo

We believe in the practice of earth stewardship, not only by our league members, but by our government and the public as well. To foster stewardship, BREDL encourages government and citizen responsibility in conserving and protecting our natural resources. BREDL advocates grassroots involvement in order to empower whole communities in environmental issues. BREDL functions as a "watchdog" of the environment, monitoring issues and holding government officials accountable for their actions. BREDL networks with citizen groups and agencies, collecting and disseminating accurate, timely information.

BREDL sets standards for environmental quality, and awards individuals and agencies who uphold these standards in practice.

Moving into the future

Since then, the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League has grown to be a regional community-based, nonprofit environmental organization. Our founding principles - earth stewardship, environmental democracy, social justice and community empowerment - still guide our work for social change. Our staff and volunteers put into practice the ideals of love of community and love of neighbor, which help us to serve the movement for environmental protection and progressive social change in Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama and Tennessee.

Grassroots Campaigns

Nothing creates hopefulness out of helplessness like a successful grassroots campaign -and our chapters have a history of winning. For over three decades Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League chapters have protected their communities by stopping dangerous facilities and promoting safe alternatives.

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

A quarterly publication of:

Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League (BREDL)

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(Kathy—Continued from page 1)

communications for the nonprofit Pee Dee Coalition against Domestic and Sexual Assault in Florence, South Carolina, as well as the sexual assault services coordinator for Rape Crisis Center in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

Andrews says social and environmental activism runs in her blood. As a child of the Deep South, she witnessed injustice and understands the power of a grassroots organization like BREDL.

With a deep concern for the environment and social justice, and an extensive background in television and marketing, Kathy believes becoming executive director of the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense

League is a natural culmination of a lifetime of experiences in communications, social justice and environmental activism. Andrews worked with South Carolina conservation organizations to stop a coal plant from coming to rural Florence County. She has also worked with Wildlife Watch and speaks at national conferences on the problems of animal abuse.

One of her greatest accomplishments was working with conservation organizations to prevent a coal plant in Pamplico, South Carolina. She is continuing her fight for environmental and social justice with BREDL by fighting everything from a

pipeline proposed through heirs' property in Florence County, South Carolina, to exposing a working coal plant in a black community at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the ultimate



battle against climate change.

An avid outdoorswoman, Kathy is also a wildlife activist working with lawmakers and organizations to prevent abuses against wildlife and rural property owners. She was instrumental in getting the renegade hunter act, which protects landowners, against trespassing hunters passed in South Carolina.

When not working with BREDL on environmental and social causes, Andrews is a world traveler, having visited China, Spain, Latin America, and beyond.



BREDL online and on your device

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Between the Lines Blog: <http://bredlbetweenthelines2.blogspot.com/>

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Websites: bredl.org | nopipeline.net

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TVA retains ownership of the Bellefonte Nuclear Plant site

Agency will not request any new licensing

By Sandy Kurtz, BREDL Co-President



Are the Zombies Dead for Good?

Zombies have been put in their place once again as TVA retains ownership of the Bellefonte Nuclear Plant Site in Hollywood, Alabama after an attempted sale mired in legal complexities. However, TVA will not request any new licensing after 47 years. See the story below. BREDL with its chapter BEST/MATRR (Bellefonte Efficiency and Sustainability Team and Mothers Against Tennessee River Radiation)

has reason to celebrate the work and many years of perseverance. Though there remains an open door through which a small nuclear reactor may be built by TVA or another purchaser of the land, BREDL/BEST continues to

watch and promote less expensive, less dangerous, more energy-wise, and Earth friendly uses for the region and for the citizens of Jackson County.

Bellefonte is just the most recent failure for this industry. Of the 30 reactors the industry planned to build 15 years ago with the so-called nuclear renaissance, only two are still being built. (Those two, at Plant Vogtle in Georgia, are years behind schedule with a budget that has more than doubled to \$27 billion.)

-Paul Gunter

Bellefonte Zombie Reactors Need to Finally Die Permanently

The project to build two Bellefonte Nuclear Reactors began in 1974 and, after partial building, had stopped by 1988. In 2005 TVA withdrew their Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) construction site permit. Equipment and materials were subsequently cannibalized for use elsewhere. By 2008 TVA reversed the decision and asked for renewal of NRC's construction permit, thus allowing Bellefonte Zombies to rise again in 2009. BREDL Chapter BEST intervened. Concerned citizens protested TVA's decision to build Bellefonte reactors. Numerous educational workshops, Zombie protests, a national nuclear conference, website information, media work, campaign partnerships, health radiological testing, and TVA board meeting appearances influenced TVA's

decision to abandon their plans. BREDL/BEST cheered. The zombies went back underground.

Then in 2016 came TVA's decision to auction off the site to Franklin Haney's Nuclear Development LLC for \$111 million. Mr. Haney wanted to finish Bellefonte. He paid \$22.9 million as down payment. However, without NRC approval the sale could not be completed. TVA had lost NRC's quality assurance during the time when cannibalizing and termination of the NRC construction permit (which never should have

been reinstated) was occurring. Mr. Haney sued TVA citing breach of contract. TVA said Mr. Haney had not completed the requirements for transfer of construction permits. After lengthy litigation, the judge agreed with TVA, but required a \$22.9 million payment/reimbursement plus interest to Nuclear Development LLC for all their trouble.

Count the years. 1974-2021. Forty-seven years! During that time, according to former nuclear engineer, Arnie Gundersen of

Fairewinds Associates, what's left of Bellefonte is not in good shape. In a review for Southern Alliance for Clean Energy, Gundersen said time has weakened the concrete foundations due to exposure to groundwater after the sump pumps were turned off. Steel tendons holding the containment vessel together are cracking. And

(Continued on page 11)



The 1,4-Dioxane Dilemma

By Therese Vick



Ground and surface water across North Carolina and the United States is contaminated with 1,4-Dioxane, a clear, flammable liquid that has a slight odor. It is not readily biodegradable and is “miscible”—it dissolves easily in water— and is difficult to remove. Most wastewater treatment plants are not equipped to remove the chemical; it often ends up in water bodies like rivers that are the source of drinking water. Yet this likely carcinogenic “forever” chemical remains unregulated at the federal level and in most states, including North Carolina. The Cape Fear watershed has had some of the highest levels of 1,4-Dioxane in the country. The lack of regulatory limits means that millions of people in North Carolina may be drinking water tainted with 1-4-Dioxane.

On June 30, 2021, there was a discharge of 1,4-Dioxane from the T. Z. Osborne Wastewater Plant in Greensboro, and it wasn’t the first time. In its July 1 release about the spill, the Division of Water Resources (DWR) noted that “municipalities with drinking water intakes

downstream” had been notified. There was reporting that Pittsboro, Fayetteville, and Wilmington would be sampling for 1,4-Dioxane, but nothing about Sanford’s testing plans. BREDL contacted the City of Sanford on July 3 and then reached out to DWR asking if they had heard anything. On July 12, in reply to a public records request from BREDL, the Water Filtration Facility supervisor replied that he had been on vacation, and that they had taken water samples that day and would re-check on the 28th. The samples taken on the 12th, almost two weeks after the spill, showed 1,4-Dioxane in raw and finished water.

This episode reveals weaknesses in local government response to these public health emergencies. Equally troubling, the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) allows local governments to share their water testing results for unregulated chemicals “voluntarily.” Considering this information, on August 10, 2021, BREDL sent a letter to DEQ Secretary, Elizabeth Biser, urging the

Department to consider the enactment of emergency, temporary, or permanent rules requiring that:

1. Testing and analysis be performed after a spill has been reported/detected, including the recommended time frame for such testing.
2. Water providers notify their users of discharges/spills immediately.
3. Water providers notify users immediately of any detection of unregulated chemicals, as well as detection of other contaminants that exceed the regulatory limit.
4. The Department post the results on the DEQ website and send out notices to their media/interested parties lists.

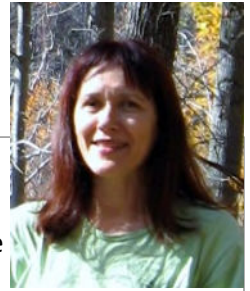
To date we have received no response to BREDL’s August letter. It is time that DEQ take action to protect public health and regulate 1,4-Dioxane.



Please join us for a new season of In Our Backyard Podcast, **The Real Costs of Nuclear**. We’ve heard pros and cons of what nuclear power can entail, and in this season, IOBP host, Jenn Galler will be breaking down what the real costs of nuclear power are, including impacts of the mining of uranium, transportation of the fuel, the use of it, where the waste will go, and whether it’s a long-term energy solution. Jenn will also be breaking down nuclear jargon, discussing whether nuclear is an essential and safe energy source. She’ll be talking with nuclear experts, discerning facts from propaganda, and scoping out what’s happening with the nuclear industry today.

Roanoke County Supervisor takes action on MVP

By Ann Rogers



On September 14, Roanoke County Supervisor, David Radford, submitted a letter to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) requesting recognition of the wetlands of Bent Mountain, Virginia as significant under 33CFR320.4(b), a section of the Regulatory Program governing USACE's review of Mountain Valley Pipeline, LLC (MVP)'s application for an Individual Permit under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act.

Representative Radford's letter was written at the request of BREDL chapter, Preserve Bent Mountain.

33CFR320.4(b), titled, "*Effects on wetlands*", offers USACE a regulatory framework in which to recognize wetland areas affected by projects governed by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. The types of wetlands protected under 33CFR320.4(b) are those considered to perform functions important to the public interest, including:

- wetlands which serve significant natural biological functions, including food chain production, general habitat and nesting, spawning, rearing and resting sites for aquatic or land species
- wetlands the destruction or alteration of which would affect detrimentally natural drainage characteristics, sedimentation patterns, salinity distribution, flushing characteristics, current patterns, or other environmental characteristics
- wetlands which are ground water

discharge areas that maintain minimum baseflows important to aquatic resources and those which are prime natural recharge areas

- wetlands which serve significant water purification functions
- wetlands which are unique in nature or scarce in quantity to the region or local area
- wetlands which are part of a complete and interrelated wetland area.

33CFR320.4(b) states that "no permit will be granted which involves the alteration of wetlands identified as important by . . . this section unless the district engineer concludes, on the basis of the analysis required in . . . this section, that the benefits of the proposed alteration outweigh the damage to the wetlands resource."

Attached to Representative Radford's letter to USACE were seven documents offering analysis and documentation supporting the request for consideration of the wetlands of Bent Mountain as having significance under 33CFR320.4(b). These documents included three letters from Roanoke County officials, including: (1) Roanoke County's 2016 comments to Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the MVP, (2) comments sent in 2016 to FERC from the Roanoke County Administrator regarding the wetlands on Bent Mountain and their importance to the public interest; and (3) a 2017 letter to Virginia Department of

Environmental Quality (DEQ) from the Roanoke County

Administrator seeking recognition of the springs, headwater streams, and associated wetlands in Bent Mountain forming the birthplace of the South Fork of the Roanoke River, an interrelated aquatic system which is crossed extensively by the MVP.

Also included as attachments are a 2021 report by Virginia Scientist-Community Interface titled, "Geology, Hydrology, Ecology, and Soils may present challenges for construction of the Mountain Valley Pipeline near Bent Mountain, Virginia", and a 2017 study by licensed geologist, Dr. Pam Dodds, titled, "Hydrological Assessment of Proposed Mountain Valley Pipeline Construction Impacts to Mill Creek, Bent Mountain Area, Roanoke, County, Virginia". Also attached to the letter is a remarkably detailed analysis of the MVP's impacts to wetlands and associated freshwater resources in Bent Mountain by former DEQ Environmental Engineer, Bob Johnson and his wife, Roberta, who are long-time members of BREDL chapter, Preserve Bent Mountain.

We in BREDL strongly support this local government-led initiative to activate the regulatory capability of USACE to protect the priceless wetlands of Bent Mountain, many of which have already been extensively damaged by construction of the MVP.

BREDL welcomes new chapter Coalition for a Clean Dan River Region

By Julie Owen, CCDRR Director

The Coalition for a Clean Dan River Region was formed in 2020 by concerned residents living in the area around First Piedmont Landfill in Ringgold, Virginia. Our story began in July, 1972. The landfill was first permitted by the Commonwealth of Virginia to dump “sanitary” items. In the late 1970s a group of citizens learned that the landfill was attempting to get permitting for hazardous waste. The residents came together and formed Dan River District Action Committee, a group formed to keep the landfill from transitioning to a hazardous material dump site. The residents banded together and, after a lengthy and exhausting fight, the landfill owners backed down. Over the years the community group continued to operate and care for the neighborhood and each other. In time, the group dissolved.

The landfill continued to operate and was, for the most part, unseen and unheard. In the early 2000’s the landfill decided to inch closer to its property line. Trees were removed, black tarps were hung by telephone poles as a barrier and poorly rigged up. Trash started to blow over the property line and onto residents’ lawns. Foul odors began to be noticed by the perimeter residents and eventually would be noticed up to three miles away. Noise has certainly increased. Unpermitted and

unplanned fires have been a regular occurrence in the last several years. They have had so many fires that they purchased their own fire truck from a local fire department! There is no safety barrier around this landfill. No fence, wall, even a tarp -- no boundary of any kind!

Last October (2020), residents became concerned over several re-zoning and special-use notice signs that appeared in the neighborhood on First Piedmont’s property. The firm owns the property across the county road from the landfill’s entrance. The rezoning was to move a one-acre parcel of land from Agriculture to Industrial Use. The special-use permit was reportedly to tear down an existing transfer station and other assorted buildings within the complex and re-build and/or relocate buildings across Clarks Mill Road, which is a rural, not a commercial/industrial road, ultimately to expand their footprint. This expansion, which they deny is

underway, will turn our rural, agriculture-based area into a heavy industrial zone literally in our backyard. We came together as a community and attended all three of the Planning Board, Re-zoning Board, and Board of Supervisors meetings, where we spoke to our local officials of our experiences. We were dismissed and called out, put down and disrespected by our elected representative. We were asking the board to postpone their decision until they had more information about the community, and seek documentation/confirmation from the DEQ about problems at the landfill with hazards and mismanagement. However, the board went ahead and granted the landfill everything they had requested, taking them at their word without verification of compliance from any state governing board. Our district representative initiated the motion to approve the landfill’s request, thereby ignoring the residents -- his constituents. The

landfill was given the green light to continue expanding indefinitely.

We press on! Our community has not ceased to fight this problem. We are at a critical point. We desperately need answers to many questions that we have asked our local officials, representatives at the landfill, and DEQ. We

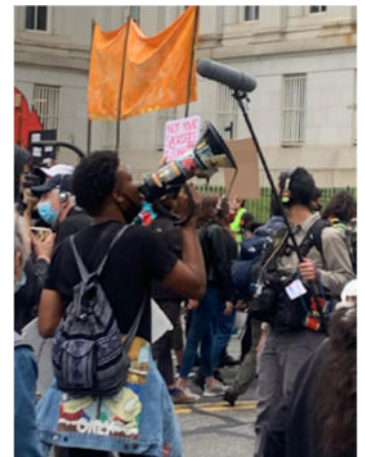


Fire at First Piedmont Landfill on June 20, 2018

(Continued on page 10)

People vs. Fossil Fuels

BREDL is one of many organizations who have endorsed People vs. Fossil Fuels initiated by the Build Back Fossil Free campaign. We must act now to end the era of fossil fuel production, protect communities from the climate emergency, and repair the harm caused by fossil fuels. During the week of October 11-15, community activists from across the nation gathered in Washington, D.C. to demand the new Administration stop new fossil fuel projects and declare a climate emergency. BREDL's Executive Director, Kathy Andrews participated. We share some of her photos from the week. Check out more photos at bredl.org and learn more at peoplevsfossilfuels.org.





Sharon Lavigne (l), founding director of RISE fighting the petrochemical industry in cancer alley in St. James, Louisiana with BREDL's Kathy Andrews (r).



need action from local officials and the landfill on remedying these serious issues.

We have questions about health, including the effects of breathing in fumes from the landfill 24 hours a day. DEQ will not address the landfill's failures and violations. The landfill knows the DEQ will not enforce, so they complete the absolute minimum activities to show their "effort" However, the residents live with these awful fumes and road hazards every day of their lives. We don't go home at 5 p.m. and forget about the issues until 8 a.m. the next day as they do. We have posed questions to all of our local officials, and we are never answered. DEQ has responded reluctantly, and minimal information has been given by their representation. We are getting sicker as a community. The air around this



First Piedmont Landfill—6:45 PM, April 17, 2016

landfill is so toxic that breathing it even for just a few minutes will result in a burning feeling in your throat and nostrils, and result in headaches. We have families who share a property line with the landfill who cannot escape the foul air entering their homes through their HVAC systems.

Residents have requested that landfill operators access the site via the industrial park next door in

hopes of making our rural country roads safer for residents. They do not clean/ sweep our road regularly. When it rains, mud layers cause slick and filthy conditions. There is limited sight where their trucks come in and out of the landfill. On many occasions the large trucks pull out in front of residents.

There have been several wrecks at the entrance of the landfill. The trucks leak all kinds of fluids onto the road in transport. Additional safety concerns have been brought up and blatantly ignored regarding a VDOT traffic study, the road debris, and countless cracked windshields of residents' cars.

Another important safety concern, which is dismissed by the county, is the absence of appropriate fencing around the landfill and the risk of elderly individuals with dementia, children, pets, and wildlife entering the landfill and being harmed. A person or animal can walk right onto the landfill property. **There is no safety barrier whatsoever!** All these issues must be addressed and properly remedied immediately!

We are here to stand up, make our voice heard, and secure a safe neighborhood for our children! To learn more about our group, find us on Facebook under the group Save Our Rural Community.



Vultures gather at the First Piedmont Landfill

In honor of a Code Red Warning, I Harken Thee

"I harken thee" declared the earth,
but we ignored her beckoning call,
we continued to consume without thought, because it was our right and privilege after all.
"I harken thee", declared the earth,
as we spent and built and played,
and the smoke stacks spewed away.
While the rivers filled with algae blooms and the fish slowly died from a lack of oxygen.
The Colorado runs dry, and people ask why?
Looking for any fault but their own,
and as the wildfires rage, is it a sign of the age or is it just our turn?
The permafrost softens while the salt lakes harden, and yet we do nothing, as Mother Earth harkens.
Our coastline water levels rise and we hear the cries, from the refugees our luxury has created.
But not on our shore, we shout and implore, as earth's inhabitable land tightens around us.
When I was a kid, we hid under our desk, thinking the nuclear option could not find us.
But now I'm an old man, and I haven't a plan, nor a desk of which to hide beneath.
Just guilt and shame, for I am partly to blame for the calamity which surrounds us.
And my ears plead for relief, from the loud decibels, as Mother screams, "I Harken Thee"!

By Frank G McManus

(Bellefonte—Continued from page 4)

mice are eating circuit wires. Who knows what else is going on in the aging process?

If Bellefonte was ever brought back to life, the builders would need to take into account new discoveries in technology and lessons learned from Fukushima. After all, the Bellefonte engineers used slide rules. Further, considering the costs and the time required to start up this plant, it would not be ready in time to help with climate change. Then there's the unnecessary manmade radioactive waste impacting public health.

Jackson County, Alabama is a relatively poor county and certainly is anxious to attract new industry and

business to spur economic well-being to its residents. To that end, Jackson County officials have been telling prospective customers that the new nuclear plant is coming and that means new jobs. After almost 50 years, it's time to quit telling that lie. A better bet is that zombies will permanently die and that the Bellefonte site can be used as a renewable energy farm using solar, wind, and run of the river power, a recreational water center along the river, perhaps an amusement park as has been done in Germany, plus a forest and wetlands that capture carbon bolstered by an



Bellefonte Nuclear Plant

educational research center. This is what TVA could be doing to further resiliency for residents against negative climate change impacts while providing jobs.

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

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

Annual Membership is only \$20

Thank you for supporting Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League
It's easier than ever to **join, renew** and **donate** online.

Check out our secure online donation form and use your credit card at
www.BREDL.org.

Or send your check to: BREDL PO Box 88 Glendale Springs, NC 28629
For more information contact BREDL at 336-982-2691.
All donations are tax deductible.

Name _____

Street _____

City/State/Zip _____

Email _____

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Chapter _____

Membership Amount: \$ _____

JMZ Fund Donation: \$ _____

**Janet Marsh Zeller
Honorary Fund**

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



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

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