



ABRA Update #316 – September 9, 2021

Issue Highlights . . .

- Comments due September 13 on draft SEIS for ACP restoration
- Mountaintop mining causes biodiversity losses, new study says
- *In the News* – page 2

Comments due September 13 on draft SEIS for ACP restoration

Comments on the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) for restoration work on the Atlantic Coast Pipeline route are due on Monday, September 13. The DESIS was published July 23 (for background and a link to the draft, [click](#) here). Upon the publication of the draft, ABRA issued a statement to the media:

“The Allegheny-Blue Ridge Alliance is disappointed that the draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for restoration of the Atlantic Coast Pipeline route does not address the important issue of requiring Atlantic Coast Pipeline, LLC to restore to landowners the full use of their property that was taken for a pipeline that will not be built.”

In subsequent communications with FERC staff ABRA was told that the issue of easements still held by Atlantic Coast Pipeline, LLC was not an appropriate topic to include in the DSEIS, but that does not preclude the Commissioners from addressing the issue. Comments to that effect are expected to be filed by several ABRA members.

For information on commenting on the ACP restoration DSEIS, click [here](#).

Mountaintop mining causes biodiversity losses, new study says

The September 2 issue of *Science Daily* reports on a new study that concludes biological diversity is “severely threatened by mountaintop coal mining.” The study was conducted by a research team led by Dr. Emily Bernhardt of Duke University and published this past summer in the journal *Ecological Applications*. The study notes:

- “The rivers of Appalachia (United States) are among the most biologically diverse freshwater ecosystems in the temperate zone and are home to numerous endemic aquatic organisms.”
- “Previous regional assessments have found significant declines in stream macroinvertebrate and fish communities after draining these mined areas.”

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- “We collected water samples from 93 streams in Central Appalachia (West Virginia, United States) spanning a gradient of mountaintop coal mining intensity and legacy to assess how this land use alters downstream water chemistry and affects aquatic biodiversity. “
- “We show that extensive coal surface mining activities led to the extirpation of 40% of biodiversity from impacted rivers throughout the region and that current water quality criteria are likely not protective for many groups of aquatic organisms.”

For a link to the *Science Daily* article, click [here](#). For a link to the Abstract of the study and information on purchasing the full study, click [here](#).

In the News:

Regional Issues

Mountain Valley Pipeline seeks the identity of its anonymous critics

- The Roanoke Times – 9/4/21

https://roanoke.com/news/local/mountain-valley-pipeline-seeks-the-identity-of-its-anonymous-critics/article_21c6a648-0cfc-11ec-812e-df0cd973c5da.html

Because how can one intimidate and harass one’s critics without first knowing who they are, and where they work and live?

DEQ taking public comments on Mountain Valley Pipeline stream crossings

- The Roanoke Times – 8/29/21

https://roanoke.com/news/local/deq-taking-public-comments-on-mountain-valley-pipeline-stream-crossings/article_401aea9e-0772-11ec-87bb-9fdf81bb71c4.html

Final action on the stream crossing permits by state and federal agencies is not expected until early next year.

Virginia environmental regulators make preliminary decision to issue key water permit for Mountain Valley Pipeline

- Charleston Gazette-Mail – 8/26/21

https://www.wvgazettemail.com/news/energy_and_environment/virginia-environmental-regulators-make-preliminary-decision-to-issue-key-water-permit-for-mountain-valley-pipeline/article_ccfc5e1f-9f5f-5e18-a215-6421642e4bd8.html

Virginia county fends off natural gas plant, but battles continue

- Bay Journal – 8/23/21

https://www.bayjournal.com/news/energy/virginia-county-fends-off-natural-gas-plant-but-battles-continue/article_03a0b6c6-0451-11ec-9950-47cbf821ba51.html

Related:

- <https://www.virginiamercury.com/blog-va/natural-gas-developer-asks-scc-to-rule-it-doesnt-need-state-approval-to-build-chickahominy-pipeline>

Lawsuit against wind farm in Botetourt County allowed to move forward

- The Roanoke Times – 8/20/21

https://roanoke.com/news/local/lawsuit-against-wind-farm-in-botetourt-county-allowed-to-move-forward/article_22b50344-01f1-11ec-ade6-5701121e95e1.html

On Shenandoah River, algae and bacteria continue to plague recreation — and human health

- Virginia Mercury – 8/31/21

<https://www.virginiamercury.com/2021/08/31/on-shenandoah-river-algae-and-bacteria-continue-to-plague-recreation-and-human-health/>

State moves toward new environmental standards, but citizens and environmental groups question if they are at all the right standards.

Big Picture:

The United States Isn't Ready for the New Phase of Climate Change

- Foreign Affairs – 9/8/21

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2021-09-08/united-states-isnt-ready-new-phase-climate-change>

Washington Needs a National Adaptation Strategy

Biden to nominate Democrat Willie Phillips to U.S. energy regulator -White House

- Reuters – 9/9/21

<https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/biden-nominate-lawyer-willie-phillips-ferc-white-house-2021-09-09/>

Related:

- <https://www.politico.com/news/2021/09/09/biden-dc-utility-regulator-ferc-nominee-510871>

FERC's Clements: U.S. Faces 'Once-in-a-Generation Moment' to Overhaul Transmission System

- Morning Consult – 9/8/21

<https://morningconsult.com/2021/09/08/ferc-allison-clements-interview/>

Clements will continue to zero in on improving transmission systems planning and interconnection, developing market integration in the West (especially in light of extreme weather and drought) and modernizing FERC's natural gas policy statement to be more legally durable.

D.C. Circuit Court Declines to Revisit Decision Striking Down FERC's Approval of the Spire Pipeline

- Environmental Defense Fund – 9/7/21

<https://www.edf.org/media/dc-circuit-court-declines-revisit-decision-striking-down-fercs-approval-spire-pipeline>

Related:

- <https://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/D.C.-Circuit-battle-escalates-over-FERC-pipeline-approval-EE-Energywire-8-26-21.pdf>

The Reason Right-Wing States Are Cracking Down on Indigenous Climate Protesters

- Gizmodo – 9/7/21

<https://gizmodo.com/the-reason-right-wing-states-are-cracking-down-on-indig-1847629146>

Maybe the reason the right is so insistent on criminalizing anti-fossil fuel protests is that they're working.

‘No point in anything else’: Gen Z members flock to climate careers

- The Guardian – 9/6/21

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/sep/06/gen-z-climate-change-careers-jobs>

Colleges offer support as young people aim to devote their lives to battling the crisis.

From 4% to 45%: Energy Department Lays Out Ambitious Blueprint for Solar Power

- The New York Times – 9/8/21

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/08/business/energy-environment/biden-solar-energy-climate-change.html?>

Related:

- <https://www.energy.gov/articles/doe-releases-solar-futures-study-providing-blueprint-zero-carbon-grid>