THE LEAGUE LINE

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF BLUE RIDGE ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE LEAGUE

CENTERED ON DATA

With the proliferation of AI and other technological advances, hyper scale data centers are an increasing concern for our communities. This month, BREDL offers a primer on data centers, featuring notable concerns and key data center terms. *(page 4)*

WHAT MOTIVATES PEOPLE TO ACT?

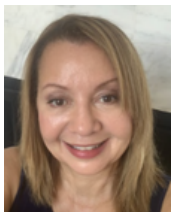
Spurred by a conversation with a local activist, BREDL Strategic Advisor, Louis Zeller, asks the question "What motivates people to engage in activism?" This is often easy to explain when someone's life or livelihood is threatened, but what motivates those who are not in imminent danger to make an attempt to right a wrong? *(page 9)*

For more information on this story and others, visit our website!

https://www.bredl.org

THE CHALLENGES AHEAD

BY: KATHY ANDREWS, BREDL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



As we reflect on 2025 and think about what we can accomplish in the future, we must realize that we are facing extreme climate change. At the same time, President Trump has made it clear that he doesn't believe in climate change, and it is a part of his mission to dismantle everything related to climate change and global warming. That mission includes dismantling parts of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and essential climate change research conducted by organizations like the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, Colorado, an organization that provides data on weather forecasting and flight safety. Fossil fuel companies reportedly gave President Trump an estimated 1 billion dollars for his campaign. In exchange, the administration has rewarded the fossil fuel industry in every way possible. That reward includes doing away with historic investment measures in the Biden Administration's Inflation Reduction Act. President Trump canceled major renewable energy projects in a number of states, including conservative states that received substantial funding to combat climate change. The Biden Administration had even made an important move in the Inflation Reduction Act to regulate methane, a powerful greenhouse gas, generated by the oil and gas industry.

Today, the future of climate change means increasing temperatures and extreme weather related events. From the Los Angeles fires, to the Texas floods, scientists say we can anticipate more catastrophic weather events. Unfortunately, we're bracing for a future with more oil and gas projects, higher utility bills, hurricanes that are more powerful, droughts more common, wildfires more destructive, and extreme heat more deadly. The term "environmental justice" will be deleted in grant applications and government publications. We can, according to political analysts, expect less enforcement of the laws still intact against air, water, and waste pollution.

A major concern for the future is also data centers, the new coal plants, which are now working with local utility companies to clear the way. These centers consume water at alarming rates and cause noise pollution. In some cases, residents near these facilities are reporting health issues. Fortunately, these centers are running into community opposition. Simply, people don't want to live next to them, or even near them. The reason why people move to rural areas is because of the peace and quiet and the love of nature. That peace will disappear with a data center in your backyard. BREDL is currently fielding calls directly from communities and working to educate people on how to protect themselves.

We must focus on how we can individually and through organizations like BREDL combat climate change. It's an uphill battle, one we're prepared for.

Here are a few ways we can combat climate change:

- Support renewable energy policies locally
- Support legislation aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- Encourage public transportation
- Participate in local climate action initiatives
- Restore forests and wetlands
- Save water
- Buy less clothing
- Build Green
- Use solar
- Green your transportation: walk, bike, or take public transportation.

We can work together to combat climate change and help communities in their fight for justice. We are up for the challenge. Are you? By working together, we can make progress toward a future free of environmental hazards.

Image by Pixabay

BREDL AIR MONITORING PROGRAM UPDATE

BY: CARE-4-AIR TEAM

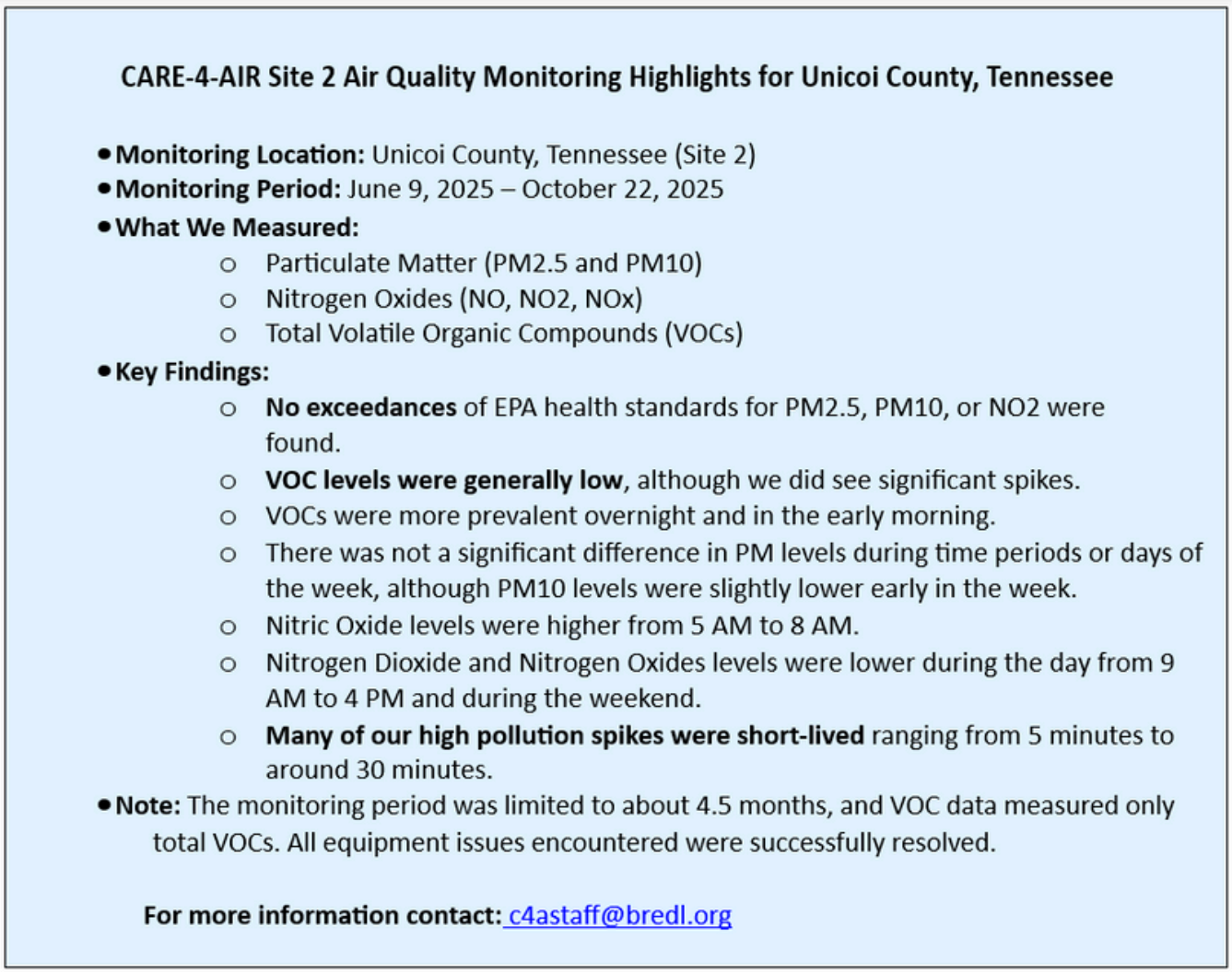
BREDL has released our CARE-4-Air Site 2 Data Reports. These reports include a compilation of data and analysis from our air sampling activities in Unicoi County, Tennessee.

Our main Site 2 Report includes a project description, objective, goals, details on pollutants monitored emphasizing health impacts, emission sources, findings, limitations, and challenges. The data section provides graphical displays of data including hourly and daily averages, time-of-day analysis, highest concentrations during the monitoring period, and wind and pollution roses to visualize the data.BREDL also screened our data with the nearest agency monitors.

Our secondary Site 2 Report includes the daily hour averages for each pollutant and any quality control comments for that day.

We have posted our Site 2 Reports on our project website at bredl.org/beast.

BREDL has begun collecting data at our Site 3 location which will be disclosed after we have concluded our air monitoring at this site.



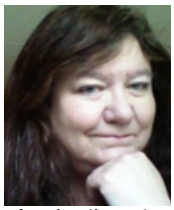
CARE-4-AIR Site 2 Air Quality Monitoring Highlights for Unicoi County, Tennessee

- **Monitoring Location:** Unicoi County, Tennessee (Site 2)
- **Monitoring Period:** June 9, 2025 – October 22, 2025
- **What We Measured:**
  - Particulate Matter (PM2.5 and PM10)
  - Nitrogen Oxides (NO, NO2, NOx)
  - Total Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)
- **Key Findings:**
  - **No exceedances** of EPA health standards for PM2.5, PM10, or NO2 were found.
  - **VOC levels were generally low**, although we did see significant spikes.
  - VOCs were more prevalent overnight and in the early morning.
  - There was not a significant difference in PM levels during time periods or days of the week, although PM10 levels were slightly lower early in the week.
  - Nitric Oxide levels were higher from 5 AM to 8 AM.
  - Nitrogen Dioxide and Nitrogen Oxides levels were lower during the day from 9 AM to 4 PM and during the weekend.
  - **Many of our high pollution spikes were short-lived** ranging from 5 minutes to around 30 minutes.
- **Note:** The monitoring period was limited to about 4.5 months, and VOC data measured only total VOCs. All equipment issues encountered were successfully resolved.

For more information contact: c4astaff@bredl.org

THE HIDDEN COSTS OF AI DATA CENTERS: CHALLENGES WE MUST ADDRESS

BY: THERESE VICK



The boom in Artificial Intelligence (AI), like ChatGPT and other advanced systems, is revolutionary, but it comes with significant hidden costs for the planet and society that we all need to understand.

Power Demand & Climate Strain

The specialized computers that run AI (called AI Data Centers) are incredibly power-hungry. They can consume as much electricity as a small city, which is putting a huge strain on our power grids and infrastructure. Because power grids still heavily rely on fossil fuels for stable, 24/7 electricity, the rapid growth of AI is directly accelerating climate change by increasing carbon emissions. In addition, data centers can emit NOx, SO_2, PM) from fossil fuels.

The Thirst for Water

AI computers generate immense heat from all the energy they use. Data center servers, like our own personal computers, generate heat while operating. Unlike a personal computer, data center servers must operate 24/7. To stop them from overheating, they use sophisticated cooling systems, which often require millions of gallons of fresh water. This heavy water usage can drain local water supplies, putting stress on drought-prone areas and impacting the water available for local communities, farming, and ecosystems.

A GROWING THREAT: AI data centers often place a strain on a community's water and electrical capacity, while contributing few permanent jobs to the local economy.

Electronic Trash (E-Waste)

To keep up with the competitive race for faster AI, companies replace their powerful, specialized hardware (like GPUs) every few years—sometimes even sooner. This short lifespan creates a growing mountain of electronic waste (e-waste). Much of this waste is not properly recycled and contains toxic materials that pollute the environment.

Disproportionate Impacts: Economy v. Environment

Few jobs are produced per facility. A data center proposal would have to include a large heavily polluting campus to produce a meaningful number of permanent jobs.

Backup Power Generation

Gas-powered data centers emit significant greenhouse gases (GHGs) like CO2, NOx, SO_2, and particulate matter (PM) from burning fossil fuels (coal, gas, diesel) for power and backup, contributing to climate change and poor air quality. Many of these pollutants have health impacts. The AI boom is expected to dramatically increase this demand and emissions.

DATA CENTER TERMS YOU NEED TO KNOW

Here are some key terms that activists in communities threatened by data centers need to know and understand:

artificial intelligence (AI) - the theory and development of computer systems able to perform tasks normally requiring human intelligence

generative AI – a specific branch of artificial intelligence focused on a machine model's ability to create unique new content

"cloud" computing – a means of sharing instant access to shared computing resources; examples include storing photos and files online, using apps like Gmail, and using streaming media such as Netflix or Zoom

server - a computer or device that provides information to other computers

data center (traditional) - a large group of connected computer servers typically used by businesses and organizations for the storage, processing, or distribution of large amounts of data; often located on the premises of a business.

hyper scale data center – unlike traditional data centers, hyperscale data centers are massive facilities that support very large data storage and processing needs of internet companies and cloud computing service providers; usually placed in a remote location.

AI data center – a specialized hyper scale data center, built to support the computing needs of AI tools.

liquid cooling – a cooling method that uses water, rather than air, to lower the temperature of computer processors; similar to a car's engine cooling system. This is often thought to be the most efficient way to cool data centers, filled with heat producing computer servers.

ACRONYMS YOU MAY NEED TO KNOW

IoT (Internet of Things) - the vast network of physical things (cars, appliances, and other devices) that exchange information over the internet. The increased use of IoT devices is one of the many technological developments that have spurred the growth of data centers.

GPU (graphic processing unit) - a specialized central processing unit (CPU) designed to efficiently perform calculations for generating computer graphics

PDU (power distribution unit) - commonly used in data centers, this is a device that distributes power to multiple outlets

BMS (building management system) - a computer-based system that monitors and controls the electrical and mechanical systems of a building, including HVAC, lighting, plumbing, and security

peering – an arrangement between two computer networks that allows them to connect and exchange internet traffic. Public peering happens all over the world at third party internet exchange points. Private peering, however, occurs when two networks are physically close to one another; such as neighboring data centers. Private peering is often more expensive, but leads to better performing networks.

data gravity – the ability of a body of data to attract other data and applications

clustering – linking many computers together to act as a single computer; *the concepts of peering, data gravity, and clustering often lead to one data center project attracting other data center projects (ex. Northern Virginia's data center alley)*

power purchase agreement (PPA) - a long-term contract between an electricity generator and a customer, which can be a utility, government or company. PPAs are one of the mechanisms to ensure an equivalent amount of a customer's agreed energy demand is being generated by renewable sources, such as wind or solar.

24/7 carbon-free energy (CFE) matching - means that every kilowatt-hour (KWh) of electricity consumption-every day, everywhere, and at all hours—is met with or "procured" from carbon-free electricity sources.

If a data center is proposed for your community, contact Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League at therese.vick@gmail.com or staff@bredl.org.

PROCHEM REACHES LEGAL SETTLEMENT AS FIGHT FOR CLEAN WATER IN WESTERN VIRGINIA CONTINUES

BY: ANN ROGERS

In October, 2025, the wastewater treatment firm, ProChem, Inc., Elliston, Virginia, reached a legal settlement with the Western Virginia Water Authority (WVWA) to pay $1.9 million to be used by the WVWA to perform water treatment in Spring Hollow Reservoir in Roanoke County, Virginia, to remove hexafluoropropylene oxide dimer acid (HFPO-DA), or GenX, from the drinking water supplied to residents in a region encompassing the City of Roanoke, and the Counties of Roanoke, Franklin, and Botetourt, Virginia. The WVWA currently provides water service to over 69,000 customer accounts and wastewater service for more than 60,000 accounts in these localities.

Image by Pixabay

An EPA toxicity assessment for GenX states, “Animal studies following oral exposure have shown health effects including on the liver, kidneys, the immune system, development of offspring, and an association with cancer. Based on available information across studies of different sexes, lifestages, and durations of exposure, the liver appears to be particularly sensitive from oral exposure to GenX chemicals.” (EPA Fact Sheet: Human Health Toxicity Assessment for GenX Chemicals, Office of Water, EPA, October, 2021)

The water in Spring Hollow Reservoir will be treated with a system utilizing granular activated carbon to absorb the GenX from the freshwater supply.

Background

ProChem began releasing GenX to the wastewater treatment facility in Elliston as a result of their contract to process equipment for The Chemours Company. ProChem began servicing Chemours equipment in 2015 (date given by ProChem to Roanoke Times reporter, Chloe Vincente, in 2023).

The WVWA began testing for GenX at Spring Hollow Reservoir in January, 2020, one month after the December, 2019 passage of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020, which required the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to add 160 PFAs chemicals (including GenX) to the Toxics Release Inventory. These early tests revealed significant levels of GenX in Spring Hollow Reservoir.

In March, 2020, the Virginia General Assembly passed a bill directing a Virginia Department of Health work group to study occurrence of PFAs in Virginia water systems. In April, 2021, the WVWA signed an agreement to participate in the Virginia Department of Health Office of Drinking Water study. Testing for the presence of 10 PFAs in 45 Virginia waterworks, as required by this bill, was completed in 2021.

The identification of ProChem as the source of the GenX in Spring Hollow Reservoir did not occur until November, 2022, after nearly two years of intensive, costly research conducted by the WVWA and Virginia Department of Environmental Quality. At this time, ProChem cancelled its contract with Chemours, and a carbon filtering system was installed at Spring Hollow Reservoir's treatment plant to begin the process of removing GenX from the reservoir.

A settlement was reached in December, 2023 between WVWA and Chemours in which Chemours agreed to pay between $9.5 and $12 million for upgrades to the carbon filtering system being used to remove GenX from Spring Hollow Reservoir.

BREDL’s issue #1 – public notification

BREDL’s Executive Assistant, Mark Barker, played an active role in bringing this issue before the public’s eye. In August, 2022, Mark’s outreach to a Roanoke Times reporter resulted in the first disclosure to the public about the presence of GenX in Spring Hollow Reserve. This reporter’s news story was the first in a series of five stories published during the next three months in the Roanoke Times, covering the issue of PFAs and GenX in Spring Hollow Reservoir. The source of GenX pollution in Spring Hollow

Reservoir was finally discovered in November, 2022, after public notification had intensified the search for the source. Public notification was essential in keeping the pressure on officials to locate and stop the contamination.

Mark's pursuit of adequate public notification on the presence of PFAs pollution in public water supplies also included his introduction of legislation for consideration by the Virginia General Assembly in 2023. Mark's legislation – Senate Bill 1013 – would require a waterworks owner to notify customers when a water quality analysis reveals that PFAs are present in the water supply or when a contaminant in the water supply exceeds maximum contaminant levels established in state or federal regulations, whichever is more stringent. The bill also would require that such notification be published in a newspaper or general circulation in the affected area and mailed to all customers, and that published and mailed notifications include information regarding the water quality analysis, the contaminant(s), potential adverse health impacts, actions to reduce the level of the contaminant(s), and public contact information for the waterworks.

The introduction of SB 1013 for consideration by the Virginia General Assembly was performed by Virginia Senator John Edwards at the request of Mark Barker. Roanoke Times reporter, Laurence Hammack, discusses SB 1013 in his January, 12, 2023 story, "Roanoke lawmakers file bills to deal with contamination of Spring Hollow reservoir":

For seven years, an industry released a dangerous contaminant through its wastewater – allowing a "forever chemical" to make its way into the Roanoke Valley's public water supply.

ProChem Inc. of Elliston says it didn't know that its process of cleaning machinery for a major chemical manufacturer was creating the pollution, and stopped the releases as soon as it became aware.

A bill introduced in this year's General Assembly by Del. Sam Rasoul, D-Roanoke, aims to prevent that from happening again.

Rasoul's legislatioin (HB 2189) would require industries such as ProChem to test its wastewater for PFAs – short for Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, which have a wide variety of industrial and manufacturing uses and are the subject of growing public health concerns.

A second bill, introduced by Sen. John Edwards, D-Roanoke, (SB 1013) would require any public water provider to notify its customers when PFAs are detected, or when their concentration exceeds maximum containment levels established by state or federal law.

However, there are currently no regulations that establish limits for the discharge of forever chemicals.

Efforts to reach Rasoul and Edwards were unsuccessful Thursday.

But Mark Barker with the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League, has been pushing for the legislation, said it's needed to address problems that came to light with the discovery of GenX in the local water supply.

"When you've got someone like ProChem, maybe this will force them to take a more active stance in finding out who the heck they are dealing with," Barker said. "That knowledge might have helped us seven years ago."

Also vital, Barker said, is the need to inform the public about possible contamination of drinking water.

On January, 31, 2023, Mark Barker appeared (via Zoom) before the Senate Committee to state his support for SB 1013.

SB 1013 passed the Senate Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources with a substitute on a vote of 12 to 0. In the full Senate, the bill once again passed unanimously on a vote of 38 to 0. However, in the House, SB 1013 was sent to a subcommittee of the House Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources Committee, where it was voted to be left on the table with a vote of 6 to 4.

BREDL's support for public notification on PFAs contamination has not ceased. Until the time when public notification is required, we recommend that waterworks customers – no matter where they reside – contact their drinking water supplier and ask if they are testing for PFAs and, if so, request a copy of the sampling results.

BREDL's issue #2 – private wells

On November 15, 2022, Mark wrote to the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) and Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) requesting that these agencies conduct water testing of private wells that draw water from the Roanoke River in an area starting at Elliston on the South Fork of the Roanoke River and extending downstream along the Roanoke River as it flows through the Roanoke Valley. Mark's request for water testing was prompted by findings from the WVWA's testing on August 4, 2022 of its Well #3 in Garden City, located about 22 miles downstream of Spring Hollow Reservoir. This test revealed GenX at 24 parts per trillion, nearly 2.5 times the EPA Health Advisory Level of 10 ppt. Well #3 is not adjacent to the Roanoke River, but is primarily fed by the river. Mark expressed concern that other private wells fed by the Roanoke River may have collected this contaminant.

Mark's letter also requested that water testing of the Roanoke River be performed several miles downstream of the WVWA's Spring Hollow Pump Station, to determine the extent of the contamination.

In response to Mark's letter, VDH replied, thanking him for his "concerns for residents along the river that reply on private wells as their drinking water sources". The letter explained that VDH was working to identify private wells at greatest risk of GenX pollution and to identify funding sources to assist those private wells owners with sampling. VDH had prepared written guidance to private well owners interesting in testing their wells, linked at: www.vdh.virginia.gov/environmentalj-health/per-and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas-in-private-well-drinking-water-supplies/.

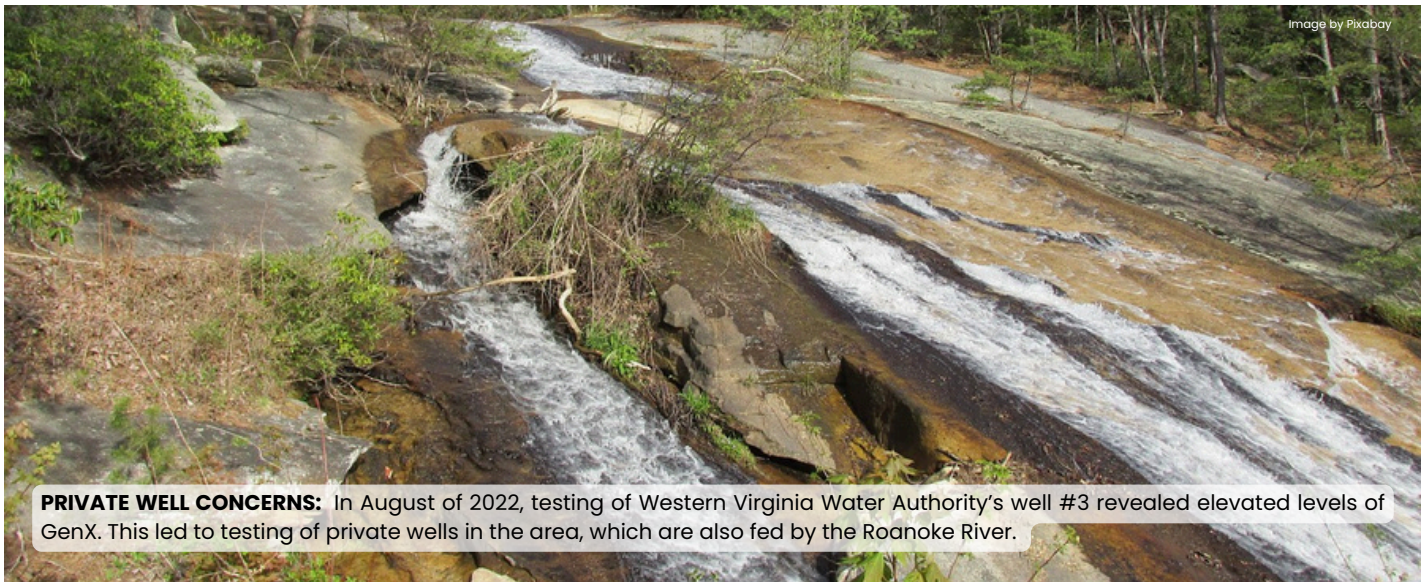


Image by Pixabay

PRIVATE WELL CONCERNS: In August of 2022, testing of Western Virginia Water Authority's well #3 revealed elevated levels of GenX. This led to testing of private wells in the area, which are also fed by the Roanoke River.

As reported by Roanoke Times reporter Laurence Hammack on December 24, 2024, the wells of 20 property owners in Roanoke and Montgomery Counties were tested through this VDH initiative, funded by Virginia's Environmental Emergency Response Fund. The first round of samples was collected in late August, 2023 and sent to laboratories. VDH reported to the Roanoke Times that these tests revealed "no presence of GenX above the minimum reporting level, which is two parts per trillion".

BREDL's work on GenX and PFAs in Virginia is paralleled by an intense campaign to identify and remediate PFAs pollution in the waters of North Carolina. Both our North Carolina and Virginia campaigns remain vigilant and engaged to provide information and support to local communities impacted by PFAs and GenX infiltration into the freshwater systems they depend on for drinking water.


THE LEAGUE LINE

REMEMBERING BREDL LEADER SAM TESH

NCDEQ RESPONDS TO SCHOOL PFAS CONTAMINATION

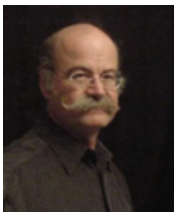
FROM OUR READERS

Great piece on Sam Tesh! Being part of that hazardous waste incinerator protest in Granville County, we followed and supported the action up in Northampton County, but I never knew the details of people like Sam that defeated it there. That he became such a longtime asset to BREDL is truly remarkable and a testament to BREDL's longevity! Long live BREDL!

- Michael Arnold

ORGANIZING PEOPLE FOR CHANGE

By: Lou Zeller



Prompted by a conversation with Dolly Reaves in the Taqueria Hacienda in Jefferson, NC.

For an experienced community organizer, what motivates people to act in their self-interest when something or someone threatens their lives, families or livelihoods is relatively understandable: it's self-preservation of a few or many residents living close by acting in solidarity. They may know each other through myriad contacts in daily life. These casual acquaintances can become grist for the organizing mill to, for example, halt a polluting smokestack or a toxic dump.

However, what motivates those whose lives or livelihood are not in imminent danger, who simply want to right a wrong? And what inspires those who turn out for a meeting or two but soon drift away?

There are many organizational models, or cultures, each of which has its place. Some examples: Professional opposition organizations which rely on technical knowledge to bring about changes in public policy; Advocacy organizations which rely on specific knowledge and coalitions to accomplish their goals; Direct service organizations which deliver needed assistance to their constituents; Community development organizations which establish local institutions to serve local needs.

And then there are people's organizations working for social change; that is, organizations whose members are cognizant of and appreciative of power relationships in society. Saul Alinsky, community activist and political theorist, wrote:

"Only through the achievement and constructive use of power can people better themselves." [A]

When normal means of petitioning for redress of grievances fail, social change organizations provide a way to alter the balance of power and make it possible to implement new possibilities in a community oppressed by a powerful few.

Opportunity, Competence and Commitment

Any organization which would endure long enough to build upon short-term success and become an agent of social change must have opportunity, competence and commitment. (A mission statement by John Charles of the Harder Foundation cites these three items of management expertise). Opportunity here means to live in a time and place where there is a need for change. Competence is ability, experience, expertise and know-how. Commitment is dedication to something larger than oneself, also known as altruism. And because people's campaigns can take years or decades to bear fruit, steadfast work with the community members who recognize their need and seek a better way is a necessary element of success. For example, it took twenty years for activists to defeat a program to use plutonium warheads in commercial nuclear power plants.

Sometimes it takes a telescope, sometimes a microscope.

Staying the course requires perception—To see far enough to comprehend the altered future which reflects the fairness, freedom and vision of the just society we are building—To see close enough to discern the easily overlooked fractures and faults in our opponents' base which would not have happened without the dedicated work of mobilized communities, known and unknown. The gift of perception is one which all people may share.

Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator and philosopher, posed the premise of his work as a refusal to be silent because it is the necessary means by which people can "transform the world." The goal is truth telling, not by one over another but by all together in a dialogue. No person has all the answers. There is much to be learned from all parties to a discussion; and by eliciting ideas and working words from everyone in the room, on the phone or online, the chance of losing important community experience, knowledge, and guidance is avoided and unity consolidated.

"But while to say the true word…is to transform the world, saying that word is not the privilege of some few persons, but the right of everyone." [B]

In the third decade of the twenty-first Century, the need for social change is great. But the freedom which is our birthright is a relative freedom, depending on the polity in which one lives. The Bill of Rights makes it explicit in some places, elsewhere it is intrinsic. (As I write this, the Fourth Amendment is being ignored with impunity by men without badges in unmarked vehicles.)

"The foundation of the People's Organization is the community, and the foundation of conflict tactics is community traditions. Just as knowledge of the terrain is of the utmost importance to military tactics in actual warfare, so too is the knowledge, the full understanding and appreciation of the power of local traditions. The first maxim in conflict tactics is…that the tradition is the terrain." [C]

Our community organizing tactics are metaphorical sharp objects which can be used to pierce the bubble of the comfortable. Using them at the right time and place, with due respect for local mores, guided by a steady hand, can build respect for a people's organization which, Alinsky advises, "thinks and acts in terms of social surgery and not cosmetic cover-ups."

Freire reminds us:

"Dialogue cannot exist, however, in the absence of a profound love for the world and for people. The naming of the world, which is an act of creation and re-creation, is not possible if it is not infused with love. Love is at the same time the foundation of dialogue and dialogue itself." [B]

A. Saul Alinsky, Rules for Radicals
B. Paulo Freire, The Pedagogy of the Oppressed
C. Saul Alinsky, Reveille for Radicals

PROTECTING NORTH AMERICA'S CARNIVORES

Season 2, Episode 26: In this episode, Jenn is joined by Nadia Steinzor, Carnivore Conservation Director with the Wild Coyote Project, a national nonprofit working to promote coexistence between people and North America's native carnivores. Nadia's work sits at the intersection of science, policy, and community engagement, addressing a complex conservation challenge of how to live alongside predators in a rapidly changing landscape.

When we talk about wild carnivores, we're referring to species like coyotes, wolves, mountain lions, bobcats, foxes, and other native predators. These animals play a critical role as keystone species as they regulate prey populations, shape ecosystem structure, and even influence biodiversity and landscape health.

Although, despite their ecological value, carnivores are often viewed as competitors or threats, particularly to livestock, game species, or human safety. Much of this is rooted in historical narratives, cultural fear, and political pressure rather than evidence.

Host Jenn Galler always interviews great guests! Search for "In Our Backyard Podcast" on your podcast app or go to https://anchor.fm/bredl

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.

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.

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Does your chapter have a story to share in the League Line?
Submit your article to bredl@bredl.org!

View archived newsletters at www.theleagueline.org

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

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. Our chapter in Roanoke and Franklin Counties, Virginia stopped an Interstate Highway. 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.

BREDL
c/o Virginia Staton, CPA
PO Box 2168
Boone, NC 28607

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.
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Janet Marsh Zeller Honorary Fund

The BREDL Board of Directors established this fund to honor the work of Janet Marsh Zeller, who founded the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League and served as its executive director for over two decades.

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