A newsletter of clean water and community environmental justice issues

Water, Environmental Justice and ENERGY

By Hope Taylor-Guevara

Energy decisions we are making today will be critical to our dwindling water supplies as well. Those choices don't just effect the environment and our health; they will have major impacts on our food and water supply, our economy, and the very existence of the most vulnerable among us: children, the elderly, low income people and people of color.

Climate change

As a result of buildup of greenhouse gases from fossil fuel burning for energy production and transportation, average global temperature is rising faster than at any time for thousands of years. While a particular storm can't be linked to climate change, the global pattern of increasingly violent hurricanes is

attributed by many scientists to higher temperatures. Droughts such as those in NC in 2000-2002 and this year in central NC, will be more damaging as population pressure on water resources increases, as fewer surface and groundwater resources are safe to drink, and groundwater levels continue to drop due to over-pumping. Greater

extremes of weather, including longer droughts, are expected in the future. Indigenous and poor people who live on islands or coastal areas will lose homes and food-producing land as sea levels rise, with few options to relocate inland as prices rise. NC is long overdue for both protective water allocation policies AND for energy

policies that will turn around our contribution to climate change. NC's newly appointed Global Warming Commission needs support and input from all of us.

Water Quantity, Energy Production

Hundreds of millions of gallons of water are used daily by each of thousands of electric power generating stations in the US, including coal-fired power plants, nuclear plants, hydropower stations and gas and oil-fired boiler plants. Some of the water used is lost to evaporation, some is passed through the plant with crushed flora and fauna discarded, and much is released at elevated temperature, reducing oxygen levels for fish and other aquatic organisms. Large volumes may even be transferred between river basins to ensure water supplies are sufficient for operations during a drought (we're addicted). For the sake of powering our hairdryers, lamps and factories, we accept massive ecological impacts to our water resources. We are so complacent that water will be a plentiful resource that we even accept the degraded air and water from producing the energy that is utterly wasted in our homes and businesses. Nearly 50% of that energy could be conserved with no change to our material "quality of life." Saving energy is not only a matter of public health, and economic justice, it's critical to ensure the health of watersheds and affordable drinking water supplies for all of us in the future.

Drinking Water: Energy Hog, Victim of Energy

Ironically, the largest cost for the daily treatment and distribution of public drinking water is ENERGY. In addition to depleting quantities of water and degrading habitat in river basins, energy production also contributes substantially to polluting the water that should be available for drinking and fisheries downstream. Large volumes of nitrogen oxides released from coal fired power plants contribute to downstream algae blooms, thus increasing

treatment costs for drinking water, killing fish by depleting oxygen and making beaches and shellfish toxic with growing frequency.

Mercury and other heavy metals from coal-fired power plant emissions are carried miles in particles, washed off the land and bio-accumulate in sediments and fish. African-Americans, indigenous people and the poor are most at risk of poisoning and developmental disorders as they depend more heavily on subsistence fishing as a protein source. Radioactive groundwater contamination documented near several nuclear power stations is an invisible and lasting threat to health of well-users.

Centralized Energy Production—Threat to our Safety and Democracy

Large energy facilities of any kind use enormous quantities of toxic or hazardous materials, require major security measures and are isolated from public scrutiny that could actually motivate

safer operations. Utilities exercise extensive local and regional corporate control over governance and environmental decisions. This sacrifice of democracy is most acute for nuclear facilities, which represent a substantial security threat known to the public only through whistleblower leaks and arcane hearings. Nuclear utilities have even been allowed to remove safety equipment since 9/11—regulators frequently prioritize industry profits over public safety.

Lost opportunity for sustainable jobs

While centralized energy utilities create a few highly paid jobs, wealthy shareholders and intermittent construction jobs, studies carried out decades years ago show that we could have equitable economic development and environmental protection. Planning for an energy future that "grows" through conservation and renewables would create over 700,000 jobs a year for decades. Failure to work toward this vision, carefully orchestrated by energy corporations, is an economic injustice to the Americans who don't have those jobs and can't afford energy costs. It's also an environmental injustice to those downwind and downstream of electrical generating plants which have increased their toxic emissions for decades.

It's time for all of us to be involved in creative efforts big and small, public and private, to completely retool our profit addicted utility paradigm.

WhoWeAre

Clean Water for North Carolina

Clean Water for North Carolina is a private, non-profit organization based in Asheville, NC. CWFNC works to ensure that all people have a right to live, work, and play in clean and safe communities.

Together, we have the power and responsibility to work for a healthy and sustainable environment. Our staff works with an active and diverse board of directors and members to increase grassroots involvement in environmental decisions. CWFNC spearheads action statewide and helps grassroots and environmental groups, individuals, and local governments develop strategies to address threats to the environment.

Our Mission

Clean Water for North Carolina promotes clean, safe water and environments and empowered, just communities for all North Carolinians through organizing, education, advocacy and technical assistance.

Board of Directors

Robin Cape • Asheville
Montie Hamby • Winston-Salem
Allen Hubbard • Charlotte
Isaac Coleman • Asheville
Nathanette Mayo • Shiloh
Richard McElrath • Charlotte
Deb Criss • Asheville
Marshall Tyler • Mocksville
Wanda Comfort • Charlotte

Who to Contact

Asheville

828-251-1291 • 800-929-4480 Gracia O'Neill, Outreach Coordinator gracia@cwfnc.org Jill Rios, Western Organizer jill@cwfnc.org

Durham

919-401-9600 Hope Taylor-Guevara, Executive Director hope@cwfnc.org

Garysburg

252-537-1078 Belinda Joyner, Northeast Organizer

Welcome to CWFNC's new Western Organizer, Jill Rios!

We are delighted to announce that Jill Rios joined our Asheville office team in November, working with communities in western NC. Her background is in International Studies and Environmental Science and Education, with degrees from St. Norbert College in Wisconsin and Lesley University in Massachusetts. Jill credits her experiences as Environmental Education Coordinator at Warren-Wilson College's Environmental Leadership Center with bonding her to the people and environment of NC. Her extensive experience teaching, planning and leading environmental, social justice and language programs in Mexico and Colombia, and with migrant farmworkers in Texas, have deepened her commitment to work



CWFNC's Western Organizer Jill Rios pictured here with her husband, Austin.

for environmental justice with Spanish speaking communities - exactly what CWFNC needs. She's been teaching English as a Second Language, and we apologize to her students for stealing her away, but we look forward to continuing relationships through partnerships for environmental health and justice!

Jill will lead our Latino outreach efforts, will assist in organizing and advocacy in the state's most "underserved" river basin—the Yadkin—and will coordinate CWFNC's new "Water Justice Campaign (see her intro to the Campaign below). She lives in Black Mountain with her husband, Austin, an Episcopal priest. We are very lucky to have Jill's energy, passion and great range of skills to enhance our work and increase our reach to more diverse NC communities.

The Water Justice Campaign will draw attention to the critical need for protection of the public's drinking water—both quality and quantity—as a basic human right, as well as water access issues including water allocation, public right-to-know, and pricing. The Water Justice Campaign specifically will be an opportunity to expand CWFNC's work with Latino Communities, therefore "aprovechando," or taking advantage of Jill's bilingual capabilities. You might be seeing her and other CWFNC staff and volunteers in your community as they begin work on what will begin as a door-to-door listening campaign. If you have specific water concerns for "the places where you live, work and play" or are aware of others that do, the Water Justice Campaign is the perfect opportunity to invite us into your communities!

Deb Criss joins CWFNC Board, ignited by water issues



As a holistic counselor, Deb is well aware of the importance of water in the body and for human health. Likewise, Deb appreciates the importance of clean water for global health. Generally well-traveled, Deb landed in the mountains of East Tennessee at an early age where she became active with anti-nuclear demonstrations on the Nolichucky River. Though she has traveled across the states several times, Deb reports that she has always been drawn back to these Southern Appalachians where she now makes her home. When she's not working, Deb escapes to her cabin on the Toe River that serves as a place to

convene with the natural world. Deb also hosts 'Listen to Women' a program on WPVM radio and has played music professionally for 25 years. Together with fellow CWFNC Board member Robin Cape, Deb is part of the Buckerettes—an Asheville-based band that has used their musical talents to raise money for CWFNC!

ECU Intern Researches Well Contamination

Andres Gaviria, a graduating student in Environmental Health from East Carolina University, worked with CWFNC this summer to assist communities with contaminated wells in Beaufort and Mecklenburg Counties, with a focus on outreach to Latino residents. He helped to empower those whose wells were contaminated or threatened to seek additional testing, inform them of the health implications and options for dealing with the situation. Andres also helped to translate our brochures and Toolkit, assisted in logistics for our Greensboro drinking water workshop and presented his work on well contamination to the NC Environmental Justice Summit in October. Thanks, Andres, for all that you've done for CWFNC and NC communities!



CWFNC 21st Annual Meeting

Communities, Grassroots Monitoring, Military Toxics, and New Nukes for NC?



The November 19th Annual Meeting was both the 21st birthday party for Clean Water for North Carolina, and the birthday of Board Chair Allen Hubbard, shown here with his wife Rosemary, also a long time environmental and social justice activist.



Dave Lochbaum, Nuclear Safety Expert with the Union of Concerned Scientists, focused on the impacts of nuclear power plants on water resources. Dave's engaging presentation focused on the incredible quantity of water that is required to run nuclear power plants, and the thermal and chemical pollution associated with operation. This important and timely topic comes at a time when both Duke and Progress Energy are aggressively pursuing plans to build new nuclear plants in NC, including sites on or near the Yadkin River.



Gracia O'Neill, CWFNC Outreach Coordinator. talked about recent air and water monitoring successes. She coordinates the Stream Monitoring Information Exchange (SMIE), which has trained about 40 volunteers to use a new biological monitoring method for western NC streams. Gracia also summarized monitoring for toxic air releases from

Blue Ridge Paper Products in Canton NC. Residents confirmed with instrumentation what they already knew-that hydrogen sulfide (rotten egg smelling compounds) increases dramatically during the night and on weekends, when regulators aren't working. Organizing in Canton (see page 6) has increased the number of complaints to the company and agencies.



Mary Olson of the Southeast office of the Nuclear Information and Resource Service, painted a powerful picture of the selective targeting of states in our region for both new nuclear plant proposals by utilities, waste fuel transportation and permitting of fuel reprocessing. "Dumping On Dixie," originally used to describe the predominance of toxic landfills and other sites sited in poor communities in the south but is also an apt description of what the nuclear industry has in mind for our rapidly de-industrializing and sometimes economically desperate region.



Adam Shestak, CWFNC Stanback Intern and Duke Law student, presented research on Military Toxics and Environmental Justice in NC. For the Dept. of Defense, environmental justice and protection are very low priorities. The last DOD report on EJ issues was almost 10 years ago, and only 0.82% of the military's \$440 billion budget went towards environmental spending last year. Adam talked about groundwater contamination, unexploded weapons and other threats at current military sites and almost 200 "formerly used defense sites" across the state, over 40 of which have never been located!



CWFNC Staff and Board Members (from left to right) Deb Criss, Gracia O'Neill, Hope Taylor-Guevara, Montie Hamby, Marshall Tyler, Isaac Coleman, Allen Hubbard, Nathanette Mayo and Jill Rios.

Not present: Wanda Comfort, Richard McElrath and Belinda Joyner

Protecting our Communities.

Safe Accessible Water for All

Focus on Communities

New Duke Nukes for NC?

Davie Country - Communities in the Yadkin riverbasin are beginning, and continuing to organize, as <u>Duke Power announces plans to build a new</u> nuclear power plant in NC. Concerned voices inspired the focus of CWFNC's annual meeting, 'NC Nukes in the 21st Century,' recently held in Mocksville NC. Duke Power is considering about a dozen sites in the Carolinas on property it already owns. The plans for a plant would require a substantial water source nearby and properties in Davidson, Davie, and Stanly counties are on the list of potential sites. In the late 1970s and 1980s a site in Davie Country, near Mocksville, was being considered for a nuclear plant. Public outcry from groups like Citizens Against Perkins was strong and Duke Power eventually abandoned its plans. Many of these same activists are still committed to the anti-nuclear movement. Organizers of all ages gathered after CWFNC's annual meeting to discuss strategies for blocking additional reactors. If you would like to get involved, contact Jill at (828) 251-1291.

Battle for a Clean Pigeon River Wages On

Cocke Co, TN – Downstream residents of Blue Ridge Paper Products (BRPP), the region's largest toxic emitter, have resurrected a historic community organization—Pigeon River Action Group—to again take up the fight to clean up the Pigeon River. The group has embarked on

an educational/ advocacy campaign to raise awareness and gain support in anticipation of the upcoming renewal for the paper mill's wastewater discharge (NPDES) permit in 2006. BRPP has had a variance on its temperature and "color" (a nice name for a toxic chemical



soup, including chloroform) discharge, allowing them to avoid complying with any limits, for as long as variances have been in existance!

In 2001, CWFNC and other environmental and downstream groups commissioned a joint study with BRPP resulting in the recommendation to implement chlorine-free technology that would significantly reduce the mill's color at a very reasonable cost. The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) watched the results of this study closely and had their own independent recommendations for the permit with overlap of technologies considered. However, when DENR didn't require the technology, BRPP never installed it, and so the fouling of the Pigeon continues. If you would like to get involved in this effort, please contact Gracia at (828) 251-1291.

Sewage Sludge Coming to a Town Near You?



Guilford Ordin

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Union Co. - The Town of Weddington will keep its protective sludge spreading ordinance - at least for now. The town has recently become a center of a growing controversy over whether municipal governments have the right to enact tighter, more protective regulations than state standards when it comes to spreading sludge on farm fields. Sludge, or "bio-solids" (the industry friendly term), is typically derived from municipal sewage treatment plants and may contain high levels of heavy metals, bacteria and industrial toxins. In response to growing concern about the safety of sludge spreading on agricultural land, Weddington enacted a zoning ordinance requiring additional monitoring, spill control planning, and other requirements for spreading within the town limits. However, after a sludge corporation sued Granville County over a similar ordinance and won, Weddington's town council has grown wary of similar lawsuits, despite Clean Water Act and EPA guidance specifically allowing towns and counties to adopt or enforce more stringent standards than state and federal regulations.

DENR Regional Offices

Asheville Regional Office 828-296-4500

Fayetteville Regional Office 910-486-1541

Mooresville Regional Office 704-663-1699

Raleigh Regional Office 919-791-4200

Washington Regional Office 252-946-6481

Wilmington Regional Office 910-796-7215

Winston-Salem Regional Office

336-771-4600

704-663-1699 910-796-7215

Focus on Communities

Downstream residents challenge state deal with chronic sewage polluter

nance Protects Kids

ıblic education and tect kids from lead **Guilford County** unanimously passed tive ordinance in North dinance has been a or Lead Poisoning rdinator Alyson Best,



ng Your Drinking Water orkshop in Greensboro.

equires all children to have blood lead es inspection and for lead hazards, like where children have ne critical 10 deciliter. Best's high d great organizing with ords, county and health I the difference. on a great victory for an example for muchs in all NC counties!

Oxford - After decades of stinking sewer overflows from the City's wastewater treatment plant and its leaking sewage collection system, downstream residents along Fishing and Coon Creeks had enough. Working with Clean Water for NC and the Pamlico-Tar RIVERKEEPER, they filed an official appeal of the state-issued "Special Order by Consent," arguing that the NC Division of Water Quality (DWQ) violated its own regulations in granting the Order.

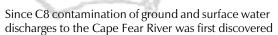
"Special Orders are tools the state can use to bring chronic polluters into compliance, but this Order fails completely to serve the purpose of enforcement," says Alan Finkel, whose home is at the confluence of Fishing Creek and the Tar River. The creeks into which the sewage spills have occurred are "impaired" or failing to meet even minimum standards for aquatic habitat and other uses. Residents in the modest income African-American Antioch community near Coon Creek can't help but wonder whether demographics may explain why their problems have been ignored so long.

The Special Order gives Oxford relief from any penalties for overflows of sewage from the plant during construction, while allowing Oxford to provide hook-ups for an additional 300,000 gallons per day from new sewage accounts. "That's an outrage," says Rev. John Hall, who lives close to Coon Creek downstream of the sewage spills, "we have no choice but to challenge this to hold the City and state regulators accountable."

Activism by C8 Working Group Leads to Discovery of DuPont Toxic Leak Fayetteville - Newly discovered contamination of groundwater by a controversial toxic chemical manufactured only at DuPont's Fayetteville facility contradicts the company's previous claims about the source of the contamination and the dangers posed to people and the environment. The NC "C8 Working Group," made up of CWFNC, the WaterKeeper

Alliance, the NC Occupational Health and Safety Project and Cape Fear River Watch, held a press conference August and has met twice with high level state regulators to call for expansion of the investigation of C8 contamination at the plant.

C8, also known as ammonium perfluorooctanoate (APFO), has been labeled as a "likely human" carcinogen." It has been found in the blood of DuPont-Fayetteville employees and is the same chemical that contaminated public water supplies in West Virginia, leading to a class-action lawsuit involving more than 50,000 drinking water customers. C8 from DuPont's Fayetteville plant is used across the country to make Teflon and other non-stick surfaces.





Dupont-Fayetteville C8 Plant

in 2003, company officials claimed the C8 was a by-product of another process, or leakage from an old tank. Instead, the new tests demanded by the C8 Working group found contamination at DuPont's brand new C8 manufacturing facility.

"Until we're monitoring for employee exposure and ambient air as well as comprehensive water monitoring, we can't rule out exposure of the public, too," says Hope Taylor-Guevara of CWFNC.

Polluter Accountability and Environmental Justice

From "Military Toxics and Environmental Justice"

By Adam Shestack, 2005 CWFNC Stanback Intern

A self-proclaimed "military friendly" state, North Carolina is home to multiple defense installations and over 100,000 active duty personnel. This presence contributes to the state's economy and is a source of pride for many North Carolina residents. As an industrially diverse and self-contained organization, however, the military releases large amounts of pollution to the state's water, air, and land. For example, two of North Carolina's active military installations—Camp Lejeune Military Reservation (Navy) and Cherry Point Marine Corps Air Station—are currently on the National Priorities List – a nationwide inventory of sites determined by the government to be in the most need of cleanup under the EPA's "Superfund" program. Both sites have substantial groundwater contamination from solvents or fuels, and it's possible that tens of thousands of

Full report on military toxics available at www.cwfnc.org

Camp Lejeune personnel were exposed to health threatening levels of contamination in their drinking water.

Further, 35 of the over 150 Formerly Used Defense Sites (FUDS) scattered throughout the North Carolina have been determined to have environmental concerns. Several of these sites include widely distributed unexploded ordnance - a variety of old bombs, mines, hand grenades, etc, that represent an ongoing threat to homeowners, farmers, foresters, hunter, etc. Another 40 FUDS <u>have not even been located</u>, so they can't even be evaluated for potential environmental hazards.

Excerpted from the 3rd edition of "A North Carolina Toolkit for Protecting Your Environmental Rights"



Congrats to Tony Serrao, Polluter Accountability "Thorn-in-the-Side" for 2005!

Ever since moving to Canton NC, Tony Serrao, who lives and works in very close proximity to Blue Ridge Paper Products (2^{nd} largest paper mill in NC), has made improving air quality his personal mission. Shortly after moving to town Tony began suffering from chronic sinus problems and headaches, sometimes so bad he has to close shop early. Taking matters into his own hands, Tony often drives around the mill using his keen sense of smell to locate and identify odors before calling the mill or lodging a complaint with the DENR Div. of Air Quality. His activities have earned him the nickname "The Canary" amongst BRPP employees, and a recent report by BRPP shows that Tony accounts for 88% of complaints made to the mill.

In addition, Tony (with assistance from CWFNC and the UNC School of Public Health) has set up monitoring equipment to continuously monitored hydrogen sulfide levels in the air near the mill, and has begun distributing information to neighbors about their rights to clean air and how to get their concerns on public record. He's found

that most people never knew they could do anything when the air quality gets bad! Tony's efforts have resulted in an increased number of complaints both at the mill and with to the Div. of Air Quality, making it harder and harder to say "there's nothing wrong with the air in Canton." Again, congratulations Tony for being CWFNC's Thorn-in-the-Side of the year!

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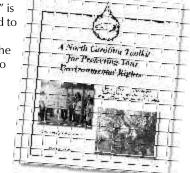
Thanks to Our Wonderful Volunteers at the **Southern Energy and Environment Expo!**

Cathy Holt, Seth Harrison, Bill Schaefer, Lincoln Balassa, Toby Heaton, Bob Grytten, Lara Lenhardt, Hallie Richards and Chelsea Allen

Hot off the press - 3rd Edition of The Toolkit now available!

It is appropriate that the latest edition of our resource book, previously known as a "Citizen Toolkit," rolls off the press during the holiday

season. This comprehensive guide for "protecting your environmental rights" is a gift to North Carolinians empowered to improve the quality of life for communities across the state. From the "Principles of Environmental Justice" to strategies for organizing a group, to regulatory and monitoring "tools," it's all here! The work of members, volunteers and dedicated community activists for "clean, safe places to live, work and play" inspires every edition of the Toolkit.



The most evident change to the 3rd edition of the Toolkit is in the title. The new title, "A North Carolina Toolkit for Protecting Your Environmental Rights" expresses our concern for and commitment to those who live and work in North Carolina, are often most vulnerable to environmental degradation, and who (regardless of citizenship status) have a right to environmental protection. In an effort to make the Toolkit even more accessible, we are currently working on a Spanish version.

Finally, the current edition of the Toolkit includes updated contact information for dozens of organizations that will be helpful for those committed to working towards environmental justice for all. Again, thank you for your important work and please know that we always welcome your feedback regarding the Toolkit. On the ground and working to protect environmental rights in your community, you know better than anyone the type of information that the Toolkit needs to include.

A North Carolina Toolkit for Protecting Your Environmental Your Environmental Rights, will soon be available in PDF format on our website at www.cwfnc.org. Hard copies are available for \$5/Toolkit or FREE when you join CWFNC!

Thanks to Our New and Renewing Members for Making Our Work Possible!

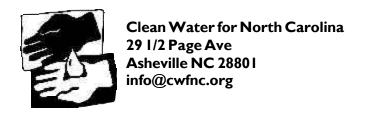
David Springer, Robert Herring, J.S. Herring, Jennifer McGovern and Steve Unruhe, Amey Miller and David Kiel, Rev. Jerry Price, Peggy Medlin, Charlene Morton, Joe Haberthier, Leslie and Eugene Mindel, Howard Martin, Martha Lamb, Jessica Claydon, Jeri Gray, Mary Cridlebaugh, Elizabeth Hall, Jim Warren, Annie Rose, Jean Hinson, Margaret Averyt, Terry Otto, Peter Pickens, Virginia Hamman, Sr. Jay McCann, Ophelia Jones, Dan and Claudia Sortwell, David Mickey, Denny and Kim Shaffer, Cathy Holt, Jill Rios, Peggy Wilson, Rev. John Hall, Cynthia Holmes, Ben Coleman, Deb Criss, Deb Schultz, Isaac Coleman, Russell Herman, Marshall Tyler, Nathanette Mayo, Allen **Hubbard and Richard Dove**

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New Edition of Toolkit

This newsletter is printed on 80% post-consumer, processed chlorine free paper.



Have you joined CWFNC to support our work statewide?

Celebrate A Clean Water New Year!

Join us for food, fun and great company!

Friday Jan 6th from 4:30-6:30pm

CWFNC Office in Asheville
29 1/2 Page Ave. meeting room
Across from Grove Arcade.

Watch for announcement of spring gathering in Durham in next Clean
Currents!