



THE LEAGUE LINE

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF BLUE RIDGE ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE LEAGUE

HEATWAVE DESCENDS ON U.S. AND EUROPE

Both the United States and Europe are currently experiencing one of the hottest summers on record. BREDL Executive Director, Kathy Andrews, discusses what we can do to combat this carbon induced climate change. (page 2)

AIR MONITORING PROGRAM UPDATE

BREDL's BEAST unit has completed its Site 3 deployment and has now gone live at Site 4. BREDL's Care-4-Air Team shares what's been happening with the unit since its previous deployment in Augusta, Georgia. We also share a summary of the data collected at Site 3. (page 3)



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

<https://www.bredl.org>



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HEATWAVE DESCENDS ON THE US AND EUROPE

BY: KATHY ANDREWS, BREDL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



The extreme heat we're experiencing is a deadly killer. Today, there is so much carbon pollution in the atmosphere, it's causing changes in the weather. When we burn fossil fuels like oil, gas, and coal, carbon pollution stays in the atmosphere, acting like a blanket and trapping in heat. There is no doubt humans are causing global warming and climate change, a primary factor in the oppressive heat we're dealing with.

Fossil fuel emissions raise the baseline temperature of the entire planet. The heatwave of 2026 has already caused over 25 deaths in the US and over 1000 deaths in Europe as of the printing of this newsletter. While we can survive temperatures over 100 degrees, it is extremely dangerous.

But there is hope. Climate change caused by carbon pollution is irreversible, yet we can protect ourselves from even more damage by continuing to advocate for climate change action. Yes, it is an uphill battle, especially with the Trump administration dismantling decades of progress. The administration revoked the 2009 Greenhouse Gas Endangerment finding, withdrew the US from the Paris Agreement, and rolled back vehicle emission standards. In addition, the administration cut funding for agencies like NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration), fast tracked fossil fuel projects, and restricted state level energy policies. In addition, it has totally revamped the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) through deregulation. The administration even went so far as to pardon mechanics violating emission laws, slash tailpipe standards, roll back protections regarding toxic wastewater discharge, and more.

But fighting fossil fuel companies is a battle we can win with consistent work in our respective communities. We've done it before through grass root campaigns.

In the meantime, there are steps we can take to help us deal with this extreme debilitating heat:

- Sign up for extreme weather alerts so we can prepare.
- Find out where shelters are located in case your air conditioner goes out.
- Check on the elderly and immunocompromised.
- Your body can dehydrate quickly leading to fatigue, dizziness, and heat related illnesses like heat stroke. Drink around eight glasses of water daily, more if you're outside doing manual labor.
- Avoid alcohol, which dehydrates the body.
- Eat small meals throughout the day. During hot weather, our bodies naturally tend to eat less, as our brain prioritizes temperature control.
- Choose light, loose-fitting clothes.

There are many more actions we can take to help us deal with the heat and fight climate change caused by the fossil fuel industry. The US contributes 20 percent of all global fossil fuel production of oil, gas, and coal. But we have succeeded in the past, through great odds, to stop the fossil fuel industry in our communities, and we can do it again. We can work together, one community at a time, to combat global warming and climate change. We must for ourselves and for future generations.

BREDL WELCOMES CAIL AS DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

This July, BREDL welcomes Hodari Cail as our new Development Director. Hodari brings with him over two decades of experience in federal and state government, politics, strategic communication, conflict mediation, public policy, and diversity and inclusion.

In his previous role, Hodari served as Sr. Foreign Affairs director working with Gray Global Advisors responsible for Ethiopia and the Dominican Republic. Gray Global Advisors counsels governments, businesses, and nonprofits on strategic development and implementation. Prior to this, he aided Maryland Governor Wes Moore in his landmark electoral victory. He was later selected to serve as the Massachusetts Port Authority's Senior Director of Diversity, Inclusion, and Compliance. Hodari also worked in the Executive Office of Governor Charlie Baker, where he was the Director of Community Affairs.



In his new role, Hodari will develop and implement new fundraising strategies, cultivate relationships with donors, and help us continue to grow the organization as a whole. Please join us in welcoming Hodari to the team!

BREDL AIR MONITORING PROGRAM UPDATE

BY: CARE-4-AIR TEAM

Equipment Annual Maintenance

On March 13, at the conclusion of our Site 3 data collection, we shipped four pieces of equipment to Wilbur Technical Services for annual maintenance and certification: our NO₂ analyzer, NO₂ external pump, Dilution Calibrator, and Zero Air Generator. We received the equipment back from Wilbur Technical Services on June 1. We conducted testing on our equipment for about 36 hours. All equipment passed testing and was deemed ready to go back into site data collection.

Site 4 Deployment

We have moved the BEAST (BREDL Environmental Air Sampling Trailer) to our Site 4 location. We plan on being at Site 4 until around October 15, 2026. Once our deployment at Site 4 has concluded, we will provide additional site details and data.

No-cost budget revision and 2-month extension

On February 9, we submitted to EPA a no-cost budget revision and request for a 2-month project extension. The budget revision seeks to shift some funds between the budget categories. For example, we would like to move some funding from personnel to equipment maintenance. In addition, because of the annual maintenance, we requested the project be extended for two months, to conclude June 30, 2027.

EPA approved our no-cost project extension on April 6, so the CARE-4-AIR project is now scheduled to conclude on June 30, 2027.

We received EPA's approval of our no-cost budget revision on July 9.

Site 3 Data

We concluded data collection at Site 3, Augusta, Georgia, on March 12. We have published our Site 3 final report on our website at www.bredl.org/beast.

Site 3 Summary

Location: Augusta, Georgia

Data Collection: October 23, 2025 – March 12, 2026

- ❖ There were no exceedances of the EPA health standards for PM 2.5, PM 10, and NO₂.
- ❖ Most of our PM spikes were probably attributed to regional particulate matter.
- ❖ Most of our VOCs, NO, NO₂, and NO_x spikes appeared to be mostly from local sources.
- ❖ Afternoon hours had the lowest overall concentrations for all of our pollutants.
- ❖ Morning hours, especially 8 AM to 10 AM, reported the highest concentrations for VOCs, PM 10, NO_x, and NO.
- ❖ Evening hours offered the highest concentrations of NO₂.
- ❖ Overnight hours had the highest PM 2.5 concentrations.
- ❖ All of our pollutants recorded lower concentrations on the weekends and Monday. Highest concentrations occurred mid-week.
- ❖ The Augusta PM 2.5 air quality was not very good. Only 54.82%, just over half, of PM 2.5 readings registered in the good range.
- ❖ All day of week averages for PM 2.5 were outside the good air quality range, except for Monday.
- ❖ Spikes with high pollutant concentrations were frequent and often "lost" in the hourly average.
- ❖ Controlled/prescribed burns appear to be conducted without consulting current and forecasted air quality.

Highest Readings:

Pollutant	Measurement	Minute Reading ¹	Hour Average ²	24-Hour Average ³
VOC	ppb	78.6	21.1	12.0
PM 2.5	ug/m3	151.5	84.3	34.0
PM 10	ug/m3	397.7	169.6	47.9
NO	ppb	350.5	20.1	5.2
NO ₂	ppb	361.2	21.9	12.6
NO _x	ppb	687.9	31.7	15.7

¹ Our equipment records a pollutant concentration every minute. This column is the highest one-minute reading at this site.

² The hour average is the average of the one-minute readings during an hour. This column displays the highest recorded hour average at the site.

³ The 24-hour average is the average of the day's one-hour averages. This column displays the highest 24-hour average during our site collection.

B.E.A.S.T. SITE FOUR GOES LIVE

BY: ANN ROGERS



On Friday, June 26, BREDL's CARE-4-AIR Operations Manager, Mark Barker visited the CARE-4-AIR monitoring trailer at Site 4, where it will be operational until mid-October, 2026. BREDL staff were on hand to photograph Mark as he engaged in the very large number of highly technical processes required to operate the trailer and obtain viable air quality data.

Below we share photos of Mark in the process of getting the BREDL Environmental Air Sampling Trailer (BEAST) activated and adjusted for the next round of air quality monitoring.

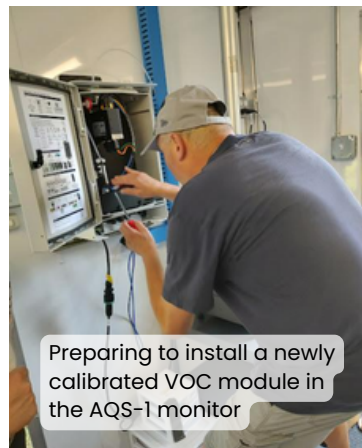
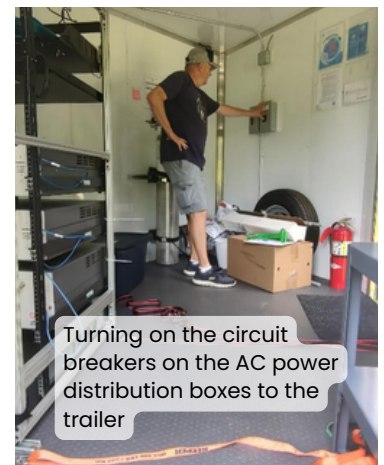
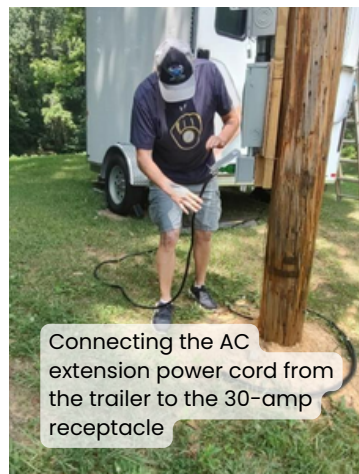
It is BREDL's policy not to divulge the location of the CARE-4-AIR monitoring trailer until after the completion of monitoring at each site.

The trailer monitors for nitrogen dioxide, volatile organic compounds, and particulate matter, including PM 2.5 and PM 10.

The trailer has been equipped by Wilbur Technical Services with a set of EPA-approved Federal Equivalent Method (FEM) air monitoring instruments including Teledyne API Model T640 PM Mass Monitor and the EPA-approved Federal Reference Method (FRM) Teledyne API Model T200 nitrogen oxides analyzer. We are also using the Aeroqual AQS-1 VOC monitor for total VOCs. Several units will work in conjunction with the pollutant analyzers. These include Teledyne units T700U Gas Dilution Calibrator, T701H Zero Air Generator, Vaisala WXT 530 meteorological sensor, and DR DAS Envidas Ultimate Data Acquisitions System.

CARE-4-AIR is funded by EPA's Enhanced Air Quality Monitoring for Communities grant.

Below, please see photos of the launch of Site 4 on June 26.



THE AI TAKEOVER

By: Renee Cail



Artificial Intelligence (AI) is technology that enables computers and machines to simulate human learning, comprehension, problem solving, decision making, creativity and autonomy. Applications and devices equipped with AI can see and identify objects.

As we navigate the modern world many people say, "Things just ain't what they used to be." Artificial intelligence has enormous value but capturing the full benefits of AI means facing and handling its potential pitfalls. The same sophisticated systems used to discover novel drugs, screen diseases, tackle climate change, conserve wildlife and protect biodiversity can also yield risks. These risks can range from biased

algorithms that cause harm to technologies that threaten security, privacy and even human existence.

Some of the dangers are cybersecurity threats, data privacy issues, environmental harms, existential risks, intellectual property infringement, job losses, lack of accountability, lack of explainability and transparency, misinformation and manipulation.

At a recent DeKalb County, Georgia Board of Commissioners meeting with data centers as a main topic, many participants discussed the impending dangers of data centers and their poor regulatory measures. One of the major questions asked was, "Who is responsible when an AI system goes wrong?" Who will be held liable in the aftermath of a damaging decision originating from AI? Policymakers and regulatory agencies are still struggling with these and many other issues as data centers are being constructed all over the world.

Communities from all walks of life are uniting to stop data centers from disrupting their lives. Non-partisan groups have emerged and are researching the impacts of AI and the harmful impacts they are causing to our environment. The high electricity demands and water usage have forced consumers to cope with increased utility bills, noise pollution and surveillance that many individuals are unaware of.

As we continue to organize and analyze the critical need for effective regulation, we must focus on developing multiple defenses against AI misuse. It is imperative that we educate communities about the perils of AI and develop strategies to mitigate the harmful capabilities of AI.

BEYOND BORDERS: WHAT U.S. AND SWEDISH ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES TEACH US



Season 2, Episode 38: In this solo episode, Jenn discusses the differences in some of the U.S. and Sweden's environmental policies.

If you've ever traveled to Sweden, you've probably noticed how clean the cities are, how much public transportation is used, and how seriously recycling is taken. On the other hand, the United States is home to some of the world's most important environmental research, groundbreaking clean-energy companies, and national parks that have inspired conservation efforts across the globe.

So why do these two countries have such different environmental laws? Is Sweden really as environmentally friendly as its reputation suggests? And does the United States deserve its reputation for having weaker environmental protections?

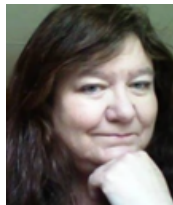
We look at the differences in systems, climate policy, energy production, pollution prevention, recycling and prevention, transportation, forests and nature, and the strengths of each country. As always, the answer is more complicated than it first appears.

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



LEE COUNTY DATA CENTER UPDATE: AND THEN THERE WERE TWO

BY: THERESE VICK



In the fall of 2025, it was revealed that a company going by the name Deep River Data, which has connections to the crypto-currency industry, was interested in establishing a data center in Lee County, North Carolina. The proposed plan was to use “natural” gas (methane), possibly using fracking, from a nearby inactive gas well which was drilled in 1998. Not surprisingly, the Lee County community was outraged by this possibility and organized to educate their neighbors. Over the months the plan languished, although we keep monitoring any progress. See Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League’s League Line newsletter from Spring 2026: [Toxic Synergy: Fracking for Data Centers](#).

Fast forward to April 2026, when the Lee County Commission and Sanford City Council announced proposed amendments to the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) that would “regulate” data centers. Both hearings were well attended. At the Lee County Commissioners hearing, outside “experts” invited by the Sanford Area Growth Alliance (SAGA) to extoll how wonderful data centers were understandably infuriated attendees. How many times have we seen this over the years?

Despite the outcry from the community opposed to data centers, and their request for a moratorium, both the County and the City passed the amendments -- with a change that reduced fines for violating sound regulations. There was suspicion that something was in the works, the only question being how long it would take to announce any project.

In June 2026, it was announced that PointOne Data Centers and CyrusOne are planning a \$900 million, 90-megawatt IT data center in northern Lee County, North Carolina. The 300,000-square-foot facility is slated for 4079 Lower Moncure Road. There could be as many as 9 buildings by the completion of the project, perhaps more.

BREDL submitted a very detailed public records request to Lee County regarding this project. Their reply was: “There are no records responsive to your request.” This is exceedingly unusual, and we have followed up.

BREDL chapter Chatham Lee Environmental Action Network (CLEAN) and allies are continuing to organize against these projects.

NORTH CAROLINA DATA CENTER LOBBY DAY



N.C. DATA CENTER LOBBY DAY: On June 24, citizens from across the state of North Carolina came together in Raleigh to demand a stop to data center development. Constituents set up meetings with their Senators and Representatives to discuss the need for stronger regulations, moratoriums, and ultimately a ban on hyperscale data center development.

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.

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Annual Membership is only \$20

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

Check out our secure online donation form and use your credit card at
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**Janet Marsh Zeller
Honorary Fund**

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



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

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