



ABRA Update #120 – March 10, 2017

Call for DEIS to be Rescinded and Revised

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline should be “rescinded and revised, and that the current public comment period be extended or suspended,” so stated a [motion filed March 8](#) with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission by Friends of Nelson and Wild Virginia, two ABRA member organizations, along with Heartwood, a regional network of citizens concerned with protecting forest lands.

In the motion, the groups state: “Friends of Nelson, Wild Virginia and Heartwood believe that the mandate for a full analysis of the ‘public convenience and necessity’ for pipelines involves more than responding to a professed need for capacity. The new, late-filed information from Dominion is relevant and significant, directly concerning many of the environmental issues the Commission is required to review and fully analyze. The burden is on the Commission to fully investigate the environmental risks and costs associated with the ACP, including all new and supplemental information.”

Mountaintop Removal Will Be a Significant Consequence of the ACP

The focus on environmental consequences of the Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP) has largely centered upon impacts on water resources and plant and animal species. Recent work done by the Dominion Pipeline Monitoring Coalition (DPMC) has broadened that concern to an examination of the effect the ACP would have on the many mountain ridges that the project would cross.

Dominion Transportation, Inc., managing partner for the ACP, has indicated in resource filings it has made with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission that in several locations in the mountainous areas of the route the pipeline would run along the tops of mountaintop ridges, in some instances for up to at least a mile. Because many of these ridges are very narrow and formed by very steep slopes, to achieve the width of land necessary to construct the pipeline, it would be necessary to remove the tops of these ridges, perhaps by as much as 50 feet of elevation. It is estimated that there are over 20 locations on the ACP route where mountaintop removal would be necessary.

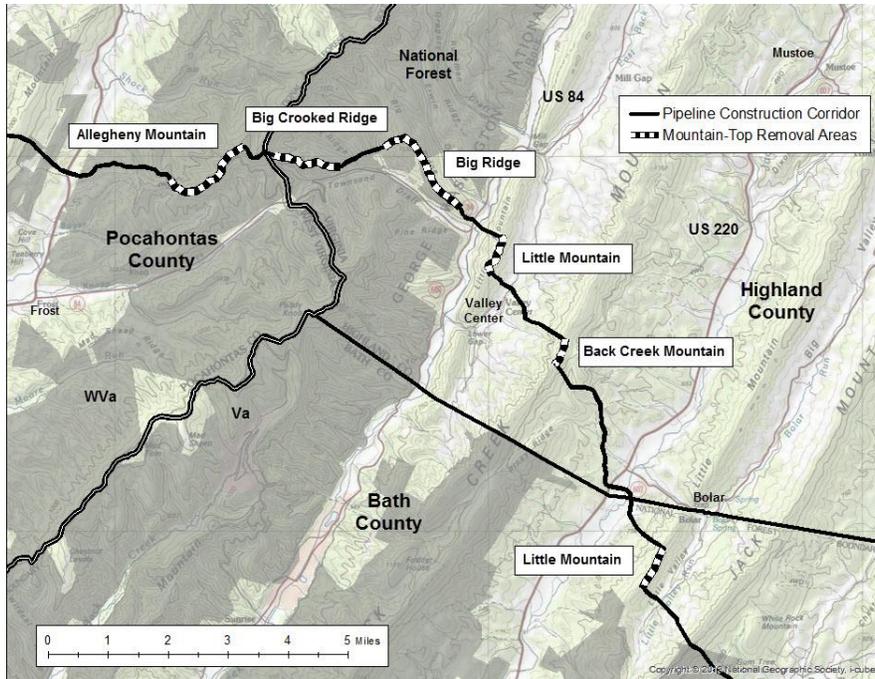
The serious impact of removing such ridgetops is two-fold: 1) the visual impact it would have in altering the scenic view would be significant; 2) the earth and rock removed from the ridgetops would seriously exacerbate the already large concern of erosion and sediment control associated with the project. Dominion has so far been vague about how it intends to manage this problem (see [the ABRA Update story from issue #119](#) on the company’s lack of responsiveness to the U.S. Forest Service).

ABRA has a new website!

In response to the growing need for more information in an accessible format, ABRA’s unveiled this week a re-designed website (www.abralliance.org). The new site is more visually driven, better organized, has easier navigation and contains a functional search capability. Users can more easily find studies and reports.

We welcome your feedback and suggestions for further features and improvements.

This week's issue of *The Recorder*, the newspaper serving Highland and Bath Counties in Virginia, features [a major article on how mountaintop removal](#) would impact just one portion of the route. The map below illustrates the magnitude of the issue in just a 15-mile portion of the route in Pocahontas, Highland and Bath Counties.



Four Weeks Remain to Comment on the ACP DEIS

The April 6 deadline for commenting on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP) is only 4 weeks away. The public comment sessions held over the past few weeks by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission drew hundreds of people, the large majority of whom expressed opposition to the ACP. Those who did not have an opportunity to testify at the FERC meetings, or who wish to file additional views on the DEIS, are urged to submit their comments before the deadline. To assist commenters, ABRA has prepared a guidance document: [The Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Atlantic Coast Pipeline: What is it? What's in it? What you can do!](#)

A book recommendation: *The Nature Fix: Why Nature Makes Us Happier, Healthier, and More Creative* by Florence Williams – The premise of the book is that we suffer from an “epidemic dislocation from the outdoors.” It’s destructive to our mental and physical health. The therapy is straightforward: “The more nature, the better you feel.” Review at <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/02/books/review/nature-fix-florence-williams.html>.

In the News:

Local/Atlantic Coast Pipeline

Anti-pipeline groups take legal stand with FERC motion

- News Leader – 3/9/17

<http://www.newsleader.com/story/news/local/2017/03/09/anti-pipeline-groups-take-legal-stand-ferc-motion/98962904/>

Citizens groups this week filed a motion with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission requesting that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline be rescinded and revised, and that the current public comment period be extended or suspended

Related:

<http://www.nbc29.com/story/34709763/groups-seek-improvements-to-federal-review-of-atlantic-coast-pipeline>

Mountaintop removal worries neighborhood

- The Recorder – 3/9/17

http://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Mountaintop_removal_worries_neighborhood-Recorder_20170309.pdf

Realization of what ACP construction really means is prompting more citizens to engage the issue

Activists say pipeline environmental assessment ‘appallingly incomplete’

- Southeast Energy News – 3/7/17

<http://southeastenergynews.com/2017/03/07/activists-say-pipeline-environmental-assessment-appallingly-incomplete/>

Advocates and activists say the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) lacks critical information and runs afoul of the law

Boyette calls for ‘transparency and truth’ on Atlantic Coast Pipeline

- The Wilson Times – 3/8/17

<http://www.wilsontimes.com/stories/boyette-calls-for-8216transparency-and-truth8217.81677>

Adventures Afield: Augusta County leads local charge against fracking

- The Rural Virginian – 3/8/17

http://www.dailyprogress.com/ruralvirginian/adventures-afield-augusta-county-leads-local-charge-against-fracking/article_4a5fbcfc-04e6-11e7-8d5e-4f372b8801e3.html

Protest, Support, Controversy Surround Atlantic Coast Pipeline

- Public Radio East – 3/3/17

<http://publicradioeast.org/post/protest-support-controversy-surround-atlantic-coast-pipeline>

Related:

- <http://www.rockymounttelegram.com/News/2017/03/08/Protest-march-targets-pipeline.html>

Regional/Mountain Valley Pipeline, other

Citizens point out inconsistencies in Mount Valley Pipeline data

- The Register-Herald – 3/8/17

http://www.register-herald.com/news/citizens-point-out-inconsistencies-in-mount-valley-pipeline-data/article_873c14fd-59e4-5f76-8ee7-bbdecb08fc12.html

Inconsistencies, omissions seem to be the MO for pipeline developers

Hearing features comments for, against Mountain Valley Pipeline

- The Exponent Telegram – 3/8/17

http://www.theet.com/news/free/hearing-features-comments-for-against-mountain-valley-pipeline/article_badd4c6d-coa3-5bfd-8a4e-b6f7be001830.html

Related:

- <http://www.wvalways.com/clip/13163804/mountain-valley-pipeline-discussion>

Does Dominion Buy Votes? Sure, But Not the Way You Think

- The Energy Collective – 3/9/17

<http://www.theenergycollective.com/ivy-main/2400007/dominion-buy-votes-sure-not-way-think>

Author believes Dominion's "contribute to everyone" strategy is more about consolidation and brokering of power within the legislature than direct purchase of influence or loyalty...seems quite plausible

Big Picture:

On climate change, Scott Pruitt causes an uproar — and contradicts the EPA's own website

- The Washington Post – 3/9/17

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2017/03/09/on-climate-change-scott-pruitt-contradicts-the-epas-own-website/?utm_term=.25942b48b8d4

Pruitt's statements fly in the face of an international scientific consensus, which has concluded that it is "extremely likely that human influence has been the dominant cause of the observed warming since the mid-20th century."

Trump Picks McIntyre, Chatterjee for Federal Energy Agency, Sources Say

- Bloomberg – 3/8/17

<https://www.bloomberg.com/politics/articles/2017-03-08/lawyer-mcintyre-said-to-be-trump-s-pick-to-lead-energy-regulator>

Spring Came Early. Scientists Say Climate Change Is a Culprit.

- The New York Times – 3/8/17

https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/03/08/climate/early-spring.html?_r=0

Pictures really are worth a thousand words!

Democrats press Trump to end crisis at FERC

- Washington Examiner – 3/8/17

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/democrats-press-trump-to-end-crisis-at-ferc/article/2616784#!>

Related:

- <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/no-business-as-usual-over-130-groups-nationwide-announce-their-opposition-to-ferc-appointments-300420373.html>

After Approving 7 Pipelines in 2017, FERC is Dead in the Water

- Oil & Gas 360 – 3/7/17

<http://www.oilandgas360.com/after-approving-7-pipelines-in-2017-ferc-is-dead-in-the-water/>

NatGas Pipeline Challengers Not Waiting for FERC Quorum

- Natural Gas Intelligence – 3/8/17

http://www.abralliance.org/wp_content/uploads/2017/03/NatGas_Pipeline_Challengers_Not_Waiting_for_FERC_Quorum_20170308.pdf

Opposition groups challenging FERC's open-ended tolling orders that are used to avoid rehearings

Judge refuses to block Dakota Access pipeline with project days from completion

- The Washington Times – 3/7/17

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2017/mar/7/dakota-access-judge-refuses-block-pipeline-project/>

Opponents say fight isn't over, Fat Lady begins warming up