



Clean Water for North Carolina

Clean Currents

Winter 2018-2019

A newsletter of clean water and community environmental justice issues

Hurricanes Expose How Climate Change Threatens Clean Water, Communities

Images from Hurricane Florence will not soon be forgotten – our towns and neighborhoods under water, coal ash flowing into our rivers, floating animal carcasses and animal waste fouling our water. While NC is receiving more than \$711 million from state and federal relief aid, the hurricane is estimated to have caused over \$15 billion in damages, not to mention the upheaval to families and communities and the environmental damage yet to be fully assessed. Meteorologists point to climate change as increasing both the rainfall and rapid intensification of Hurricanes Florence and Michael.

Soon after Florence, it became apparent that coal ash impoundments at Duke's Sutton and H.F. Lee power plants had failed, dumping the toxic ash into nearby waterways. RiverKeeper water sampling near the ash sites showed levels of arsenic at 18 times the state health standard. While Governor Cooper stated that we must consider future flooding to lessen the impacts of human caused pollution as we rebuild, proposed state coal ash residual rules and animal waste management rules offer little hope for better practices that would prevent future contaminated floodwaters.

At industrial animal operations, some 3.4 million chickens and 5500 swine had drowned in the floodwaters. Approximately 110 hog waste lagoons breached, further contaminating surrounding waters - an estimated 7.3 million gallons of untreated hog waste was released from just two of these lagoons. It is clear that more protective environmental policies are urgently needed if actions are to match the rhetoric.

The Florence disaster has increased awareness of the impacts of climate change and the perils of continuing with business as usual. It was recently reported that more politicians than ever are acknowledging that climate change is real and that steps need to be taken to prevent it and to mitigate the effects. In late October, Gov. Cooper called for greater cooperation between government and the private sector to move toward clean energy. He signed an Executive Order with some steps to curb climate change and transition to a clean energy economy.

However, the Order focused on reducing sources of carbon dioxide (CO₂), ignoring releases of methane from gas pipelines that the Governor has supported and DEQ has permitted. Methane, the main constituent of "natural gas," is at least 86 times as powerful a greenhouse gas as CO₂ in the 20 years after it is released. All gas pipelines, including the huge ACP being constructed through low income communities of color in eastern NC, leak methane during normal operations. Compressor stations, pipeline cleaning and the pipeline itself have ongoing leaks, to say nothing of increasingly frequent ruptures and explosions, even from recently built pipelines.

The most powerful steps we can take to prevent catastrophic climate change are to prevent extraction of natural gas (fracking) and stop construction of fracked gas pipelines and power plants, which will increase utility customer costs, while accelerating climate change! Quickly transitioning to renewable sources for residences, businesses and industry is a better investment, and will also create more safe, long term jobs for NC residents.



Many lower income housing areas, like this mobile home park in Lumberton, shown days after Florence passed through, are located in areas that are particularly vulnerable to flooding from rainfall, magnified by the effects of climate change.

WHO WE ARE

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, as well as 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

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

Board of Directors

Nydia Morales, Chair • Matthews

Anita Simha, Vice Chair • Cary

Beth Jezek • Asheville

Nathanette Mayo • Shiloh

Tina Motley-Pearson • Durham

Marshall Tyler • Oriental

Please Contact Us

Asheville

828-251-1291 • 1-800-929-4480

Amanda Strawderman, Program
Coordinator and Asheville Office Manager
amanda@cwfn.org

Xelba Gutierrez

*Energy & EJ Organizer/Researcher
Durham*

919-401-9600

Hope Taylor, Executive Director
hope@cwfn.org

Rachel Velez, Environmental Justice
Organizer/Communications Coordinator,
rachel@cwfn.org

Garysburg

252-537-1078

Belinda Joyner, Northeast Organizer

Welcome to Xelba, our new Energy and Environmental Justice Organizer/Researcher

We are excited to have Xelba Gutierrez, an experienced environmental justice and social justice organizer from Philadelphia, joining out staff in December. Xelba was born in Venezuela, but has lived for many years in Florida and Pennsylvania. She has a Bachelor's degree in Biology from Florida International University and recently completed her Master of Environmental Science degree with a concentration in Environmental Justice at University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. Starting her professional life as veterinary technician, and marine science mentor for kids in Miami, she became increasingly involved in organizing for social justice and community empowerment, including urban agriculture and public engagement for healthy communities in Philadelphia. In 2016, she co-founded March on Harrisburg, a multi-issue collaborative, and became its first Outreach Coordinator and Eastern PA Organizer. She brings a wide range of skills for training volunteers and activists, and collaborative planning. She is looking forward to working with us on a range of Environmental Justice issues, and getting to know the mostly rural communities we work with.



A Fond Farewell to Xavier



In late August, Xavier Boatright, who had been our Energy and Environmental Justice Organizer and Researcher in the Asheville office for nearly 3 years, resigned to be spend more time with his family. Xavier had been our lead organizer on coal ash issues for most of his time with CWFNC, and had worked closely with coal ash impacted residents around the Asheville plant, and around the Cliffside Plant in Cleveland County, and helped to coordinate public participation at several related regulatory hearings. He became our expert on coal ash reprocessing and recycling, having extensive conversations with recycling industry experts and he organized a full day workshop on coal ash disposal issues in Chatham County, recruiting scientists, lawyers and grassroots activists for a very successful and informative event. He was looking forward to helping organize a workshop in Goldsboro in collaboration with the DownEast Coalition, which would go into even more depth on recycling and disposal issues when he needed to leave. We miss Xavier's warmth and deeply thoughtful approach to all that he met and worked with, and we actually hope that we might get a chance to work with him again in the future! Hearty best wishes, Xavier, our thoughts are with you and your family, and we hope you'll be back for a visit soon!

Drinking Water Justice

"Fair Market Value" Legislation Passed in June—Implications for Publicly Owned Water?

Our last newsletter reported on the looming "Fair Market Value" legislation we had been tracking for a while. Unfortunately, the proposed bill, which incentivizes financially vulnerable publicly owned water utilities to sell their systems to private companies, became law in North Carolina quickly and quietly this past June. No doubt a result of efforts of private utilities, like Aqua NC, and their lobbying organization, NAWC, which had aggressively lobbied for the bill.

What does this mean for the future of our local, publicly-owned and operated water and wastewater systems? With many legislators and for-profit companies hailing this legislation as a way to increase capital investment in North Carolina infrastructure and reduce financial pressure on the state, we anticipate that private utilities will increasingly see

opportunities to buy out vulnerable municipal systems.

CWFNC was able to identify systems that might be vulnerable to privatization by consulting the North Carolina Department of State Treasurer's "Unit Assistance List". This list includes municipalities requesting state financial support, and identifies those with financial problems with their water or sewer funding. Among a list of 42 struggling systems, 10 were found to have current water quality violations and 11 more have had violations in the past 3 years. We are in the process of reaching out to local government officials and managers of these struggling systems to identify specific challenges and provide information on why it is important for communities to maintain ownership and control of their water and wastewater utilities.

Stanback Interns Walker Grimshaw and Jim Liu Investigate Safety of NC Wells and Springs

Clean Water was pleased to host Walker Grimshaw this summer as one of two Duke University Stanback interns. As a Master's student in public health and environmental management, Walker took an interest in



access to safe drinking water in rural western North Carolina. He turned his efforts to investigating springs as a drinking water source when he discovered that over 3 million people in the state are not connected to a public water utility, and that they are responsible for the testing and safety of their own water supply.

While wells draw water from more protected groundwater sources, springs can be more affected by surface water conditions and are therefore more prone to contamination. Walker worked with CWFNC staff to develop an outreach campaign to spring users in WNC, providing free testing for bacteria and surveying potential needs of spring users in vulnerable communities. His work helped establish a protocol for providing assistance to springs users and made new community and Health Dept. connections in western NC.

Jim Liu is a senior at Duke University, working in the Donohue Genotype Environment Interaction Lab, with a strong interest in rural drinking water. We knew that Wake County had tested wells in the eastern part of the county, underlain by a granite formation that contains radioactive



minerals, and found radioactive contamination in many wells. Because Franklin County, just northeast of Wake, is a lower income county with the same granite formation, CWFNC offered to test wells for radon, a radioactive gas given off by decaying uranium, and gross alpha emissions, to detect uranium. Jim and CWFNC staff sampled wells in areas of the county close to eastern Wake County but found low levels of radon and gross alpha. In an area of lower income African American residents further from the county line, variable but often high levels of radon were found. CWFNC will work with the Franklin Health Dept. to find affordable ways to filter contaminants.

Is Your Well Contaminated by Flooding, Other Pollution?

Thanks to our allies, ACT Against Coal Ash has funding to provide FREE testing of wells impacted by floodwaters or other sources of pollution!

Contact our Durham office at **919-401-9600** if your well has indications of contamination:

Coal ash—gray ash deposited by floodwaters around your well, or a well located within 1 mile of a coal ash basin. (we can test your well for presence of coal ash metals)

Fuel—a sheen on water around your well or observed in your toilet after the water has been sitting for a while (we can test for volatile organic chemicals or VOC's)

Animal or human wastes—dark stains around your well after floodwaters recede, sewage like odors (we can test for bacteria, nitrate and ammonia)

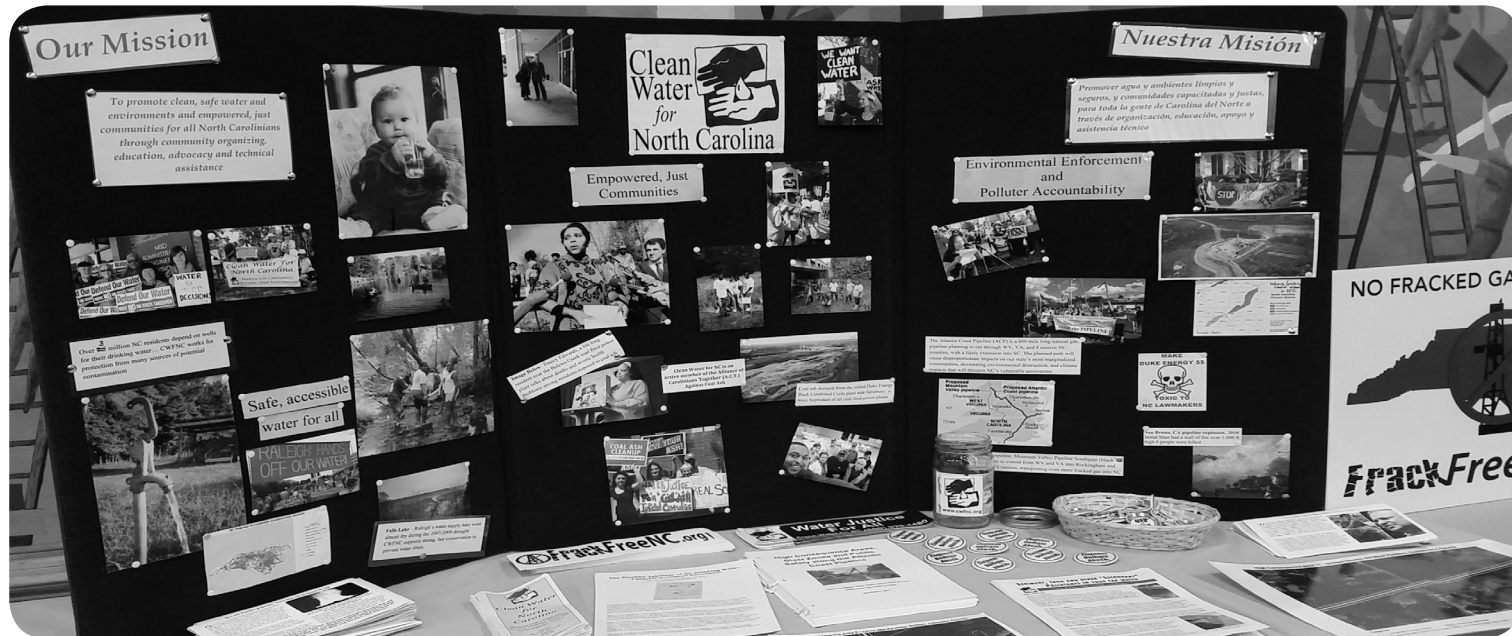
Communities Rising for Safe Water, Air and Justice Across North Carolina: CWFNC 34th Annual Public Meeting

Lisa Sorg with NC Policy Watch, an award-winning environmental investigative reporter, gave a brilliant Keynote Speech at the Clean Water for North Carolina 2018 Annual Meeting. A journalist for 24 years, Sorg has a keen interest not only in the environment, but also the social justice impacts of pollution and corporate malfeasance. Her presentation, "Waiting to Exhale," covered the effects of several polluting industries across the state that impact air quality and contribute to chronic respiratory illnesses in surrounding communities. Among these polluters are "natural" gas pipeline compressor stations, poultry operations, and wood pellet "biofuel" industries. Sorg calls for a crackdown on facilities that fall under the small polluter rule as well. She pointed out that of the more than 400 "small emitter" facilities in the state, half are located within zip codes of low income areas demonstrating clear Environmental Justice concerns. Lisa was presented an award for "Outstanding NC Environmental Justice Journalism."



Robie Goins, Chairperson of EcoRobeson, is a life-long member of the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina and longtime resident of Robeson County, and the historical community of Prospect, home to many Native people. EcoRobeson has become a primary source for information about social, environmental and economic injustices affecting Robeson County. His presentation, "The Atlantic Coast Pipeline and Other Environmental Injustices-a Lumbee Indian Perspective," brought to light how tribal perspectives had been omitted from ACP decision-making process, how requests for consultation were ignored, despite clearly disproportionate impacts to Lumbee residents.

Threatened with eminent domain seizure of their land, tribal members do not feel secure in their persons and property and are angry that the ACP developers are not giving a complete picture of project impacts. To the Lumbee, community, family, and health depend on maintaining strong connections to healthful and in-tact ancestral lands and environment. EcoRobeson calls for government-to-government consultation between the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and the Lumbee Tribal Council to enable the Lumbee to defend their community from a range of environmental injustices caused by the pipeline.



Steven Pulliam is an organic farmer, automotive technician, family man and environmentalist who has volunteered with Good Stewards of Rockingham County and recently elected to leadership. He is currently working to build awareness and opposition to the proposed MVP Southgate project that would cross Rockingham and Alamance counties. His presentation, "Impacts of the MVP Southgate and Growing Resistance," revealed how communities in the surrounding areas would be affected and called attention to safety issues from pipeline explosions. He also voiced concerns about the effects this pipeline would have on agriculture with over 240 acres of prime farm land impacted along the proposed route. Good Stewards of Rockingham is reaching out to landowners, townships and county commissioners, civic clubs, churches, and other environmental groups to rally around this issue. Here he is shown directing attention to the proposed extension of the Mountain Valley Pipeline.



Roger Hollis of the Cliffside Coalition for Clean Water spoke on "Continuing the Fight for Safe Water, Air and Coal Ash Clean-Up." The Cliffside Coalition of residents around Duke's Cliffside coal plant was an early participant in the statewide Alliance of Carolinians Together or "ACT" Against Coal Ash. Roger has been involved with organizing, providing technical assistance, contacting government officials, and speaking out on behalf of the Cliffside Coalition, as well as collecting air particulate samples along coal ash truck routes. While he spoke of frustrations in dealing with a company that doesn't care about his community, he vowed to continue to be a thorn in the industry's side until the coal ash pollution in Cliffside and other communities is properly handled by removing all ash from unlined ash basins. The Cliffside Coalition was honored for their efforts with a "Communities in Action for Justice" Award.



Kristen Wills, Staff Attorney and Researcher for NC WARN, spoke about the Title VI Civil Rights Complaint that was filed with EPA early this year on behalf of Environmental Justice groups opposing the Atlantic Coast Pipeline. The Complaint provided documentation of disproportionate impact of the pipeline on Native American and African American communities, as well as low income residents. At the time of her presentation, EPA had not responded, but the Complaint has since been "dismissed" by EPA as being covering too broad, and not timely, as construction on the pipeline had been halted. This is a puzzling response, as the pipeline would stretch over 8 counties and 186 miles, with impacted residents along most of the route, and everyone knew the ACP builders were fighting to have the stop work order reversed within a few weeks.

Water Justice

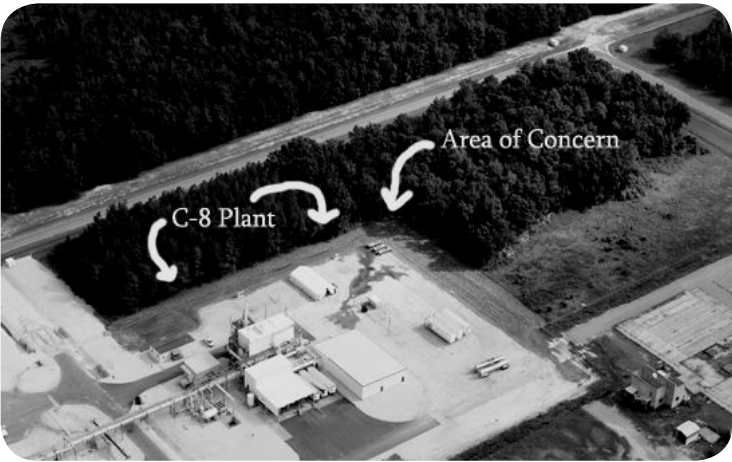
Gen-X Emissions Continue Polluting Wide Area Around Chemours, Despite Public Outcry

After EPA called on facilities producing or using a Teflon-related chemical, C8 or PFOA, to reduce their releases by 2010 and stop production altogether by 2015, it's as if the regulators went to sleep. C8, associated with liver and blood disease and considered a "likely human carcinogen" by EPA, had shown up at alarming levels in workers' blood and in wells, groundwater and the Cape Fear River. CWFNC had worked from 2005 – 2008 with residents in the surrounding community, and the C8 Working Group to get DuPont to stop production completely.

DuPont formed a new spin off company, Chemours, and began producing another chemical with similar properties at the same plant in Fayetteville as C8 (see photo), which they called GenX. Even less is known about the health effects of GenX than C8. It's a game of chemical hide and seek used many times by US industries, to avoid regulations.

As with C8, the company did little to control air emissions or water contamination, so it spread quickly into the Cape Fear River, to drinking water supplies last summer. In June, DEQ

proposed a court order to lower air emissions from Chemours. CWFNC told DEQ that the agency is justified to shut down the GenX plant completely. Cape Fear River Watch has filed a suit calling for shutdown, and a class action suit has been filed on behalf of residents.



A Tale of Two Pipelines: DEQ Doubts Need for MVP Southgate, but Never Seriously Considered Need, Climate Impacts or Injustices of the ACP

We were delighted to learn this week that NC DEQ has written to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) expressing doubts about the need for the MVP Southgate extension. A lot of credit for raising awareness about the MVP extension into Rockingham and Alamance Counties goes to local advocates, both individuals and organizations such as Good Stewards of Rockingham County and the Haw River Assembly, with support from the Sierra Club. It's the right thing to do to officially raise those doubts.

The contrast with how the agency dealt with the Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP) is, however, striking. Before the Atlantic Coast Pipeline was granted a "Certificate of Convenience and Necessity" last October, advocates had sent extensive information both to FERC and do DEQ on the lack of economic benefit, the lack of need for additional fracked

gas supplies in our region, and the massive Environmental Justice impacts that would affect African Americans, Native Americans and low income residents all along the pipeline. We pointed out that the poor would be disproportionately affected because the builders of the ACP, Duke Power and Dominion Resources, would be able to raise rates to pay for a pipeline, even if never used. DEQ never raised ANY public doubts about the need for the ACP, and the Governor even glowed about it in January, after DEQ approved a 401 Water Quality permit that the agency knows it can't enforce. Campaign donations and utility economic clout drove the decisions about the ACP, not need or economic benefit. Many of us are working to minimize the damage, challenge local permits and continue to resist the costly, dangerous and unjust ACP...

Aqua Customers Fight for Clean Drinking Water As Rate Hikes Pending

Becky Daniels and Jack Robinson met at a public hearing on Aqua NC's proposed rate hike in June. They had gathered at a full Utilities Commission hearing with many other Aqua customers to testify about their experiences with the private water and sewer corporation, and to oppose exorbitant proposed rates.

They have become leaders in the fight to call on the Utilities Commission to reject Aqua's rate hike until the private corporations proves they can provide reliable water quality to thousands of customers. CWFNC recently sat down with them to learn about their personal experiences and challenges they face during this rate case.

While Becky has been an Aqua customer for 12 years and Jack just over 3 years, both described the crippling impact that water quality has on their daily lives. Discoloration is

caused by manganese and iron contamination, not regulated by EPA. "You still can't bathe, do laundry, or cook with the water," Becky said. "It is still unusable whether or not it is meeting the hurdle of a health issue."

"Our Attorney General represents people who have been sold misrepresented merchandise," says Jack. "Aqua has misrepresented their product for years. Something needs to be done."

If their service and water quality were adequate, both said they wouldn't mind paying higher rates, but many can't afford them. After the hearing, Public Staff actually proposed LOWERING the rates, but the Commission often ignores such input and rules in favor of companies. CWFNC supports Becky and Jack's fight, and is strategizing with them to hold Aqua accountable for poor service throughout NC!

Clean Water for North Carolina

Thanks to Our Generous Foundations and Major Donors!

ActBlue Charities -Florence well testing
Asheville Friends Meeting
Ann Batchelder and Henry Kieffer
Harris and Frances Block Foundation
Betty and Thomas Clark
Clif Bar Family Foundation
Stan Coleman
Community United Church of Christ --
Social Justice Ministry
Sky and David Conard
Covenant Community Church
Ric Cruz-Segarra
Duke Philanthropy Lab
Martha Girolami
Mary Goodwin & Chip Hood

David Hinton
Little Acorn Fund of the Community
Foundation of Western NC
Deborah Long*
Donovan McLaurin*
Meg McLeod
Elaine McNeill & Ann Louise Barrick
Nydia Morales & Allan Kaufman
Tina & Scott Motley-Pearson
Park Foundation
Patagonia, Inc.
Peter Pickens
Prentice Foundation
Renaissance Charitable Foundation—
Steven Birt

Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation
John Runkle
Harvey & JB Spurr
Brad and Shelli Lodge-Stanback
Fred and Alice Stanback
Carolyn and Shaler Stidham Fund of
Triangle Community Foundation
William Stokes
Hope Taylor
Betty and Clark Thomas
Mark Trustin and Marcia Angle
Gayle Tuch
Marshall Tyler & Alix Hitchcock
Nathalie Worthington*
Anonymous Donor

Thank you to our new and renewing members!

Bob Austin
Katherine Baer
G. Bartholomew & T. Waldspurger
Suzi Wilkins Berl
Bill & Jane Berry
Katie Breckheimer
Vero Brentjens
Ron & Nancy Bryant
Kimberlee Buhrman
Rita Burns-Wooten
Jeannette & Bob Cannon
James & Joan Carroll
Lorna Chafe
William & Lucy Christopher
Catherine & Tom Coulson
Barbara Anne Craig
Tom & Barb Cullen
Grace Curry
Kyle Dalton
Susan Delaney
Carol Diamond & Jo Ellen Wade
Max & Ann Drake
Thomas & Joan East
Raymond Eurquhart
Georgia Ferrell
Judith Ferster

Rosalyn Fielding
Richard & Jo Ann Fireman
Laura Gordon
Daniel Graham
Jeri Gray
Arnold & Bernice Green
Carol & David Greenspan
Steve & Sue Gurley
Montie Hamby & Diana Perkinson
Ed Harris
Annie Helton
Dorothy & David Herbert
John Herold & Anne Cassebaum
Margaret Herring
Katie & Jeff Hicks
Nelda Holder
Bill Holman
Elizabeth Holsten
Deane & Sandy Irving
Mitchell Jackson
Philip Jamison & Catherine Scott
Laurie & Alan Lamoreaux
Joan Lemire
Andy Lewis
Cori Maas
Howard (Tony) Martin

Ron McCollum
Joseph McDonald
Jennifer McGovern & Steve Unruhe
Bill & Edie McKellar
Amey Miller & David Kiel
Mary Olsen
Gracia O'Neill
Lew Patrie
Jane Richardson
Jon & Karen Riley
Charles Ritter
Kate Satchwill
Steve Schewel & Lao Rubert
Mark Schulz
Iris Schwintzer
Francine & Don Stephenson
Charles Stohr & Donna Johnston
Carol Swing
Diane Van Helden
Pam Weiss
Jane White
Bill & Stephanie Whitesides
Douglas & Carol Wingeier
Molly & Barden Winstead
Derek Wragge
Ruth Zalph

Thanks for the steady flow of support from our recurring donors!

Anna Baucom
Valerie Blanchette
Karl & Mary Bolstad
T Butler
Catherine Conrad

Victoria Conrad
Jennifer Edwards
Ericka Faircloth
Deborah Graham
Theresa Lanning

Deborah Long
Melissa Mills
Robin Olmes
Janet Smith
Jo Ellen Wade & Carol Diamond

Join Clean Water for North Carolina (or renew your membership):



☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ Other ☐ I would like to volunteer ☐ I'll give online at www.cwfnc.org/donate

Contact Information: Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____ (email is a faster & cheaper way for us to reach you)

(Optional) my gift is in honor of: _____

Make your check payable to: Clean Water for NC, 1070 Tunnel Rd., Bldg. 4, Ste. 1, Asheville NC 28805

Clean Water for North Carolina is a tax-exempt nonprofit with a charitable solicitation license. L201814200030



Clean Water for North Carolina
1070 Tunnel Rd., Bldg. 4, Ste. 1
Asheville, NC 28805
www.cwfnc.org

Non-Profit Org
US Postage
PAID
Asheville, NC 28810
Permit #70



Made with 100% Recycled Content

Drilling Under Our Rivers for the ACP—A Costly, Unneeded, Dangerous Pipeline

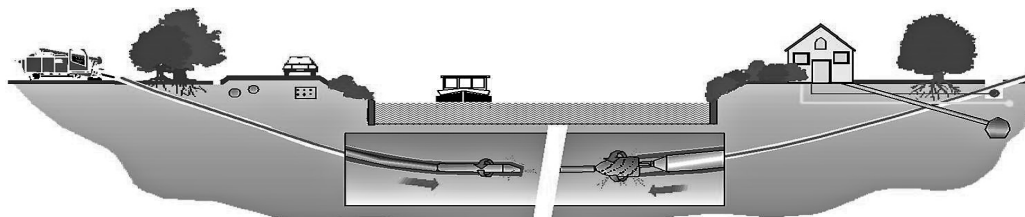
As construction of the Atlantic Coast Pipeline moves more aggressively through eastern North Carolina, impacted communities and landowners have become increasingly familiar with the destruction involved in the project, including tree-cutting, harassment of landowners, grading and sedimentation of creeks and rivers.

The next stage of construction, however, will cause widespread environmental and potential health impacts, as builders prepare to drill underneath the Tar, Roanoke, and Cape Fear Rivers, as well as under a number of large creeks, through a process known as Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD). This technique poses serious risks to creeks, rivers and aquatic life, even drinking water sources depended upon by hundreds of thousands of North Carolinians. Most dramatically, there's the threat of drilling fluid escaping into waterbodies.

Many of the drilling fluid ingredients used during the

HDD process are deemed “trade secrets”, so it is largely unknown what toxic chemicals could potentially leak into our waters. Engineers contracted by ACP have acknowledged the risk of this kind of accident, called an “inadvertent return” by the industry, is very high! In their report, the engineers further note that these returns are hard to predict and impossible to reverse.

One thing is certain, however--DEQ reviewed these risk assessments, but STILL granted the pipeline's “Section 401” water quality certificate last January. With our state laying out the red carpet for the ACP, we will continue to work on the ground with friends and allies in the impacted zones to monitor and report construction violations that will certainly occur. If you'd like to be a part of these efforts, please contact our Durham office, 919-401-9600, or visit the website www.ncpipelinewatch.org to sign up for volunteer monitoring and trainings!



***Diagram showing
Horizontal Directional
Drilling technique to be
used to drill beneath
our rivers!***