BLUE RIDGE ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE LEAGUE
BREDL

THE LEAGUE LINE

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF BLUE RIDGE ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE LEAGUE

UNDISCLOSED

If your community has been fighting a data center proposal, you have likely already heard of the acronym *NDA*. If you have not heard those letters before, you may want to familiarize yourself. *(page 3)*



Image by Nolan Torian

BENT MOUNTAIN FACES NEW MVP FIGHT

Earlier this year, BREDL's Preserve Bent Mountain chapter learned that MVP, LLC is considering a site on Bent Mountain as a prospective location for a new compressor station to provide gas-powered pressure for the Mountain Valley Pipeline. *(page 3)*



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DIRECTOR'S REPORT

WE WON'T STOP NOW

BY: KATHY ANDREWS, BREDL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Those of us on the frontlines of environmental justice are dismayed, but hopeful. With all the strides we've made throughout the years, one administration can't destroy all progress.

It's a movement started in the late 1970s in a small town in NC. When residents in Warren County, NC protested the state government storing 6000 truckloads of soil laced with toxic PCB (polychlorinated biphenyls) in a Black community, legislators listened and joined the fight. Polluters ultimately won, but predominantly Black Warren County became the focus of national attention when more than 500 were arrested. These were the first arrests in US history over a toxic landfill. Environmental racism had gained credibility. Legislators took part in the protests. And research studies determined that three quarters of hazardous waste landfill sites in 8 southeastern states were located in low income Black and Latino communities.



The strides over the years have seemingly been destroyed as the Trump administration has gutted federal environmental justice investments. All 10 of the US EPA regions have been subject to closure of all offices related to diversity and environmental justice, and polluters are given a free pass to continue dumping in communities of color and jeopardizing public health. All this when climate change, such as extreme heat, wreaks havoc on the most vulnerable.

But now, through many years of research and exposing corporations, the work continues. There is no more denying climate change and the death and destruction it leaves behind. The movement to stop the corruption and racism continues. Communities are making their voices heard by voting and speaking out. There is still power in grassroots organizing. Environmental injustice is real, and we will never stop voicing our views. And that's how we will progress -- by continuing the fight against great odds.

A GUIDED MEDIDATION FOR COMMUNITY RESILIENCE



Season 2, Episode 45: This week's podcast is out with Knellee Bisram who is the founder of AHAM, the Art of Happiness and Mindfulness and the Academy of the Heart and Mind, an organization connecting mindfulness, education, nature, youth, and community resilience.

Building on our last episode, this 10-minute guided meditation invites you to deepen your connection with mindfulness, the natural world, and the work of fostering resilient communities.

For the best experience, find a quiet, comfortable place where you can be still and fully present. Please listen only when it is safe to do so, and avoid listening while driving or doing chores that require your attention.

Take this time to pause, reconnect, and nurture the sense of calm and connection that can help us build stronger, more mindful, and resilient communities.

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

UNDISCLOSED

BY: JASON TORIAN



If your community has been fighting a data center proposal, you have likely already heard of the acronym NDA. If you have not heard those letters before, you may want to familiarize yourself.

What is an NDA?
NDA stands for "non-disclosure agreement". A non-disclosure agreement allows two parties to negotiate a deal while ensuring that certain information remains confidential. Sharing information in spite of an NDA is considered a breach of contract and can lead to a lawsuit.

Why do data center use NDAs?
While NDAs are not unique to data centers or the tech industry, it has become common practice for hyperscale data center developers to use NDAs during negotiations with local governments. These NDAs often require local officials to keep the developer's name and potential water and energy use hidden from the public.

One reason that data center developers employ NDAs is to protect competitive secrecy. NDAs prevent tech competitors from knowing where their rivals' physical infrastructure is located and from knowing what capacity they might have. A second, and more unsettling, reason that NDAs are used by data center developers is to limit public input on their projects.

A recent Gallup poll conducted in May showed that 70% of Americans oppose the construction of data centers in their neighborhoods. A subsequent poll by the Pew Research Foundation found that over the last 9 months, Americans have begun to think more negatively about the impacts of data centers on the environment, home energy costs, and quality of life.

Data center developers are well aware of the negative perception, and the actual negative impacts that data centers have on communities. With that in mind, these NDAs often result in data center projects being approved, seemingly without any public opposition.

In 2024 Person County, North Carolina county commissioners agreed to rezone more than 1400 acres of land and close down a state road, all before the community knew that the land was being sold to Microsoft for a 4-building hyperscale data center campus. Similarly, officials in Richmond County, North Carolina rezoned 646 acres of land, which was ultimately sold to Amazon to be used for a 21-building data center site. The Richmond County deal also included a tax incentive that amounted to a 50% decrease in property taxes for Amazon. In each case, local governments did in fact hold legally required public hearings, they simply failed to disclose that what they were meeting about was a data center. Residents were completely left out of the decision-making process.

What can be done?
The use of NDAs is not an uncommon practice in economic development negotiations. These agreements offer competitive advantages to corporations, while allowing controversial projects to proceed without public opposition. Local communities, on the other hand, are simply left in the dark, facing a power imbalance which favors the corporations. Fortunately, the national debate over data centers is beginning to bring this practice to the forefront for public scrutiny. Microsoft, for its part, recently announced plans to end all NDAs with local governments. A number of state legislatures have now introduced bills that would ban the use of NDAs, either specifically for data center projects or, in some cases, for all economic development-related activities. Other states and even local municipalities would be wise to follow suit.

BREDL FIGHTS TO STOP NEW MVP COMPRESSOR STATION

By: Ann Rogers



On June 30, Bruce Coffey, the Chairman of BREDL chapter, Preserve Bent Mountain, made a presentation at BREDL's Zoom Tuesday, which is our weekly Tuesday night Zoom to share discussion of environmental issues. In his presentation, Bruce shared that Mountain Valley Pipeline, LLC (MVP, LLC) is considering a site on Bent Mountain as a prospective location for a new compressor station to provide gas-powered pressure for the Mountain Valley Pipeline, which has been constructed and in operation since 2024.

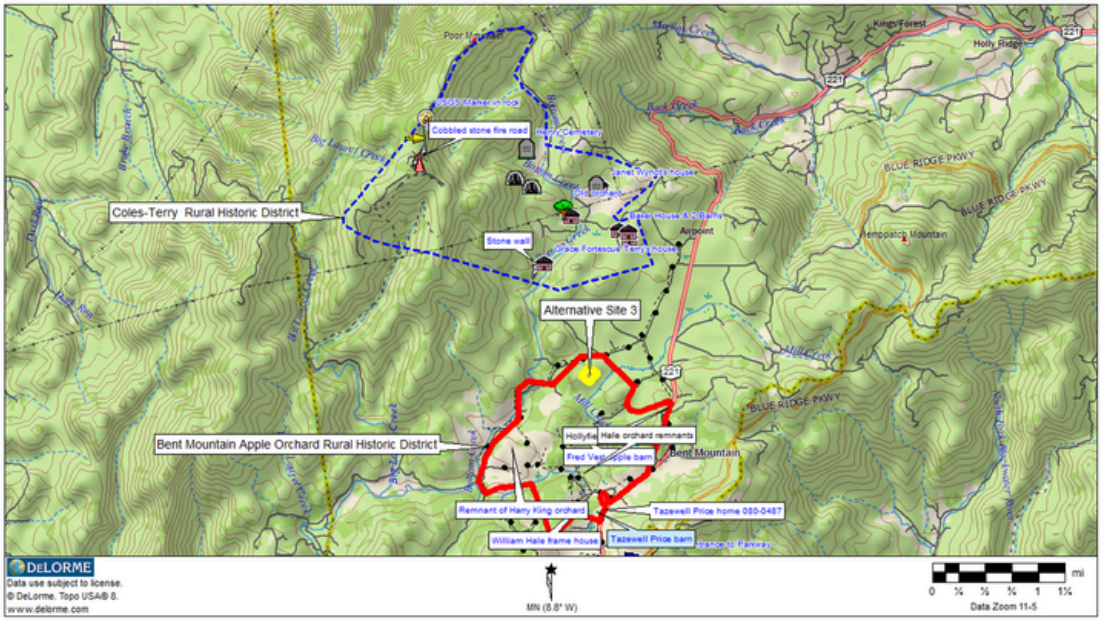
In response to Bruce's presentation, BREDL staff prepared comments submitted to Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) during the public comment period for the Environmental Assessment for the Mountain Valley Pipeline Boost project.

In addition to the site in the Bent Mountain community, MVP, LLC and FERC are considering four additional sites for the construction and operation of the Swann Compressor Station. These include a site in Craig County, two in Montgomery County, and another on the boundary between Montgomery and Roanoke Counties.

In our comments, BREDL stated that the Swann Compressor Station Alternative Site 3, as referenced in the Environmental Assessment for the Mountain Valley pipeline Boost Project, is:

(a) inside the Bent Mountain Apple Orchard Rural Historic District, which has been named eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places by Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR 080-5731), and
(b) within 4,189 feet of the boundary of the Coles-Terry Rural Historic District, which has been named eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places by Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR ID 080-5689)
Both these rural historic districts were developed by BREDL staff working with members of Preserve Bent Mountain during the period 2015 to 2017.

Included with our comments to FERC were three documents. The first is a map illustrating the location of the Swann Compressor Station Alternative Site 3 within the bounds of the Bent Mountain Apple Orchard Rural Historic District and within 4,189 feet of the boundary of the Coles-Terry Rural Historic District. Please see map, below.



Swann Compressor Station Alternative Site 3 within the bounds of the Bent Mountain Apple Orchard Rural Historic District and within 4,189 feet of the boundary of the Coles-Terry Rural Historic District.

The second and third are documents from Virginia Department of Historic Resources, including:
·DHR statement of eligibility for Bent Mountain Apple Orchard Rural Historic Districted, dated August 10, 2026, and
·DHR statement of eligibility for Coles-Terry Rural Historic District, dated August 11, 2026.

Our comments to FERC conclude with a "request that FERC provide assurance that the Bent Mountain Apple Orchard Rural Historic and the Coles-Terry Rural Historic District will be protected from industrial development in the form of the Swann Compressor Station Alternative Site 3, which would drastically impair the districts' historic integrity."

We are planning to prepare nominations to the National Register of Historic Places for the Coles-Terry Rural Historic District and the Bent Mountain Apple Orchard Rural Historic District.

Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, federal agencies must consider impacts to historic properties by proposed projects that are federally-funded or federally-licensed. Neither law requires that federal agencies take specific action to protect historic properties threatened by impacts from proposed projects, merely that the agencies document and recognize those impacts.

As of the August, 2026 submission of BREDL's comments to FERC's Environmental Assessment for the Mountain Valley Pipeline Boost Project, neither MVP, LLC nor FERC had acknowledged any awareness that the Swann Compressor Station Alternative Site 3 is located inside a state-approved rural historic district and less than a mile from the boundary of another such district.

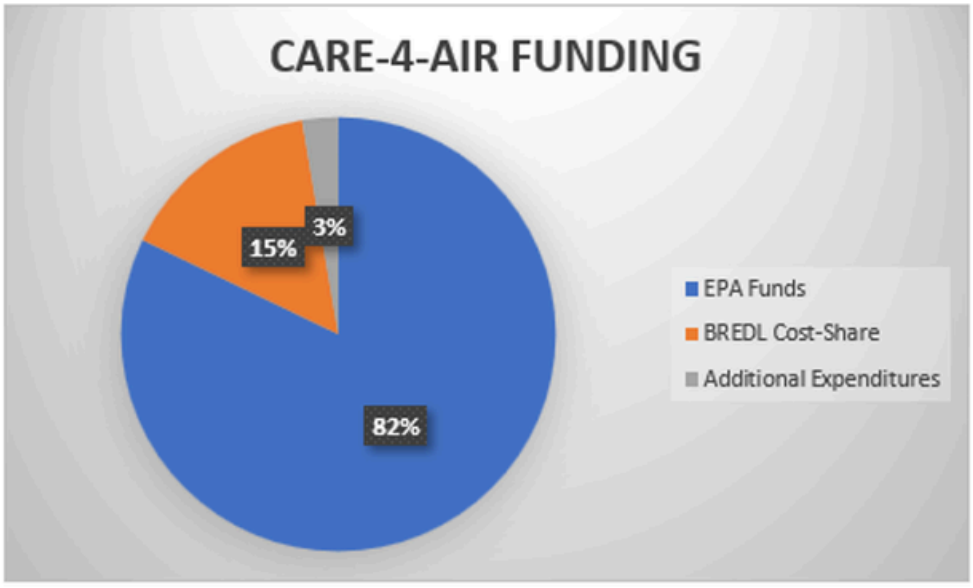
CARE-4-AIR PROJECT UPDATE

By: BREDL Care-4-Air Staff

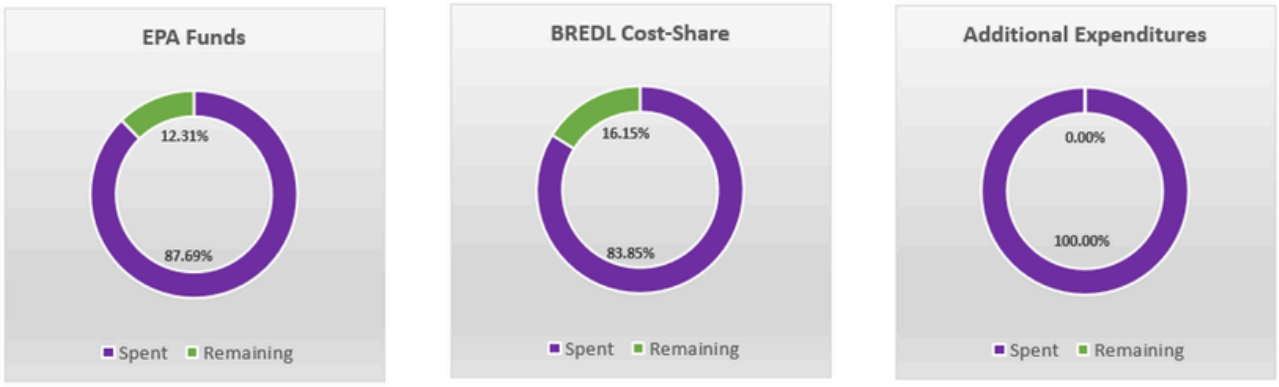
Our CARE-4-Air Project is on schedule to conclude on our new grant end date of June 30, 2027, which was approved by EPA on April 6. We are currently monitoring at our Site 4 location.

EPA approved our no-cost budget revision on July 9 with no new terms or conditions. Barring any major issues, we are on schedule with the newly revised budget. Our project budget consists of $365,368 in EPA funding and $67,486 in BREDL cost-share funding. Those funding numbers did not change with our revised budget. Our revision shifted funding between the various budget categories.Budget categories include personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contractual, and other.

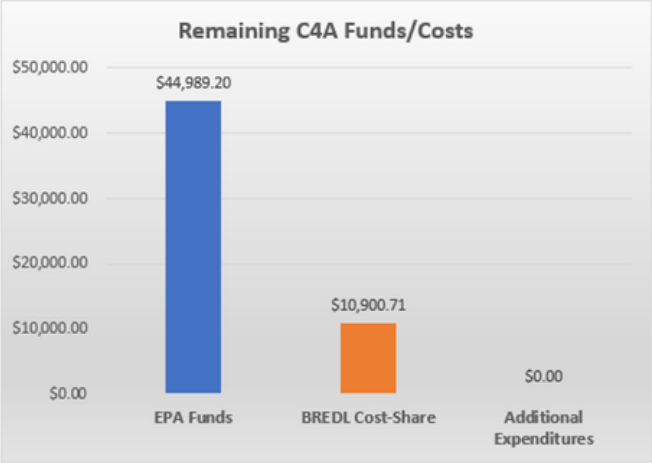
BREDL has spent an additional $11,893 in unexpected expenses. These additional expenditures have included some equipment calibration, DMV registration, trailer property taxes, and trailer insurance. We do not expect any additional expenditures.



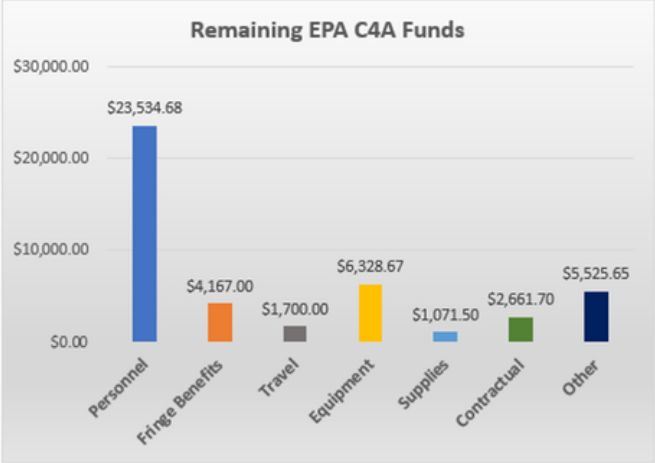
Overall Project Funding Breakdown



Percentage of Spent and Remaining Budget updated through September 28, 2026



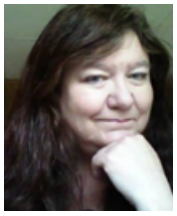
Remaining Funds/Costs updated through September 28, 2026



Remaining Budget for EPA Funds updated through September 28, 2026

RECOGNIZING AND MANAGING INFILTRATION IN LOCAL BATTLES

By: Therese Vick



A recent article by Lisa Sorg of Inside Climate News detailed how an industry plant infiltrated a community group. Link to story here: https://insideclimatenews.org/news/23092026/asphalt-company-sues-consultant-opposing-proposed-plant/

Industry infiltrating a community group is more common than some may think. During my time with Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League (BREDL) I have experienced this several times while working on waste issues, including the hazardous waste incinerator struggle in Northampton County (waste companies are notorious for this), and during the explosion of the hog industry in Eastern North Carolina. I'm sure that the fracking, pipeline, and data center issues are also targets for infiltrators. Of course it could be an industry rep who is unhappy with leadership, as well. However, this is about companies attempting to disrupt -- even destroy -- a community group by creating strife and suspicion.

A few things to look for:
• Someone new who shows up during a contentious issue, whom no one knows and who has no verifiable local connections, is evasive about where they live, has a vague background, foments division, and has unreasonable curiosity about leaders
• Additional clues include suggesting/pushing for violence, interfering with group strategy, attempting to hijack meetings, speaking to the press without running it by the group, making big promises, and undermining leadership.


Image by Pixabay

Grassroots organizations should be aware, vigilant, transparent, and insistent on non-violent behavior. Groups that suspect an infiltrator should try to avoid infecting the whole membership with paranoia until it is fairly certain what is going on. If you see an unfamiliar name, investigating possible connections with industry is a possibility. Excluding the person from email communications about strategy, potential legal action, etc. is also an option.

Grassroots community organizing isn't new to North Carolina, and neither are the pressure tactics that come with high-stakes industrial development.

Contact staff@bredl.org for assistance on these and other concerns.

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.
Check out our secure online donation form and use your credit card at
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Or send your check to: BREDL, c/o Virginia Staton, CPA, PO Box 2168, Boone, NC 28607
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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.

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