

# WAGING DEMOCRACY IN THE KINGDOM OF COAL



## **OVEC and the Movement for Social and Environmental Justice in Central Appalachia**

**By Mary Hufford**

**With**

**Dianne Bady, Janet Keating, Laura Forman  
and Corinna McMackin**

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**In memory of Laura Forman 1962-2001**



*Quilt by West Virginia Artist Winter Ross, dedicated in memory of Laura Forman, hanging in OVEC office. Courtesy Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition.*

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**Key to Acronyms for Organizations, Government Agencies, Legislation, and Practices used in this Ethnography:**

AEP – Appalachian Electric Power  
AOC – Approximate Original Contour  
CCC – Citizens Coal Council  
CFE – Center for Folklore and Ethnography, University of Pennsylvania  
COE – Corps of Engineers  
CRMW – Coal River Mountain Watch  
DEP – West Virginia Division of Environmental Protection; offices in Nitro, Logan, and Oak Hill played a role in this project  
EPA – Environmental Protection Agency  
FATT – Flood Analysis Technical Team  
FTAA – Free Trade of the Americas  
IGCCC – Interfaith Global Climate Change Campaign  
LBA – Lucy Braun Association for the Mixed Mesophytic Forest  
KFTC – Kentuckians for the Commonwealth  
KRC – Kentucky Resources Council  
MSHA – Mine Safety and Health Administration  
MTR – Mountain Top Removal  
MWA – Mountain Watershed Association  
NEPA – National Environmental Policy Act  
OSM – Office of Surface Mining  
OVEC – Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition  
PERC – Peoples’ Election Reform Campaign  
SMCRA – Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act  
UMWA – United Mineworkers of America  
WVSMRA – West Virginia Surface Mining and Reclamation Association

## **Prelude: The Closing Circle at Pipestem 2002**

*“Our work flows out of a sense of the importance of relationships.”*

Dianne Bady

It is unforgettable, this sundappled, breezy moment on the deck of The Lodge at the Pipestem Resort in southern West Virginia. Below the deck the mountain dips dizzily toward the nadir of an invisible stream, bursting somewhere beyond that into a panorama of mountain ranges that lures people of every political stripe to this place. Reflected in the Lodge’s windows and doors, the range surrounds us as we join hands to form the closing circle for OVEC’s Fourth Summit for the Mountains. Poet Bob Henry Baber enchants us with a litany of kisses for things seen and unseen in our environs, and Dave Cooper brings out a sphere of brown yarn the size of a soccer ball. He hands it to Janet Keating (formerly Fout), who explains the ceremony that will connect us before we scatter. Holding onto one end of the yarn, Janet launches the ball across the circle. “I feel fortified,” she declares. Trailing a single strand, the ball begins unraveling, bouncing to the feet of Julian Martin, a senatorial figure who is a leader of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy.

Martin picks it up, and retaining a bit of yarn around a finger, tosses the ball toward Jen Osha. “I feel exhilarated,” he says. Two strands now form an X. Jen, a musician and writer, from Preston County, lobs the ball to me. “I feel encouraged,” she beams. Three strands. “I feel hopeful,” I say, tossing the ball, then scrambling to retrieve the part I was supposed to hold onto. Four strands. As the web thickens the adjectives mount: there are feelings of peace, purpose, loyalty, empowerment, inspiration, satisfaction, amazement, gratitude. Toward the end, the yarnless must raise empty hands to make themselves known. Dave Cooper is the last to catch it. “Whew!” he says, expressing relief, and echoing the last line of Bob Henry Baber’s poem. We laugh and gleefully flex our connective tissue. It appears strong enough and thick enough to bounce a cat, or at least a heavy squirrel. Not tensile enough to deflect flyrock, perhaps, but what it betokens might yet prove to be. We drop our yarn and around the slackened threads our good-bye hugs proliferate, reflected in shimmering glass doors against a backdrop of West Virginia hills.



*Closing Circle at the First Summit for the Mountains, Appalachian Folklife Center, West Virginia, August 26, 1999. Photo by Mary Hufford.*

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The Closing Circle at Pipestem, like the closing circles at the previous three Summits, epitomizes the philosophy of Leadership for a Changing World practiced by the leadership of the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition since the late 1980s. We might consider the Closing Circle a rite of consensus, noting that the etymology of consensus means “feeling with” in the sense of feeling together (James Fernandez, cited in Noyes, 1993:138). Through rites like the closing circle, OVEC not only expresses but accomplishes consensus. Change can come about through force imposed from above, or it can happen through the cultivation of community at the grassroots level. Laura Forman, Dianne Bady, and Janet Keating have made cultivating community out of and around the medium of the environment their focus. As folklorist Dorothy Noyes describes this dynamic in relation to the Patum, a Corpus Christi festival in Catalan, “Communal action creates a shared reality, and over time, a fund of common experience makes mutual understanding at some level possible... Near universal Patum participation in Berga

guides the senses of the entire community in the same direction, obliges them to feel together in a way that their divided everyday experience can never foster.” (1993:138).

OVEC continually generates communal time and space around the project of retrieving an ecological citizenship. Resuturing what centuries of Enlightenment science and economics has sundered begins with overcoming what divides people in everyday life. The message: we care for the environment by caring for each other. OVEC’s project is not simply about fixing the system by changing the power supply from carbon to renewables. OVEC’s staff keeps energy flowing from a Higher Power Supply through practices of meditation and prayer, immersing themselves in nature, a constant channeling of faith, hope, and love, and, as they repeatedly emphasize, a dependence on miracles.



*Participants in OVEC’s Fourth Summit for the Mountains, Pipestem, WV, 2003.*

## Part I

### Leadership, Ethnography, Making Meaning



*Laura Forman, Dianne Bady, and Janet Keating*

## **OVEC and the Collaborative Ethnography**

In 2002, two of the people mentioned in the description of the closing circle, Janet Keating and Dave Cooper comprised half of the full-time staff for the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition, whose work is the focus of this study. The other half, Dianne Bady and Vivian Stockman, were also present at the yarn tossing, holding onto the ends of their strands. Also very much present was Laura Forman, the charismatic organizer whose death opened the position given to Dave Cooper.

With Dianne Bady and Janet Keating, Laura had been awarded a Ford Foundation Leadership for a Changing World Award in 2001. Shortly after Laura, Janet, and Dianne had begun working on a collaborative ethnography of their leadership practices with Richard Couto in November of 2001, Laura collapsed while speaking at a protest outside of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers facility in Huntington. Her death sent shockwaves through the activist community, ripping holes in the movement's fabric that people began mending by sharing with each other signs of Laura's continuing presence and support. Like others who have died with so much unfinished business, without saying good-bye, Laura appeared to members of the community in signs of small sacred things like Carolina wrens, poet's daffodils, and hyacinths (see illustration on the dedication page). Laura's spirit condensed into real presence for Dianne, who was overwhelmed with grief, and then also anger, at Laura's absence. Recalling Laura's visit in an e-mail to me, Dianne wrote, "It was about two weeks after Laura collapsed and died in front of me. I was having many flashbacks that would leap into my mind at any time – the paramedics ripping her blouse off to shock her heart, while the TV cameras rolled; being in the hospital, when the doctor told about twenty of us that "Laura has passed," and all the women dropped to the floor in one big hugging screaming pile. After she died I talked to her in my mind a lot: 'Laura, are you okay?'" I asked over and over again.

"I dreamed that the whole horrible morning of Laura's death was happening, every detail was exactly the same. But this time, when Laura collapsed, I KNEW she would die. I screamed and screamed. I woke up, standing upright in my bedroom screaming. And there, just behind my left shoulder, stood Laura. Shortly after I saw and felt her presence, she was gone. "Afterwards I thought, how could the message be any

clearer? I'd been asking if she's okay. In the dream I had to watch the circumstances of her death all over again. But immediately after the dream, there she was, just behind my left shoulder. It was as if she were saying, "Don't worry, I still AM. My spirit is not dead." Signs of Laura's continuing re-incorporation within the community appeared at the Summit. Laura was present in her words on the t-shirts worn by a number of participants: "West Virginia is truly almost Heaven. She has given so much to me. How can I not try to save her?" and in the special issue of *Winds of Change*, the OVEC newsletter dedicated to her memory, the Laura Forman Passion for Justice Award given at an award ceremony, and in repeated references to her throughout the summit. Laura was also present in a very tangible way as one of the women who gave this weekend of reflection and planning in one of West Virginia's most beautiful resorts as a gift to the activist community, many of whom could not otherwise have afforded such accommodations.

Funding for the Fourth Summit for the Mountains at Pipestem came through an award that Dianne Bady, Laura Forman, and Janet Keating won from the Ford Foundation's Leadership for a Changing World Program in 2001. Their channeling of this money into the activist community both as a gesture of gratitude and to further strengthen the work of social change in West Virginia provides one example of their approach to social change. This gift is like the ball of yarn in that it is a resource for nurturing and maintaining the web that is OVEC's object of stewardship. Before looking more closely at what the community makes of its yarn, a bit of background on OVEC is in order.

### ***A Brief History of OVEC***

A brief history of the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition may be found on OVEC's website ([www.ohvec.org](http://www.ohvec.org)). The short description: "OVEC is people working together for a cleaner environment," heads the history. The coalition formed in 1987 "to mobilize citizen opposition to a proposed BASF chemical company hazardous waste incinerator near Ironton, Ohio." It took eight months of organizing in the tri-state area to defeat the proposal. Among the allies were the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers' International Union. Over the next few years OVEC tackled a number of chemical waste and pollution hazards in the tri-state area of Ohio, Kentucky, and West Virginia. OVEC's

early work, organizing citizens to pressure the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to require pollution reductions, resulted in the U.S. EPA's Tri-State Geographic Initiative, a major program to stimulate pollution improvements. OVEC's work on the Citizens Advisory Committee resulted in pollution reductions at a number of area industries. Dianne Bady had been involved since 1986 in a battle against Ashland Oil, one of the heaviest polluters in the country, for egregious violations of pollution control laws at its Catlettsburg, Kentucky plant. This battle, which neighbors of the refinery waged with the support of OVEC, lasted for more than ten years. Eventually the U.S. Department of Justice levied a \$5.8 million dollar fine against Ashland Oil, which had to spend an additional \$27 million to bring its refineries (now owned by Marathon) into compliance with pollution laws.

While OVEC was working on refinery issues, it learned of a plan by Parsons and Whitmore (formerly a British-owned corporation) to site North America's largest pulp and paper mill in Apple Grove, West Virginia. If approved by West Virginia's legislature and environmental regulators, this pulp mill would have discharged deadly dioxin into the Ohio River, at rates over 90 times higher than that recommended by the EPA. OVEC, as the lead organizer to stop the construction, formed a broad coalition, working with non-traditional allies, including organized labor. Significantly, after the fifth in a series of rallies, which brought out a thousand people to the state Capitol. Senator Jay Rockefeller, a former pulp mill supporter, changed his stance on the mill. Large numbers of citizens, working together, defeated the pulp mill in 1997. Since then, OVEC has made mountaintop removal mining and West Virginia political campaign finance reform the principle foci of its staff. Around these foci, OVEC continues to engage in state, national, and local community efforts to keep the environment healthy.

From the website, the outlines of OVEC's mode of working emerge. They include community building, education through the dissemination of information based on thorough research, the cultivation and wise use of media, and a remarkable mastery of the civics required to work within government structures. In an effort to defend and strengthen the laws that protect the country's environment -- which we might think of as our connective tissue -- OVEC has been all over the legislative, judiciary, and executive

branches of state and federal governments. Especially striking is the diversity of the groups with which OVEC engages: including councils of churches, labor unions, local, state, and national citizens groups, cultural organizations, conservancies, forest activists, scientific organizations, the academy, government agencies, and industry itself. For listings of OVEC's local, regional, and national collaborators in 2003, please see the appendices.

### ***OVEC's Mission, Goals, and Structure***

OVEC's mission, as stated on its brochure and website is "to organize and to maintain a diverse, grassroots organization dedicated to the improvement and preservation of the environment through education, grassroots organizing and coalition building, leadership development and media outreach." Its goals for realizing this mission are to:

- Organize people to oppose big polluters and irresponsible corporations, with the goal of positive change;

- Organize citizen action to oppose mountaintop removal, irresponsible coal waste disposal, and other destructive practices;

- Educate the public about environmental threats in our region;

- Form coalitions that shift the balance of power towards the public interest;

- Provide and promote an alternative vision of economic development and governance based on principles of social and environmental justice.

In 2002, OVEC had four full time staff members:

- Co-directors -- Dianne Bady and Janet Fout

- Outreach Coordinator – Vivian Stockman

- Organizer – Dave Cooper

And one part-time staff member who served as Administrative Associate, Maryanne Graham. In addition to utilizing volunteers, the office creates temporary positions for contract staff members as funding allows. OVEC also has a board of 19 directors and a membership of about 800 people. Membership here can range from those who receive the newsletter and occasionally attend the events most relevant to them, to those who engage in a number of OVEC activities and show up repeatedly. While the office, where most staff people work, is located in Huntington, several staff members work out of their homes. The actual work flows around the state, region, and nation, which makes this ethnography something other than a classic ethnographic study of a community grounded in one place. Our effort to discern the shape of the locality OVEC builds with its

members followed OVEC's own effort to construct a coherent space for itself locally, regionally, and nationally.

### ***Prior Scholarship on OVEC***

What kind of an organization is OVEC? What kind of work is it doing? What's the broader context within which previous studies have placed OVEC as an organization? Richard Couto, a political scientist who conducted the first set of interviews for this study, included OVEC in the book he wrote with Catherine S. Guthrie, *Making Democracy Work Better: Mediating Structures, Social Capital, and the Democratic Prospect* (1999:155-57). Couto describes OVEC as "a community-based mediating organization" that deals with the negative externalities of environmental degradation -- the hallmarks of market failure in the Central Appalachian region that belong to the coal, petrochemical, pulp, and timber industries. The record shows that unless community-based mediating organizations demand it, state agencies have been lax at enforcing laws in place to protect citizens from smokestack emissions and irresponsible dumping of toxic waste. OVEC built up its credibility through thorough research, yielding a disturbing picture of the degrading practices of Ashland Oil and BASF. OVEC also brought impressive technical skills to the tasks of publicizing through the media, testifying at public hearings, lobbying legislators, and holding government agencies accountable. But, as Couto points out, the work of serving as experts and advocates was not helping them to "grow the movement" necessary for real change. For that, they needed to shift some of their effort from advocacy to more organizing in the communities most affected by the degrading practices of the region's industries. Under the tutelage of Pete McDowell (then with Partnership for Democracy) and Joe Szakos (then with Kentuckians for the Commonwealth) OVEC developed a plan for developing the leadership skills and building the coalition community members needed in order to fight their battles over the long haul. In doing this, OVEC annexed itself to the unfolding history of struggle for civil rights and environmental justice in Appalachia. Keeping this history alive is a vital part of the struggle of memory against forgetting that Milan Kundera says is the struggle of people against power (1978:1).

The important thing to which Couto draws our attention is OVEC's role in a continually

emerging grassroots political formation that is vital to the democratic process, though not well supported institutionally. OVEC's adversaries are daunting – since Dianne, Janet, and Laura won the Leadership for a Changing World awards, we've seen the movement of prominent adversaries in industry into positions of power and influence in the Bush administration. We've seen the Bush administration aggressively weaken the laws that OVEC is seeking to enforce, laws that protect communities from the negative externalities of the coal, timber, petrochemical, and pulp industries. And we have also seen Julia Bonds, a leader in a community that OVEC helped organize, win the most prestigious environmental award on the continent, we have seen a federal judge rule against the coal industry, U.S. legislators mount legislation in opposition to the Bush efforts, and *The Charleston Gazette*, one of the few remaining independent newspapers in the country and therefore a vital public forum, remains solidly planted in Charleston. It is our position that what may look like a stalemate or an endless volley of tit-for-tat is actually an indication of the success of OVEC and its allies. To see this is to see leadership not as the work of individuals (heroic leadership) but as an effect of community building (post-heroic leadership).

### ***Post-Heroic, Community-Based Leadership for Social Change***

What are the signs of social change and how do they appear as a result of the work of leadership? As conventionally used, the term “leadership” implies two positions: a leader and a follower. This division is antithetical to an egalitarian form of leadership that emphasizes reciprocity over hierarchy, dialogue over monologue. Is “leadership” the wrong word, or are we only now coming to terms with what Joyce K. Fletcher has called “the paradox of post heroic leadership.” Fletcher describes an emerging shift in frameworks for thinking about leadership, from a focus on individual achievement and meritocracy to a focus on collective achievement, social networks and the importance of teamwork and shared accountability. (Fletcher, 2002: 4) Is the term “leadership” even appropriate for this alternate model of community-based activism?

During our initial coffee with Dianne and Janet at Taylor Books in Charleston, research assistant Corinna McMackin and I puzzled with them over the term “leadership.” The term made all of us uncomfortable. It seems to go against the non-hierarchical, reciprocal web of relations OVEC is building in order to achieve a cleaner,

safer environment. In a subsequent interview with Corinna, Dianne voiced her continuing discomfort with being asked questions about leadership, “as if I know something.” She then went on to cite the importance of the connection that she and Janet share with the natural world “and their work to preserve it as a source of both the energy to sustain the battles and a major reason for their success” (October 16, 2002).



*From left, the research team at Taylor Books in Charleston, Mary Hufford, Corinna McMackin, Janet Fout, and Dianne Bady, during their first meeting in 2002.*

The classic model of heroic “leadership” implies a system that, like the extractive economy, is export driven: what is exported is leadership, direction, expertise (cf. Jane Jacobs, *The Nature of Economies*, on the concept of export vs. import-driven economies (2000: 54-55). This is the model implied in Fletcher’s discussion of mothering. OVEC, however, is *not* export-driven, but import-driven. OVEC begins by importing what fortifies the spirit and channeling that into the work of community development. What comes back are the material resources they need to carry on.

OVEC, in other words, deliberately lends itself to a system that resembles what Lewis Hyde has called the gift economy, a system in which gifts must be kept in motion. Hyde distinguishes between two systems of gift exchange long practiced in land-based societies. The first is the reciprocity practiced between two parties who exchange goods. In that system, the gift never disappears from sight. The second is the circulation of gifts along an unlimited chain of recipients and donors. The gift disappears from sight before reappearing. Hyde notes that in circular gift economies the gift always moves to the empty place, and that the reappearance of the gift after disappearing is enlivening. OVEC’s practice is to fill empty places with the gifts that continually appear out of and

disappear into the cycling rounds of the earth's seasons. What also circulates in such a system is fullness and emptiness, often in ways that are unpredictable and inexplicable.

### ***Walking in the Fog as a Metaphor for Struggle***

The metaphor that Dianne and Janet use to describe OVEC's leadership style and how they experience their work is "walking in the fog." Dianne writes:

*In our work we are often thrown into totally unexpected circumstances that we don't know how to deal with. Our carefully developed plans often become suddenly irrelevant by a new development on the part of the Coal industry or the local, state, or federal government's capitulation to coal's demands. Or even by Laura's death. This not knowing is very difficult to deal with. Over the years, Janet and Laura and I together realized that part and parcel of our jobs was this total disruption of our plans and our subsequent not knowing what to do next. We learned together that in these situations, we needed to rely on pure spiritual trust. We developed the idea that sometimes we just walked through a fog, and that this IS the way it's supposed to be, it's not just a total disruption of our work – it IS our work. We learned together to rely on the trust that even though we don't see much of that path through the fog, if we consciously acknowledge our unknowing and our total confusion, and ask for the Grace to see the next few steps, that we WILL know what to do next. Maybe only the next step or two. But first, we must just live with the uncertainty and accept it. This approach has required a great deal of personal growth. It did not come naturally to us. But learning to think and act in this way has been crucial to our ability to continue fighting issues that many others have seen as impossible to win (personal communication, June 7, 2003).*

Walking in the fog provides a metaphor for how OVEC positions itself. It runs distinctly counter to the much-vaunted ideal of the "visionary leader," a claim that the coal industry makes for its leaders who are celebrated as "men of vision." Indeed, some might argue that this is a fog produced in part by leaders who reduce reality to what can *only* be seen, dismissing what we know by other means. Navigating through fog, all of one's senses are keenly on the alert for signs – for the clanging bell-buoy, the smell of the marshes, the changes in the slope and texture of the path. To make it possible to dismantle mountains, the Corporate State has to stifle the signifying power of the world.

In order to do this, the Corporate State also has to suppress historical memory. If, as Kundera writes, the struggle of people against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting, part of finding one's way through the fog is remembering where one has been.

### ***Orienting in the Fog: Some Guiding Principles***

Through nine years of working together, Laura, Janet and Dianne developed a number of methods for orienting in the fog. Recurring scenarios have come to serve as cues for adopting particular stances and practices, which Dianne distilled into six guiding principles:

- ***Radical Trust:*** Explaining this concept, Dianne writes “Our experience has been that if we consciously act with integrity (however imperfectly we may carry out some things) if we treat others with care and respect, sometimes small miracles happen” (Personal communication, June 7, 2003);
- ***Listen carefully to others:*** be willing to consciously put aside preconceived notions to really hear what someone else is saying. A related practice involves what Janet calls “listening to your heart.” (Interview with McMackin, October 14, 2002);
- ***Tolerate and respect the chaos*** that one must inevitably face in this work and allow order to emerge from it: “We often follow our intuitive feelings as opposed to what our head says,” Janet told Corinna. “Power is not something that’s up here (she motions with her hands above her head), it’s decentralized. So that everyone is recognized as a leader...Our style of leadership, besides being democratic, is messy. It is chaotic.” (Interview with McMackin, October 14, 2002);
- ***Deal constructively with the pain and anger*** that are inherent to this work. These teach humility and reliance on something greater than oneself;
- ***Focus on the strengths and potentials*** of volunteers and partners rather than on faults and weaknesses;
- ***Deal directly and immediately with interpersonal conflicts*** rather than letting them fester and explode.

The part of the research question (“how does OVEC engage in the work of leadership for social change?”) with which everyone is quite comfortable is “social change.” The

concept of social change contains a clue for reconciling “leadership” with the egalitarian process OVEC fosters, a process that refigures the roles of gender and spirituality with the work of leadership.

### ***Leadership, Gender, and Spirituality***

Fletcher illuminates the paradox of “post-heroic leadership” by arguing that “leadership” is generally used and understood as a masculine concept, inasmuch as it connotes traits traditionally ascribed to men in our society. She points out that these traits are of course idealized stereotypes, but the stereotypes exert pressure on men and women to “do gender.” The high incidence of women *as leaders* in the environmental movement can’t be ignored, and Fletcher theorizes that there is a distinct “feminine advantage” in an emerging model for leadership grounded in “relational skills and knowledge, and a more mutual, self-in-relation stance toward social interactions.” (Fletcher, 2002:6) Fletcher’s theories are based on interactions in the work environment, which may be why she can ask a question like: “Why, if these new models are aligned with the feminine, are not more women being propelled to the top?” OVEC evades this issue by improvising an alternative to the corporate model for workplace organization. Examining this model, in which women exert influence with no desire to be propelled to the top, should enhance our understanding of how OVEC turns gendered social positions and ways of being into powerful assets for effecting social change.

Thus OVEC’s feminized style of leadership avoids the “disappearing dynamic” that Fletcher ascribes to women in the workplace, because OVEC operates in a workspace that is permeable. OVEC *integrates* work and domesticity. This is not simply because much of the work has to happen when community groups can meet: outside of “job time.” OVEC’s integration of work and domesticity actively resists the separation between these spheres. Janet Keating illustrates OVEC’s conscious refusal of the boundaries that distinguish business life from personal life with a story of her chance encounter with a former coal company executive. As Corinna McMackin wrote in her field notes:

“After [he] had retired, Janet saw him in the grocery store and he said, ‘Hi, Janet, nice to see you.’”

She said, “Yeah, right.”

He said, “It *is*. This is different. This is not work.”

Janet then says to me [Corinna], “No! It is only different if that is how you order your life.” She observed that he has ‘compartmentalized his life so that he can look at himself in the mirror.’ This speaks to Janet’s holistic approach to her life and the interdependence of professional life with the other aspects and expressions of her person. She says on a funny note that this former coal executive now volunteers with the blind, and she thought, “Well, that’s perfect.” (McMackin, fieldnotes, October 2002)

Fletcher’s discussion of “mothering” as one of the ways in which female leadership disappears in the workplace (i.e. mothering implies “selfless giving” that cancels out reciprocity) is of interest. Fletcher points out that when women try to lead within the workplace they often find themselves in a double bind. “If they try to establish their behavior as leadership and not mothering, by for example, limiting the extent to which they will do it invisibly, calling attention to the unevenness of expectations or by holding others to similar standards, they find it is tough to do without getting called arrogant or labeled ‘men in skirts’ or ‘bully broads’”(2002:11). It is of no small interest that the destruction of mountains, framed by activists as a kind of misogyny (implied in terms like “raping the land”), was glibly referred to by WVSMRA Director Ben Greene as “reconfiguring Mother Nature.” As ecofeminists have argued, Greene’s trope implies that Mother Nature, like female leaders in the workplace, can be depended on to clean up after those who have made the mess.

For women, changing the world may mean what it meant for Archimedes, who said, “Give me a lever and a place to stand, and I can move the world.” OVEC’s leaders have a knack for identifying both levers and places to stand. Thus positioned, women activists in Central Appalachia have succeeded in putting industry on the defensive. In *The Coal Bell*, the tabloid publication of the West Virginia Surface Mining and Reclamation Association, for example, citizens who oppose the coal industry are frequently depicted as women.



*Representations of environmental activists as women, from the West Virginia Coal Bell, exemplify industry’s adopting a stance that Fletcher describes as “self-in-relation.”*

As we’ll see in Part II of this report, industry has taken to responding defensively, which, as Fletcher points out, is a mark of diminishing power (see figure): “In systems of unequal power, one of the markers of the more powerful is the entitlement of having others adopt a self-in-relation stance that allows them to anticipate your needs and respond to them without being asked: what marks one as less powerful is being required to do the anticipating and accommodating without any expectation of reciprocity.” (2002:7) Does industry’s attentiveness to the gender of its opposition indicate that OVEC and its allies are gaining ground?

The term “leadership” connotes change in position, that is, a movement from one political status or social condition into another. To move from a position of invisibility to one of visibility is to arrive at a position from which to speak, a position with a point of view that listeners must acknowledge, however tacitly, in order to respond. This movement can also be a movement from one *time* into another, and it could be said that OVEC, with its insistence on “being the change we wish to see,” leads by emulating a way of being that *is* the future for those who choose to embrace it. As Janet pointed out, “We also serve as examples of people who stand up to power, so that other people can get courage to do the same thing.” But they are consciously modeling more than resistance.

Janet Keating and Dianne Bady articulated their model for an alternative society to Richard Couto by recounting the story of OVEC's first staff meeting:

“Our first staff meeting was a walk in the park,” said Janet. “Dianne Bady talked about something she got out of M. Scott Peck’s book, *A Different Drummer*. Could you tell that?”

“These are the big outlines,” began Dianne. “It’s the story of a monastery. Most of the monks were getting old and there were no new monks coming in. And the monastery was dying and the monks were grieving this, that their monastery was dying. Way off in the woods there was a Jewish hermit, and one of the brothers went to talk to the Jewish hermit. They were commiserating about how it’s so hard nowadays, and the monk was asking for advice: ‘What can we do? Our monastery is dying – we’re not getting any new people.’ ‘The Jewish hermit said, ‘I don’t know, but what I can tell you is that one of you is the Christ.’ And so the monk went back and told that story to the others. They thought, ‘Well, could it be Brother Thomas?’ ‘Well, he’s dumber than – but could it be Father Michael?’ And after that they started treating each other with such care and such respect that after a while people from the community started coming out to have picnics on their grounds. And on the weekends there’d be more and more people coming, and as more and more people came to have picnics on their grounds and to walk around, some of the young men started talking to the monks, and lo and behold, the monastery began to grow. And, of course the moral is obvious.”

“Which is?” pressed the ethnographer.

“Well,” reflected Dianne, “Everybody is hungry for community, and everybody is hungry to be treated with worth and with care, and when people treat each other with care and respect, that’s attractive to other people, and it brings other people in.”

“Well, I’m very glad I asked you for the moral,” Richard responded. “You said it very well.” (Interview with Couto, November 2001).

Maurice Merleau-Ponty, the French philosopher, said that the body is always and already a symbol, “embracing a philosophy of the flesh as the invisible made visible.” Despite the received wisdom that we should not judge books by their covers, truly acting as if we believe there is far more to people and environment than meets the eye is one way of undoing the spell whereby mechanistic cosmology has frozen the world into a set

of things with fixed identities, viewable from one perspective only. The possibility that there are others out there who also lend their bodies to the world as channels for an Other energy source is realized when such people form community by reclaiming their connection to a shared commons, figured in the closing circle as a web of yarn, collaboratively woven, and continuing to grow.



*OVEC Staff in 2007: Dianne Bady, intern Abe Mwaura , Carol Warren, Vivian Stockman, , Janet Keating, Maria Gunnoe, and .*

### ***The Collaborative Ethnography: Methods, Frameworks, Questions***

The Ford Foundation offered to Leadership for a Changing World awardees the option of conducting a collaborative ethnography, administered through New York University's Robert Wagner School of Public Service. "Collaborative" meant specifically that:

- the research would be undertaken jointly;
- research questions would be generated and agreed upon together; and
- the team would not be divided into "subjects" and "objects" of study.

In other words, the awardees themselves were not to be the focus per se, but rather ethnographers and awardees would explore together how the work of OVEC engages leadership for social change.

In ways unanticipated by the grantmakers, the coalfields of southern West Virginia already formed a strong basis for this collaborative ethnography. For ten years I had been doing fieldwork in contexts that had brought me into contact with Dianne Bady, Janet Fout, and Laura Forman, and had years ago become an advocate for communities struggling against the effects of mountaintop removal mining. I welcomed this

ethnography as an opportunity to explore the overlap between OVEC's work and my own efforts to make visible the cultural commons grounded in the soil, forests, streams, and history of southern West Virginia's mountains.

Events in which I had previously encountered and supported the work of OVEC included:

- The 1997 Lucy Braun Association for the Mixed Mesophytic Forest meeting in Mt. Vernon, KY;
- OVEC's 1997 Marshall University forum on mountaintop removal;
- The Buffalo Creek 1997 commemorative ceremony on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act;
- the first meeting of the Coal River Mountain Watch in November 1997;
- the Lucy Braun Association for the Mixed Mesophytic Forest 1998 meeting in Huntington, WV;
- the OVEC-organized 1998 informational rally on Cabin Creek in the coalfields;
- an OVEC-organized 1998 rally against mountaintop removal on the WV Capitol grounds;
- OVEC's First Summit for the Mountains (August 1998);
- the OVEC-organized action at the 1999 State Mining Reclamation awards ceremony; and
- the OVEC-organized 1999 lobbying on Capitol Hill.

I brought to these events the perspective of a folklorist studying the cultural implications of environmental degradation in the Coal River Valley. My contribution as an ethnographer up to that point had been to try to bring the perspectives of people living in the Coal River Valley into public discourse on forest decline, air pollution, and mountaintop removal. I have been interested in how a local social imaginary referred to as "the mountains" forms the basis for community life in the Coal River area, and the reciprocal role that community life plays in the ecological production of "the mountains." The mountains, as local commons, form the connective tissue holding the community together. The problem I wanted to study further was the twofold problem of:

1) bridging between local neighborhood commons and the commons for which national and regional groups were battling, the commons of forests, clean air, soil, water, endangered species and ecosystems: how is OVEC developing those connections?

2) bridging among sectors – activists, the academy, local communities, global networks, and governments: how can this ethnography itself bridge among sectors? The OVEC ethnography presented an opportunity to study how activists and scholars can coordinate efforts to “regionalize from below” in order to bridge between local and national/global publics.



*Organizational meeting for Coal River Mountain Watch, Assembly Church of God, Sundial, WV, November 22, 1997.*

*Organizers, from left, are: Laura Forman (OVEC), Carlos Gore, Larry Gibson (Kayford Mountain), Randy Sprouse, CRMW, Lowell Dodge (Lucy Braun Association). Photo by Mary Hufford.*

The research assistant for this project was Corinna McMackin, who was finishing a master’s degree in environmental studies at the University of Pennsylvania. Corinna had taken folklore courses, and was keenly interested in the role that ethnography can play in environmental assessment, policy setting, and planning.



*Corinna McMackin reviewing mountaintop removal mining permits at the Division of Environmental Protection, Nitro, West Virginia. Photo by Mary Hufford.*

***Research Design: Ethnography as Shared Inquiry***

To structure the ethnography as a collaborative effort, yielding shared, new knowledge for all participants, we brought existing some of the structures and resources of both OVEC and the University of Pennsylvania into dialogue. We adapted programs already in place for both institutions to the work of furthering shared inquiry. OVEC has an internship program, in which Corinna McMackin participated for three weeks, fulfilling requirements for her master's degree at the same time. Corinna thus fulfilled her mandate to conduct research toward her degree by lending her research capabilities to OVEC's needs. OVEC generates a yearly round of events for local, regional, and national participants. Corinna and I attended and participated in a number of these events over the course of 2002-2003 (see Appendix 2: "A Year and Half in the Life of OVEC"). The Center for Folklore and Ethnography offered workshops, speaker series, and public events bringing together scholars and practitioners to explore the role of vernacular culture in local, regional, and national life. The CFE collaborated with OVEC on two events, one at the University of Pennsylvania, and one in southern West Virginia.

The primary ethnographic methods we employed were participant observation and grounded theory. Participant observation means that we cooperated in the production of ethnographic events, with an eye toward defining our (the ethnographers') roles in the events in relation to the roles played by our collaborators. Thus, Corinna McMackin, working as an intern in the OVEC office apprenticed herself in effect as someone learning how the organization works by contributing to that work under the direction of OVEC staff members. Reflecting on this work in light of our research questions, she wrote up and shared field notes, describing her experiences and insights.

The Center for Folklore and Ethnography then collaborated with OVEC on a workshop for the Pipestem summit. Entitled "Getting out of the Overburden and Onto the Map," the workshop was designed to stimulate collective thinking on the role of cultural assessment in mountaintop removal permitting and how thinking culturally might help communities to defend themselves at permit hearings. In the course of this work we consulted variously with OVEC leaders and staff regarding matters of protocol.

What could we do to make this workshop more interactive? What kinds of things do people need to know about cultural assessment in the permitting process? What should participants gain from this workshop?

Corinna and I also conferred with USEPA official Stanley Laskowski, who teaches courses in Environmental Studies at Penn, to set goals and objectives that would strengthen EPA support for coalfield communities. Citing a saying among regulators, “You manage what you measure,” Laskowski advised us to find out from coalfield citizens:

- what is *not* being measured in the present permitting process;
- relate what is not being measured to the categories used in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on mountaintop removal.

Our findings could have an impact on the Draft EIS then in process at the EPA’s Region III headquarters in Philadelphia. How does the draft EIS address the values of coalfield residents that have been ignored in permitting? Does it address the need to take stock of these and protect them?

The list of amenities we generated at the Fourth Summit for the Mountains in Pipestem forms a particular kind of ethnographic text in the sense that we co-produced it with OVEC’s members in the course of our study. It is ethnographic in the sense that it juxtaposes a point of view recovered at the Summit with a point of view registered in the state’s permitting process. One object of collaboration would be the pending programmatic draft Environmental Impact Statement on mountaintop removal /valley fill strip mining (see Mountaintop Removal Court Chronology, prepared by Vivian Stockman, in Appendix 3). How could our collaborative ethnography help us to anticipate the draft EIS and think proactively about what to do during the 90 day public comment period? How could academic researchers work effectively with coalfield citizens in shaping responses to the draft EIS?

We also saw this ethnography as an opportunity to engage further in the larger task that Betsy Taylor outlines for public folklore: “reweaving the fabric of the public sphere” (Taylor, 2002). This fabric has been shredded by the corporate state’s systematic assaults on the cultural and geographic commons. Recognizing that OVEC is engaged in the recovery of a regional public precisely by fortifying the commons, Corinna and I saw

an opportunity to structure the study itself around the task of connecting this regional public to resources at the EPA, using the academy as a meeting place.

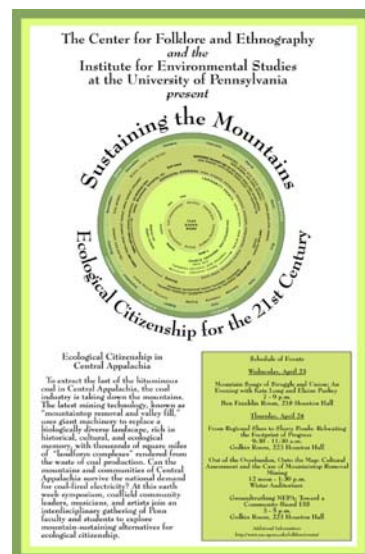
In anticipation of the federal government’s release of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement on Mountaintop Mining and Valley Fill, we collaborated with OVEC on two events:

- “Getting Out of the Overburden and Onto the Map,” a workshop on the permitting process during the Summit for the Mountains in southern West Virginia; and
- “Sustaining the Mountains,” an earth week symposium on mountaintop removal at the University of Pennsylvania, as a workshop in community-based civics that would bring University students together with coalfield citizens.

*Poster for “Sustaining the Mountains: Ecological Citizenship for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, cosponsored by Penn’s Center for Folklore and Ethnography and the Institute for Environmental Studies, Earth Week, 2003.*

The collaborative aspect of the research then was the use of the research itself to further the work of connecting epitomized in the yarn toss. We would work on a way to connect a major research institution with the research needs of coalfield communities, and to form a space for a conversation among representatives from the government, the academy, and the Central Appalachian region.

Our primary means of documentation included field notes, photography, and some audio and video recording. (These documents are now part of the University of Pennsylvania’s Folklore Archive). In keeping with the tenets of “grounded theory” we used the field notes themselves as a data set, coding them for recurring themes and circulating them to Janet and Dianne for comment and discussion, along with drafts of the developing ethnography. Grounded theorists, in the words of Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw, “give priority to developing rather than to verifying analytic propositions. They



maintain that if the researcher minimizes commitment to received and preconceived theory, he is more likely to ‘discover’ original theories in his data. At the actual working level, the researcher begins by coding the data in close, systematic ways so that he can generate analytic categories” (1995: 143-44).

The concept that emerges in our field notes and transcripts as the cornerstone of OVEC’s philosophy of leadership is “relationship.” The propositions that we developed appear at the beginning of Part II of this ethnography.

## Part II

### Waging Democracy in the Kingdom of Coal



*Vivian Stockman, dressed as King Coal, manipulates a puppet with the face of Stephanie Timmermyer, then Director of the West Virginia Division of Environmental Protection. Photo by Dave Saville.*

### *Four Propositions*

The following propositions distill three spheres of relationship that we identified as keys for this study: spirituality, community, democracy. Dianne Bady noted that OVEC's "basic style of leadership is to provide the spaces for concerned people to get together, share their anger, and work through the darkness to come up with plans." Part II of this ethnography examines the ways in which OVEC cultivates spaces for relationships that are spiritual, communal, and democratic. In the course of writing the ethnography, it became clear to us that OVEC's work on democratic relationships creates spaces for what Betsy Taylor calls "regional publics," spaces that are absolutely critical for integrating communities with shared concerns into national and global publics. The fourth proposition is the result.

1) **Spirituality:** The mountains are channels for spiritual and social communication; a part of the world that makes the invisible visible. The coal industry does not have the authority to reduce the mountains (or any other commons) to the mere physicality connoted in the term "environment." OVEC seeks to heal the rift that the corporate state drives between spirit and matter through practices that validate the status of mountains as the invisible made visible. OVEC's staff leaders ground this work first of all in their own spiritual connections and practices.

2) **Community:** As spiritual, social, and physical commons, the present mixed mesophytic topography of mountains, forests, and streams is vital to mountain communities; the commons is the material expression of community life. Building community through the work of caring for mountains is the most effective means of environmental protection. OVEC accomplishes this work through, as Janet Keating put it, "connecting, connecting, connecting:" connecting matter with spirit, individual with cosmos, body with soul, mind with heart, voters with legislators, expertise with community research needs, regional with national issues and so forth.

3) **Democracy:** Environmental degradation is a sign of democracy in crisis. In order to

care for the environment, citizens have to reclaim the state. OVEC works to reclaim the state through grassroots organizing, research, translation, distribution of information, and working through the political process and the media to cultivate the political space necessary for social change.

4) **Global Regionalism:** Mediating between communities and national and international entities, OVEC is helping to articulate and cultivate a regional public sphere, which is both broad and deep: broad in the sense that Central Appalachia's situation is shared by cognate regions around the world now targeted as extractive zones, and deep in the sense that this movement for social change builds on the history of civil rights, labor, and preservationist movements.

### **Spirituality: Connecting through the Earth**

*"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, who made heaven and earth." Psalm 121*

*"We don't believe in miracles. We **depend** on them." -- OVEC saying*

We return to Dianne Bady's story of the monks, told to Richard Couto within the framework of what folklorists refer to as a "foundation narrative." As stories of how things began, foundation narratives articulate and renew our participation and commitment to a world in common. Dianne's story of the monks draws our attention to the beginnings of OVEC's commitment to faith-based reason and community-based action. The foundational moment here is the acknowledgment that not knowing which person is the messiah provides an opportunity to treat everyone as though they might be. The leap of faith is registered as a belief that there is more to the world than meets the eye, and that cultivating a relationship to what it is that we can't see forms a rationale for stewardship of what is visible and palpable. The way that faith-based reason works is to acknowledge that very real experiences of communion with something greater than the self are produced through stories that relate us to a world shared in common. As Dianne Bady put it, over coffee at Taylor Books, "The natural world and I are part of a much larger spiritual process" (Hufford, notes, June 13, 2002). It follows that, regardless of what one believes the Source of the help to be, mountains are part of the delivery system.

Practices of participation in something greater than the self continually regenerate an alternative cosmos, a world in which physical, social, spiritual, and economic aspects develop in relationship to each other.

These experiences may be accounted for in different ways by different belief systems. In some Appalachian religions this experience may be called “grace”. At the Pipestem Summit people described it as “spirituality” and “peace of mind” and the inspiration for “music, poetry, and prose.” Some societies make a point of defending the channels that enable such experiences. Consider, for instance, the sacred groves of India, and the present effort to defend West Virginia’s Cheat and Blackwater Canyons from loggers. This rationale is not unusual, but what OVEC contributes is the grounding of social change in a fundamental sense of connectedness to the earth, and the effort to bridge across cultures in order to retrieve the connection. Speaking of a session held for Ford Foundation’s Leadership for a Changing World awardees in New York, Janet Keating told Corinna McMackin: “There was a whole group of folks that just feel that this work is just grounded...in spirituality...Because of deep connections to the earth, especially with those that were awardees in the environmental realm – there is a deep, deep connection to the earth...those deeper connections are what makes it possible to keep doing this work. Day after day. Month after month. Year after year.” (Interview, McMackin, October 14, 2002).

Another kind of narrative exchanged among activists resembles what folklorists call “conversion narratives,” stories of an experience of conviction that changed one’s beliefs and consequently one’s life course. Dianne Bady related to Corinna McMackin a story of the consciousness-altering, world-changing experience of this connection that propelled Dianne into activism. “When I was in graduate school at Rutgers, I had pretty much decided that there is no God. I was an atheist,” she told Corinna (Interview, McMackin, October 16, 2002). “One day I drove an hour to this real big park. I was really sick of living in urban sprawl and I was walking through an area in the park where there weren’t many people. And this particular park had some huge open fields with tall grass that was blowing. And I stood there looking at the tall grass blowing, and all of a sudden there were all these silver sparkles in the grass. All these incredible silver

sparkles. And I started to feel really different...It was a real mystical experience in that the silver sparkles spread from the grass, they went into the trees, they were in the air, and then they went right through me, and I was just part of all this.” (Motioning with her arms).

“Oh, that’s beautiful,” responded Corinna.

“It was like a different dimension of reality,” Dianne continued. “It was wild. It was extraordinarily beautiful and it was love. It was love! And, flowing through the grass, flowing through the trees and flowing through me. And I went back home, and this is funny. I remember being in the bathroom thinking, ‘Holy shit! Now I’ve got to totally re-do my entire view of reality.’”

“What did it do to it?” Corinna pressed her.

“Well, I don’t know what God is, but if God refers to a spirit or a force that is way beyond us, but that we are part of too, I know that that exists. And I’m really connected to the trees and the grass and the land. It is all a part of me. That is what drives my activism. I have had a number of other experiences like that since then.” (Interview, McMackin, Oct. 16, 2002).

Through stories, such private experiences become shared experiences. Corinna McMackin is moved to comment on the beauty of Dianne’s vision because she has entered into the experience Dianne evokes. The structure of storytelling forms the means not only of sharing experience, but of the making sense together that is the essence of community-based leadership. It is not enough that Dianne has told Corinna she had to redo her view of reality. Corinna wanted Dianne to tell her what that meant.

Storytelling is just one of the familiar structures we use to share such experiences and make sense of them. OVEC adapts a host of customs and ceremonies to build community and engage leadership. Through prayer vigils and participation in interfaith alliances such as the Commission on Religion in Appalachia (CORA), OVEC helps build a discourse on such experiences, which lead rationally to the conclusion that mountains cannot be dismantled because they contribute to spirituality, cosmic connectedness, peace of mind, and community well-being.



*Blessing of Gauley Mountain, slated for mountaintop removal in 2008. Photo by Vivian Stockman.*

Ratifying those deeper connections and creating a safe space in which members can acknowledge and build on them is a way of mending the rift that science in the service of neo-liberal economics insists on driving between spirit and matter. Reducing nature, creation, cosmos, earth to mere physicality, the term “environment” is a product of that rift. It leaves us with the problem of putting spirit and matter back together. OVEC’s mode of organizing repeatedly shatters that fictitious boundary that the corporate state rigidly asserts between spirit and matter, and between private and public, heart and head. Betsy Taylor’s term “cosmogogenesis” is especially useful for thinking about these practices, creative acts that generate *cosmos* as a meaningful system within which nature and society co-operate (Taylor, 2002: 4-5).

The spiritual dimensions of community-based environmental work begin with care of the self, which includes revitalizing the self through this sort of connecting. As a channel for this energy, the self has to be taken care of as well. In this regard, Laura Forman was lost to the movement because she subordinated her own care to the care of others. “One of the things I truly believe,” Janet told Corinna, “Is that it all starts with the self. All of it.” Self-care relies on a capacity to get away, to get the exercise one needs to stay fit, and to nurture one’s own spiritual connections. Self-care includes self-

examination, which includes airing grievances constructively, respecting others enough to try to work through differences. This aspect of self-care is essential to “personal growth.” As the OVEC saying goes: “Personal growth is *not* optional.”

A hallmark of cosmogenesis is reciprocity, a desire to give something back. As Laura Forman put it, “West Virginia is truly almost heaven. She has given so much to me. How can I not try to help save her?” Consider the story that Tony Linsky, of Indian Creek, told of a man who kept himself alive by eating birds when stranded during the war. Tony choked up as he recalled how the man threw food to the birds every day after he came home. “He’d say, ‘They kept me alive. This is the least I can do’” (Interview, Hufford, March 24, 2003). This is one example keeping gifts in motion, impelled by gratitude to empty places.

Our attention was repeatedly drawn to the relationship between Appalachian religion and organizing for social justice. Singer, composer and OVEC member Kate Long pointed out during a concert at the University of Pennsylvania that it’s no accident that the songs used in the movement sound like revival songs. She and Elaine Purkey had just finished singing the protest version of “Uncloudy Day,” which begins, “They tell me of a land where no sludge ponds rise.” As Elaine Purkey described her participation in social activism, “It’s not religious, but it’s definitely spiritual” (Video Recording, Poizat-Newcomb, University of Pennsylvania, April 23, 2003). Conflating the secular with the sacred, such songs call attention to the state’s destruction of channels of grace. These songs are not dogmatic, but move people to the laughter and tears that, in the service of self-care, break down the barriers between self and other, and between self and the environment. The songs illustrate the power of artistic expression to build the Movement through performances that move people.

Perhaps, then, OVEC’s most radical battle is against the historical disjuncture of faith and reason in European and American culture, which harks back to the founding moment of the field of folklore. An alternative way of knowing, folklore was systematically expunged in the 19<sup>th</sup> century from enlightened discourse and became an object of study for antiquarians. Only the quantifiably measurable can be admitted as data for decision-making. But this marginalization of the language of faith eliminates the realm of the spirit from consideration in planning. By the same token, this realm of the

spirit is off limits to the state, and it is where OVEC begins its work of cosmogenesis – ratifying and redeploying these alternative ways of knowing the mountains. In contrast, the fundamental position from which rational instrumental planning proceeds is one that Michael Thompson calls “cosmic exile.” This position is taken up by making the claim to be able to see an object in its socially unprocessed state. From a position of cosmic exile, one can claim, with certainty, to expunge all social value from the mountains. This claim is no less an article of belief in the tenets of mechanistic cosmology than the claim that the mountains are sacred space. Michael Thompson writes, “When people do play the cosmic exile, and claim to have access to raw objects, they are simply insisting that their socially processed objects are better than other people’s: that their cognition is true and that of others is false” (1979: 77). Neither can be dismissed on the grounds of rationality without leveling the playing field. This is not science. This is politics, and an abusive politics at that.

That the corporate state’s decision to destroy mountains is not grounded in legitimate authority, and not justified by the need to keep the lights on, is the message of a billboard that OVEC funded in response to coal industry billboards:



*Photo by Mary Hufford.*



*Photo by Janet Keating.*

OVEC’s billboard statement, which adopts the style of a series of billboards proliferating at that time along interstate highways, opens a small window onto the system on which OVEC operates. First of all the message “Stop Destroying

My Mountains” directly addresses those who are destroying mountains. It implies that someone is watching those who destroy mountains, Someone whose Gaze is impossible to avoid. It raises the issue of ownership. Land, as the economic theorist Karl Polanyi points out, is one of three fictitious commodities – labor and money being the other two. Fictitious commodities are objects that were not created to be sold but may be treated *as if* they were (1974). The billboard underscores the “as if” part of this deal. Invoking a higher authority, the billboard calls attention to the illegitimate use of power. It overleaps the boundary between business life and spiritual life, reminding industry that churches (including the former West Virginia governor’s denomination) have officially voiced opposition to mountaintop removal, suggesting that even those whose lives are driven by love of the deal might want to hedge their bets. Finally, in the manner of good satire, it’s an “if the shoe fits” message. Only someone who feels the message is directed their way could take umbrage, in which case, maybe they need to hear it!

If what fuels the movement is a shared sense of deep connectedness to and through the earth, what galvanizes the movement is outrage at what neo-liberal economic policies are doing to the earth, and to society through the earth, which thus becomes a conduit for violent, contemptuous messages delivered by an elite few to the growing numbers excluded from reaping the fruits of generations of collective labor, not only the labor that co-produced a particular kind of forest, but the labor of naming and remembering everything on the land. Vernon Williams, of Peachtree Creek, described the defilement and the squandering of mountains, forests, and streams as a form of collective humiliation: “They’re taking our dignity by destroying our forest” (Personal



communication, 1994). In the Psalms, no one ever lifts up their eyes unto a sludge pond, or even to Goliath, that forerunner of the technological sublime who was undone by a singer of psalms.

*Janet Keating, right, talking with members of the United Mineworkers of America Local 750, during a rally on Cabin Creek, September 27, 1998. Photo by Mary Hufford.*

## **Build Community by Tending the Commons**

*“Our work is all about developing trust and nurturing and expanding relationships and networks.” Janet Keating*

*“There was the friendly, festive atmosphere I’d come to expect at OVEC events.” Corinna McMackin*

The web at the Pipestem closing circle embodies OVEC’s work of, as Janet Keating put it, “connecting, connecting, connecting.” Each tangible connection is glossed in language, linked to an intangible state of being. The yarn toss itself recapitulates in brief the commons that, in Hannah Arendt’s terms, “gathers us together and yet prevents our falling over each other, so to speak.” She argues, “What makes mass society so difficult to bear is not the number of people involved, but the fact that the world between them has lost its power to gather them together, to relate and to separate them.” (Arendt, 1958: 53) The closing circle then represents the work that OVEC does to reassert the relationship between society and the geographic commons that the Corporate State reduces to “environment,” stripping it of those twin capacities to connect people and to buffer them, both crucial to sustaining public space.

When mountains are recast as barriers to free trade, what crumbles is the commons. At the workshop on “Getting Out of the Overburden and Onto the Map,” Corinna and I asked the questions, “What is being lost to communities because of mountaintop removal mining? What is not being measured that should be monitored?” Participants identified aspects of the commons that function to connect people to both community and cosmos, and that function as well to buffer communities from the excesses of market-based development.

Representing the connecting function of the commons are: cemeteries, hunting and fishing grounds, ginseng digging, communal gathering and eating of ramps, the enjoyment of paths/trails/old roads; historic values (mining, revolutionary war), keeping human skills going, traditional medicines, genealogical memory, connection between generations.

Representing the buffering function of the commons are: zoning laws, hunting/fishing/ ginsenging/ agriculture (supplementing short pay checks), “cumulative permititis”(see glossary, Appendix 1), property values (tax losses, education suffers),

pollution, biodiversity, soil, independence (for complete list, see Appendix 5). These terms, written by Corinna on the flip chart as they were called out, call attention to violations of the buffer zone that is essential for the protection of community life and foundational to democratic governance.



*During OVEC's Fourth Summit for the Mountains at Pipestem, participants in the Penn Center for Folklore and Ethnography workshop on cultural assets write information on a graphic of the mixed mesophytic seasonal round. Photo by Mary Hufford.*

Participants dispelled the confusion of a bureaucratically administered fog by naming the previously unspeakable. “Cumulative permititis” refers to the trick used by industry, of taking out permits for the maximum number of acres that may be disturbed without requiring mitigation. If 249 acres is the maximum number for which mitigation is not required, then companies apply for multitudes of adjacent permits to strip 249 acres. Against the intent of the law, the community is then unbuffered against the destruction of wetlands, soils, and forests. Similarly, when 90 percent of the land is controlled by absentee owners, property tax laws structured to favor absentee owners make it difficult for communities to keep schools nearby. And pollution violates the commons of clean air and water. Clean air and water legislation is intended to buffers not only mountain communities, but most of America against the excesses of industry. Ironically, the 1990 amendments to the clean air act made the relatively clean-burning bituminous coal of southern West Virginia more valuable to industry, and placed mountain communities in the path of mountaintop removal mining. Finding themselves unbuffered against damage from blasting, flooding, and blowouts, communities crumble, as members begin to move away.

### ***Collective Humiliation and the Unmaking of the World: The Problem of Pain***

The destruction of the mountains is described by coalfield residents as a relentless assault, a violent act committed by one sector on another throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Vernon Williams' comment: "They're taking our dignity by destroying our forest" draws attention to mountaintop removal as a distinct genre of social communication: the insult. Historically, while "merchantable timber" has been off-limits to people living in the valleys, the forest itself formed a buffer zone – a place to gather greens, hunt game, dig ginseng, and raise corn and beans in rich mountain soils. The rights to the best timber belonged to the land companies, but everything else in the forest belonged to the community, and was communally managed. As a collective work, this very complex landscape formed through the "culture of nature," is, in John Dewey's terms, how the collective manifests itself as art. Witnessing the destruction of this work, the bounty of generations of social labor, is exceedingly painful. Another man likened it to a sustained beating: "When they first come in, they feel you out, I'll put it that way. And if you do nothing, they beat you up. The next time they come in, they knock you down. And if you still don't fight back, the next time they come in, they take you wholeheartedly."

"He's talking about clear-cutting, strip-mining, and now," explained John Flynn, a science writer from Rock Creek, WV who directed the Lucy Braun Association's Appalachia Forest Action Project from 1994 until his death in 1996.



*Before: Rock Creek Hollow, in southern West Virginia. Photo by Lyntha Scott Eiler, October 1995.*

*After: An eleven-mile long mountaintop removal project on Cabin Creek, a neighboring tributary of the Kanawha River. Photo by Lyntha Scott Eiler, October 1995.*



For OVEC's leaders, continually witnessing the brutality of unchecked market rule in the communities of West Virginia is painful and daunting when it isn't downright terrifying. "It was painful to see people horribly ill from pollution and know that the pollution could be dramatically reduced but wasn't because of the power of the company and the corruption at all levels of government," wrote Dianne. "It hurts horribly to see that indescribably beautiful and vital landscapes and ecosystems are being blown up, and people losing their homes. It is continually painful to see how money (political campaign contributions) buys power for polluting and destructive companies. And worst of all, every so often I see starkly and clearly how difficult if not impossible our goals are, how strong in worldly power our opponents are and how stumbling and underfunded we are. And the spiritual certainties and trust slip away. I'm gripped with a feeling of futility and fear. A raw, cold, hollow horrible feeling" (personal communication, June 7, 2003).

What the two men from Coal River describe is the collective humiliation of having one's community life and resources dismantled as if the community didn't exist. As if there is no place there worth grieving for. The dismantling itself contains a message: "A.T. Massey came in here and said, 'You don't exist,'" said one man. This, as Elaine Scarry notes in her book, *The Body in Pain* (1985), is the point of torture – the deliberate dismantling and destruction of identity.

In the coalfields this dismantling has one purpose: to displace the legitimate subjects of the mountains. How can one deal with a job that entails so much pain and anger? You have to "stare it 'in the face,'" wrote Dianne, "and be willing to just be engulfed in it, to feel it profoundly instead of running from it." Dianne finds that after surrendering to a bout of such pain, she often finds herself re-energized and full of active hope. "Like I've been moved from deep within" (personal communication, June 7, 2003).

In response to industry's violent unmaking of the world, OVEC works with communities to build democracy, one volunteer at a time. Through a variety of community building practices, OVEC builds on the historic commons, linking the material world with the social world by refusing the abstract principles used by the Corporate State to administer the materials of land, water, air, forest, and people. Many

of these practices are informed by a principle that Janet Keating calls “connecting heart and head” (Hufford, notes, June 13, 2002).

### ***Connecting Heart and Head***

Corinna McMackin observed early on that meetings of environmental activists in West Virginia begin with touching, that most reciprocating of senses. That is, every occasion of touching is *two* events, not one: I can’t touch you without you touching me. Hugging, touching shoulders, shaking hands, activists begin their meetings by defining the space they occupy as an intensely personal one, shaped by the presence of human bodies. Dianne Bady articulates a passion for the concrete, for the bodily, the material realm of the mountains, often eclipsed in legal battles that spiral into debates over how laws and regulations are worded.

Touching, unlike the one-way gaze of the technocratic state, is reversible (if the state doesn’t “see” us, it can act like we don’t see it). Getting the state to acknowledge its constituency, OVEC leaders begin with personal contact that emulates the democracy they are struggling to generate. At this most fundamental micro-level, OVEC truly *is* the change it wishes to see (and *feel*). What distinguishes the community-based work of OVEC is the length to which members will go for the sake of personal relationships. Thus, when OVEC’s board voted against participating in a historical reenactment of the March on Blair Mountain because it could place members in physical danger, some members of the coalition, including Laura Forman, decided to participate in order to support a member for whom the march was crucial, an example of following a member, as Couto put it, “to keep him in the fold.”



*Mother Jones and Larry Gibson, bearing the standard during the commemorative march on Blair Mountain, August 26, 1999. Photo by Laura Forman.*

Corinna notes other aspects that relate to embodiment –the face-to-face contact, sometimes validating, sometimes challenging, creating spaces, for voices that have been figuratively disembodied by a corporate state that says in many different ways that hardly anyone lives in the coalfields. And there is the sharing of food. Activist gatherings seem always to include food. I remember that one of Laura Forman’s gestures of protest was the refusal of food offered by coal spokesman Ben Greene when OVEC interrupted a state award ceremony for the reclamation of mountaintop removal sites. “I told him I’d throw up if I ate that food,” Laura told me later in a phone conversation (personal communication, January 1999).

### ***Building a Regional Public***

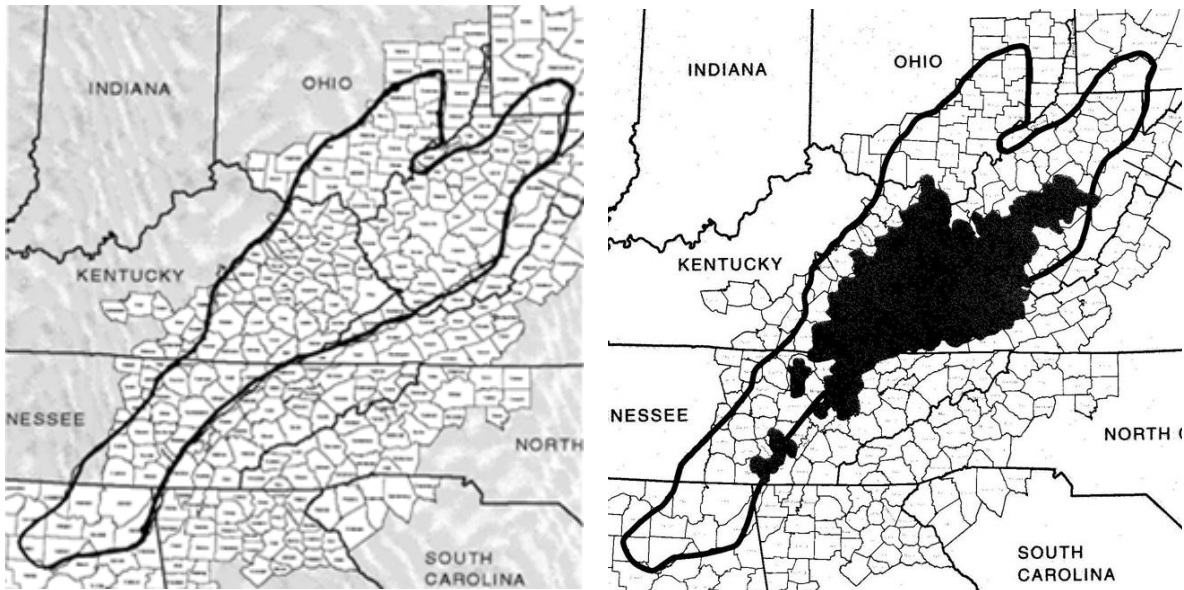
The space of region provides the necessary platform for achieving visibility and audibility in national and international arenas. Building regional publics is, as Betsy Taylor writes, essential to the project of broadening democratic participation in national and global publics. In debates mounted at public meetings and rallies there are signs of a struggle to define a new regional identity. Leadership takes the form of challenging the outmoded economic and social identity of “the coalfields,” an identity that the corporate state continues to promote as part of the rationale for mountaintop removal. This is only one of many possible identities, but it continues to trump its alternatives.

One of the alternatives provided the space for OVEC’s first meeting: the walk in the woods. The woods in which Laura, Dianne, and Janet walked are part of a forest system that ecologists term “mixed mesophytic.” Forming the world’s oldest and most biologically diverse temperate zone hardwood system, the mixed mesophytic forest region harbors many renewable resources on which local communities could depend indefinitely for economic and cultural survival. OVEC celebrated this region on a tee-shirt logo it issued in the mid-1990s:



*OVEC Tee-Shirt issued in the mid-1990s, celebrating the mixed-mesophytic forest as an asset that links communities throughout the coalfield region.*

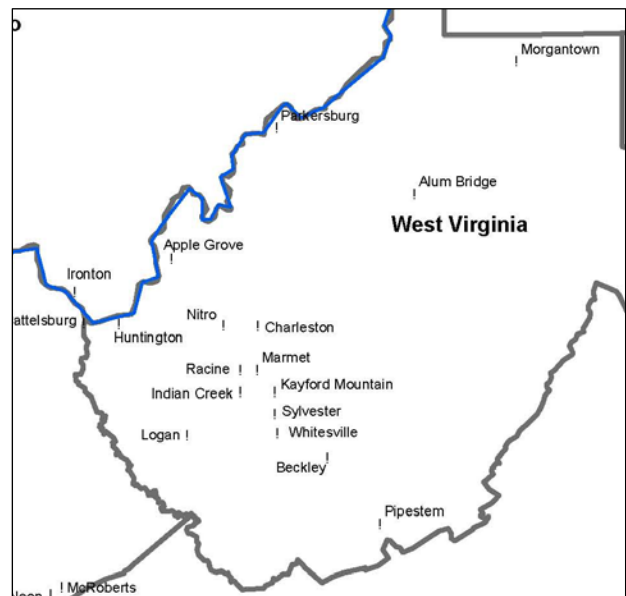
Yet the corporate state's intention for this globally significant resource is disturbingly revealed in a juxtaposition of the EPA's regional map over the map of the mixed mesophytic forest region:



*Left: Outline of the extent of the mixed mesophytic forest region. Right: Outline of the USEPA's "mountaintop mining and valley fill region," adapted from the Environmental Impact Statement. Graphics produced by Penn's Center for Folklore and Ethnography.*

OVEC's work with communities in a region shaped by geological events engages citizens in the work of relating their own localities to others in the mixed mesophytic region and articulating a regional identity from within.

*Local sites within the coalfields, cited in the ethnography, in which we carried out our collaborative study over an eighteen month period in 2002-2003, and which OVEC worked to integrate into a coalfields regional public. Center for Folklore and Ethnography map produced by Darryl Depencier.*





*Network of locations grounding national and global publics, in which OVEC worked during the time of this ethnography to make a coalfield regional public audible and visible. The ethnographic study integrated the University of Pennsylvania into this network. Center for Folklore and Ethnography map produced by Darryl Depencier.*

For an example of how OVEC engages leadership in the work of regionalizing from below, we turn next to the West Virginia Environmental Council’s planning meeting for a Coal Summit that would be held in Charleston in the summer of 2002.

***Building a Regional Public: The Campaign against Valley Fills***

Two of the three major campaigns (Coal Truck Weights, Valley Fills/Sludge Ponds, and Campaign Finance Reform) in which OVEC was involved during the study period addressed the Corporate State’s deep encroachment into the buffer zones of roads and of streams.<sup>iv</sup> The campaign against valley fills and sludge impoundments is waged at the national level, around the commons of U.S. waters. To dispose of the excess spoil generated by mountaintop removal mining, industry dumps most of it over the edge of the mountain into a hollow to form “valley fill.” Water collected in pools at the top of the fill is discharged via rock-lined “groins” to a “toe” at the base. The rest of the spoil is used to construct a dam across the mouth of a wide valley nearby in order to store black wastewater containing toxic chemicals used in the washing of coal. “A witches brew,” Judy Bonds called it, containing, among other things, “lead, arsenic, and mercury” (University of Pennsylvania, April 23, 2003).

Ruling on a lawsuit filed by citizens against the US EPA for failing to ensure that the state follow the law, Federal District Judge Charles C. Haden found that most valley fills violate the stream buffer rule in federal law. Using the same argument it used in the over-weight coal truck case (that industry’s habitual violation of the law signals a need to change the law) industry successfully appealed the decision, and then mounted several

campaigns to change the federal stream buffer rule, redefining coal waste as “fill material.” Here, more so than in the case of the coal truck weight issue, the streams form a resource that can link local and national commons.

Organized citizen opposition stopped the change to the stream buffer rule under the Clinton administration, but the Bush administration was swift in taking up the charge for the coal industry, a top campaign contributor. Despite a ruling from Judge Haden that the Bush administration could not legally change the definition of fill material, the administration did just that. By “harmonizing” conflicting definitions of fill material held by the Corps of Engineers and the EPA, the Bush administration legalized the dumping of “fill materials” (including strip-mining spoil) into streams.

In preparation for a Coal Summit in Charleston in June (2002) that would bring national, state, and local groups together to look at “The True Cost of Coal,” OVEC convened a meeting of the West Virginia groups, including coalfield residents. This meeting, which began with a potluck supper, was held in the basement of a United Methodist Church in Charleston. The purpose of the discussion was to clarify what the West Virginia groups would like to see come out of the Summit. Some people there had been in the movement for many years, and others were there for the very first time, but the discussion took on the character of a tribal council. At this meeting Corinna and I saw some of the painstaking work that OVEC and its members put into building a regional public. The stakes of the regional public are different from the stakes of the national groups. OVEC has promised coalfield communities not to actively seek the abolition of coal mining in its effort to stop mountaintop removal mining, and it will not go back on its word. The discussion began with the question of “what to do about the Bushies and their energy policy, which is to push coal and roll back anything that gets in coal’s way.”

In the course of the discussion, it seemed that nearly every possible perspective on the issue was expressed. Campaign for renewable fuel? How about supporting the carbon tax, as a way of making it more expensive to use coal and to make common cause with a global network? This doesn’t address the problems of coalfield residents. What about setting up [hydrogen] fuel cell factories here in the state? Or banning mountaintop removal but continuing to deep mine coal?

To get a legal perspective, the group calls up a public interest lawyer, and all eyes turn toward the speakerphone and the voice emanating from it. What are the ramifications of the Haden decision? How can we get legislation through congress? Can they still build slurry impoundments? The lawyer says that one possibility is to go after the regulatory agencies and insist that they interpret the law according to Haden. Find out how many fills the Corps has approved, which are now illegal.

After the phone conversation, Julian Martin, an elder and active member of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, speaks quietly and to the point: “I don’t want to be part of telling them how to strip mine better.” Larry Gibson agrees.

Margaret Chapman and Jim Kirby, of the National Lawyers’ Guild, enter the room, and Janet goes over to welcome them and sit with them. She had just met them earlier that week at the southern conference of their organization held in Charleston, West Virginia, where Janet had been invited to talk about mountaintop removal and lead a field outing.

The Question appears: “How do we draw the boundaries? Some want no coal, some want only conventional mining.”

“What is conventional mining?” asks a newcomer.

“It’s deep shaft mining,” explains Larry Gibson.

Julian Martin cautions the group against opposing deep mining. “The coal industry’s edging the public into thinking that you have to strip mine.” Steve Wazell, a disabled electrician has to leave early. This is his first encounter with the West Virginia groups, and he’s very excited about the prospect of working with like-minded people toward change. “Nice to be here,” he says fervently, gives out his phone number and then exits.

More discussion.

Julian Martin says, “Nothing is worth sacrificing West Virginia’s mountains and water for. It’s so costly. It’s not our job to tell them how they can save their asses. Ken Hechler’s argument [in the seventies, leading up to SMCRA, the federal surface mining law] was that you have to abolish strip mining because you cannot regulate it.”

Regina Hendrix responds, “It sounds like you’re saying what Robert Kennedy said: ‘We’re transferring the mortgage to our children.’”

There is an abundance of vision in the room. The other Steve wants to build the infrastructure for wind turbines, photo voltaics, fuel cell factories “right here in the state.” Vivian wants to get the United Mineworkers to sign on as United Mine and Alternative Energy Workers.

Larry Gibson plans to install solar panels on Kayford Mountain.

Somebody says, “This will just drive the coal industry to China.”

“That’s fine,” says someone else.

A chorus of voices asks “Why?!!!”

Janet Keating reminds the group of something that Ronald Goodman said, “Those who opposed slavery opposed it because it was wrong.” Period. In the end, consensus emerges on one outcome only: mountaintop removal has to stop. This is the message the group will carry to the Coal Summit.

Such consensus affirms the radical trust that Janet and Dianne have in the organized chaos of democracy. “Eventually, out of the chatter,” Janet would tell Corinna later, “comes a single voice or vote.” The outcome is more than a vote, however. This meeting exhibits the weaving together that was exemplified by the yarn toss. It exhibits the fluidity of the movement, with new people, faces of the more familiar, and pillars of the movement ebbing and flowing through the fragile spaces of democracy: Julian Martin reminding us that SMCRA itself was a bitter compromise, containing the loophole through which industry drives its draglines, Janet Keating graciously incorporating newcomers into the proceedings, Larry Gibson educating members who don’t live in the coalfields, the fathoming of historical and political context, alternatives for the future, and respect for the very different paths that led members of the group to that basement on June 13, 2002 (Hufford, field notes, June 13, 2002).

## Democracy: Reclaiming the State

*“We are not really impressed by traditional power...and we are not intimidated by it...because we work in groups. You know, they could get rid of me or Dianne or anybody else. But there are all these other people now engaged and working on the issue. And so they cannot quell all the voices.” -- Janet Keating*

*“The state’s divided. There are people in the government who will help you out, but they have to work in the shadows to do it.”*

*-- Randy Sprouse, first director of the Coal River Mountain Watch*

“What do you think has happened to the democracy in our country?” Corinna McMackin asked Janet Fout.

“I think it is flailing in the worst sort of way,” Janet answered. “There is this so-called patriotism and flag-waving among a lot of people. But if it were truly a democratic society. . .people would be going to the polls. I believe that people don’t believe their voices are being heard.” (Interview, McMackin, October 14, 2002)

If Coal is King in West Virginia, where and what is his realm? Suppose, for the sake of discussion, that we define it as the realm of market-centered planning, which in West Virginia is usually coal-centered planning. Couto points out that the acronym for the industry’s guiding principle, “Return on investment,” is also the French term for King: ROI. Coal forms the substance around which the Kingdom coalesces, and the Kingdom is administered from corporate and government offices in Charleston, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Richmond, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C., among other places. What Karl Marx wrote, in surprising tones of praise for the bourgeoisie, several decades before the first steam engine ever rolled through the New River Gorge, could be said of the Kingdom of Coal:

*“...in its reign of barely a hundred years [it] has created more massive and more colossal productive power than have all previous generations put together. Subjection of nature’s forces to man, machinery, application of chemistry to agriculture and industry, steam navigation, railways, electric telegraphs, clearing of whole continents for cultivation, canalization of rivers, whole populations conjured out of the ground – what earlier century had even an intimation that such productive power slept in the womb of social labor?”* (*The Communist Manifesto*, lines 473-475) cited in Berman, 1984:93).

The struggle over the uses of this productive power, and what to do with the conjured populations once they've served their purpose, has shifted political tides from laissez-faire economics to the progressive policies of the New Deal and back to the now global neo-liberal fast track. "Whole populations conjured out of the ground," includes a rural working class diverted from the Jeffersonian dream of dispersed agricultural communities, augmented with immigrants from Europe and refugees from the Kingdom of Cotton. Southern West Virginia was a bustling place in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. But the populations were beside the point in a project centered on the accumulation of private wealth. Even so, West Virginia's "Captains of Industry," would like to be *seen* as servants of the public good, and go to great lengths to persuade the public of this. Two strategies include 1) conjuring a coal-centered public in West Virginia and 2) denying the existence of viable alternatives (Recall Margaret Thatcher's famous acronym, TINA – "There Is No Alternative.")

Where are they now, these "populations conjured out of the ground?" Not in southern West Virginia, according to key planning documents for the Kingdom on file in the WV Division of Environmental Protection in Nitro. In the environmental resources portions of permits filed under the general permit for mountaintop removal mining, what is most striking is the *absence* of reference to coalfield communities. Though archeological reports rehearse thousands of years of Native American habitation, there is scant reference to community life in the present. In the eyes of its administrators, the Kingdom of Coal is sparsely populated, and if anyone does live there, we are reminded that it's because they depend on coal for jobs. As one land company official expressed this logic during an interview in 1995, "There aren't very many people living down in southern West Virginia. People complain about the absentee land owner, but if it wasn't for the absentee owner, there wouldn't even be a West Virginia." (Interview, Hufford with Rowland Land Company officials, October 1995).

This kind of statement exemplifies what anthropologist Stephen Fisher calls "symbolic depopulation," a practice that helps economic interests to create the blank space needed for economic growth. This statement renders invisible the many people who lived in these mountains before the coal industry claimed them. Judy Bonds, for example, was the ninth generation of her family to live in the Coal River Valley. On

paper, the Kingdom of Coal is filled with blank spaces, many of them awaiting colonization by a new fleet of coal dragline giants, bearing names like “Big John,” “Big Muskie,” and “Sacajawea.”

There *is* another giant, which Janet called “that great sleeping giant, the masses of unengaged people.” As if anaesthetized, this giant sleeps through the blasting, the flooding, the dwindling biodiversity, the acid rain, and the plugging up of streams. “I’m not sure how we are going to get that giant to wake up,” Janet told Corinna. “That is a big problem.”

One antidote for this anesthesia might be *aesthesia*, the function of art – waking up the senses. A function of art is the cultivation of dreams for the future. What dreams does the state cultivate in its citizens? Over and against the Kingdom of Coal is the State of West Virginia, described as “wild and wonderful” by the Division of Tourism and Recreation. The only state to fall entirely within the Appalachian range, it is dubbed the Mountain State, where “mountaineers are always free,” and the state song is “The West Virginia Hills.” Yet it is not mountains but *coal* that the state seems bent on cultivating as the stuff of dreams, while concealing from public view the continuing struggle for social and environmental justice. In recent years the state has;

- appointed a series of men with ties to the coal industry as directors of the Division of Environmental Protection;
- approved two new multi-million dollar roads “King Coal Highway and Coalfields Expressway;”
- dedicated a Coal Hall of Fame at the University of West Virginia, into which it inducts industry leaders each year; and
- given out awards for the reclamation of mountaintop removal sites and for “mountaineer guardianship,” at annual coal industry banquets.

Early in 2003 the state announced its plans to dedicate a bronze sculpture of a coal miner on the Capitol grounds. Activists were pleased with this until they discovered that around the base of the statue were four bas-relief panels celebrating the giant earth moving technology used to remove mountaintops.



*Young citizen participating in OVEC's "Tell the Rest of the Story Campaign," a critical response to West Virginia's honoring of machinery used for strip-mining, such as the draglines on the face of the memorial to coal miners above. Photo courtesy of OVEC.*

OVEC organized a "Tell the Rest of the Story" campaign, publishing a letter it had received from Bill Price (then with the Coal River Mountain Watch):

"If the entire legacy of mining is to be told, then the statue should be surrounded by a pool of black sludge similar to the recent spill at a Massey Energy plant in Logan County. I

would suggest a bas-relief panel that shows the homes and lives destroyed by dust, blast-damage and flooding that occurs at the bottom of valley fills from mountaintop removal. And one panel should show a scene of state government placing the interests of coal over the general welfare of the citizens of West Virginia."

Rising to the challenge of this last comment, much artistic creativity has gone into shaping a dialogue between West Virginia's nightmares and the dream of alternatives. Public performances that Janet calls "theater stunts" involve embodiments that translate the violence of the Corporate State's abstractions into human terms: a public funeral for the mountains in the streets of Charleston, West Virginia (see cover photo), artist Carol Jackson's travelling stream cemetery, a mock beauty pageant to choose "Miss Mountaintop Removal," and many other demonstrations before the façades (faces) of the corporate state: the state and U.S. capitols.



*Vivian Stockman, dressed as King Coal, introduces Miss. Mountain Reaper, a contender for the title of Miss Mountaintop Removal, a contest held on the steps of the West Virginia State Capitol. Below, contestants lined up for the judges. Photos by Than Hitt.*



Here the embodiment and dramatization of abstract forces is a way to stake out and claim a position in

public space. Rehabituating world and body (and *word* and body as well), protesters carnivalize official discourse – putting flesh on what has become overly abstract while uncrowning and exposing the corporate state. Through publicly staged satirical performances, OVEC embodies the populations suppressed by the logic of market-centered planning, and exposes the state as a façade for the Kingdom of Coal.

Whereas symbolic and literal depopulation has destroyed public space, OVEC recreates public space by holding public protests and demonstrations outside of the buildings in which the Kingdom of Coal is anchored: the state and federal Capitols and regulatory agencies, and the offices where corporate decisions are made. These events are festive to the point of being what the literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin called “carnavalesque.” Carnavalesque practices mix elements of performance with elements of “double-voicing” – what is performed is quite often in dialogue with an official discourse that the performance seeks to invert or overturn. It does so by delivering competing

messages within the same utterance. An example is the term “yeah, right,” an expression that says yes, but means no. The meaning cannibalizes the form of the message. This has the democratizing effect of multiplying perspective, re-opening dialogue that has been shut down by King Coal having the last word, and re-opening space for a democratic polity.

The atmosphere of OVEC’s public events is often festive, and conducive to laughter, that very democratic expression that breaks down social barriers and causes energy to surge. At its awards ceremony during the 2002 Pipestem Summit, OVEC gave awards to members for defending communities from the practices for which the state gives awards to industry. Scaled to the human body, these awards call attention to the struggle to inhabit the coalfields:

- --the Sylvester Dustbusters received feather dusters and face masks to help them fight coal dust from a coal preparation plant;
- the Inez Sludgebuster received a kit containing sample collection containers, rubber gloves, a hardhat, and a cell phone with the EPA's hotline phone number;
- a Speaking Truth to Power Award consisted of a law enforcement badge and a spray bottle of "Bull Sh\*t Detector" to use on regulators, coal industry officials, and politicians;
- an award for hospitality (an elegantly dressed mother hen and a welcome mat) recognized a role for nurturing in the movement;
- while a Homeplace award (a lovely birdhouse) drew attention to the alternative use of the mountains driving the struggle.

Two other awards playfully invert OVEC’s view of power. One was a Take it Straight to the Top Award, a fancy top hat given to a woman who took coalfield issues to the Vatican and to the UN. The other was Courage in the Face of Adversity Award, an "Insectobot." This large, battery-powered bug, given to the awardee as something to deploy when all else fails at mine and impoundment hearings could be seen as a move to overwhelm the technologically sublime with the technologically ridiculous.

OVEC creates a space in which art, performance, and ceremonies like this one function ritually as “experimental technologies intended to affect the flow of power in the

universe.” (Comaroff and Comaroff) A carnivalesque view of the world provides the crucial torque for these experiments. Julian Holloway and James Kneale write, “As the dialogical Other of official culture, Carnival must always be present. It contaminates the supposedly monologic utterances of the powerful. Carnival may be a weakened force, but its currents still run through popular culture. . . open to the play of dialogue, resisting the last word.” (Holloway and Kneale, 2001:83-84) Thus, in response to a coal industry ad, “Coal keeps the lights on,” one OVEC member designed a bumper sticker that said “Coal keeps the lights on in WV funeral homes!” The carnivalesque is present in signs at protest rallies: “Land reform, not wrecklamation,” and in parodies such as that composed by former secretary of state Ken Hechler, “Almost level, West Virginia/ Scalped-off mountains, dumped into our rivers,” a parody of John Denver’s song that begins, “Almost Heaven, West Virginia.”

At an OVEC organized rally held outside of the state capitol building in 1998, novelist and gubernatorial candidate Denise Giardina told the crowd, “I have changed my mind about Mountaintop Removal Mining. I think I may have misjudged the coal companies. Mountaintop removal does provide some very good economic opportunities. We could, for instance, bottle the water from sludge ponds and sell it. We could call it ‘Arch Mineral Water.’” (Arch Coal, a St. Louis-based company, engages in mountaintop removal.)

“Picture West Virginia without a King,” said Norm Steenstra, director of WV Citizen Action Group, during the same rally. (This scenario had been played out in an earlier protest through a skit showing the deposition of the greedy monarch by an opposition that included Mother Jones.)

“King Coal is dead!” proclaimed Denise Giardina to cheers. “Long live the people of West Virginia!” (Hufford, notes, April 25, 1998).

This reappearance of the subjects of Democracy is OVEC’s answer to the question Fletcher raises about the disappearance of female leadership in the workplace. Old King Coal is a gendered old soul, the embodiment of a system that commits geomisogyny and disappears everything that gets in its way. Refusing disappearance, OVEC drafts the forms of official market-centered discourse to the service of reinstating the commons at the heart of the democratic polity.

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## **APPENDICES I - VI**

## Appendix I: Glossary of Terms with special meanings and emerging idioms

**Activist conservatives** – judges who use the bench to further a party’s agenda (from Tom Fitzwater)

**Blue/green** – an alliance between labor and environmentalists. For instance, OVEC has cultivated these alliances, working with the UMWA over the past year on the Coal Truck Weight reduction campaign.

**Campaign** – In activism, a series of actions for specific political and social changes, often waged by coalitions of allied interests, focused around particular issues. Examples of campaigns include the coal truck weight campaign, the Shays-Pallone bill, and PERC.

**Class hierarchy** – a social effect of the “chain of extraction” (Taylor) and of the uneven geographic development that creates throwaway regions (see also National Sacrifice Zone).

**Corporate State** – the state working in concert with industry; industry masked as the government. The two work on behalf of and through each other, but the primary interest served is that of corporations and big business. “Trickle down economics” is the primary argument used to support this arrangement as something that is in the public interest. A site for watching the corporate state is the so-called “revolving door” that shuttles officials between positions in industry and the state. Thus, an OVEC Action Alert reports on a sighting of the Corporate State: “Remember Mike Castle? He was one of three former coal industry executives appointed to head the WV Department of Environmental Protection under Governor Underwood (himself a former coal industry executive). Castle is now ‘special assistant’ to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s administrator for our region.” In Central Appalachia the “corporate land grant university” is sited within the loop of the revolving door. For instance, Marshall University’s president Wade Gilly was appointed to Governor Underwood’s task force on Mountaintop Removal Mining. The board of Gilly’s university included Arch Coal Company spokesperson David Todd. Nationally, symptoms of a corporate state include the appointment of Steven J. Griles as the second in command at the Department of the Interior. A former lobbyist for the National Mining Association, he helped to craft the Bush administration’s changes to the clean water act, which legalized valley fills. During that time he received \$284,000 annually from a company for which he formerly lobbied.

**Corporate time** – Time governed by the clock; but also by recurrent economic cycles and cycles of development. Despite the cyclical aspects of boom, bust, inflation, deflation, outmigration and return, and so forth, the name used for the mythic time frame is Progress. “Progress,” as E. Morgan Massey says in the film, *Breaking New Ground*, is “a constant race without a finish.” Positions on the timeline of progress are fixed, with “men of vision” leading the charge, and the rest of society falling in behind.

**Cosmogogenesis** – “. . .the symbolic creation of the [structures] of meaning that turns the flatness of ‘universe’ into the proportionalities of ‘cosmos,’ that allows things to nestle within each other, to co-inhabit, to be a matrix for each other, to make a ‘place’ out of neutral ‘space’, or to be cast out as anti-matrixial.” (Taylor, 2002: 5)

**Cosmic exiles** – People who claim to be able to see objects in their raw and unprocessed state, a feat that is not actually possible for socialized humans who can, in truth, view objects only as they have been socially processed. The proposition that some experts can see objects in their socially unprocessed state is the principle fiction underlying mountaintop removal mining and related practices. From a position of cosmic exile, one can claim to expunge all traces of interconnectedness. Michael Thompson writes, “When people do play the cosmic exile, and claim to have access to raw objects, they are simply insisting that their socially processed objects are better than other people’s: that their cognition is true and that of others is false.” (*Rubbish Theory: The Creation and Destruction of Value*). See also “Flatlanders.”

**Crisis mode** – Or crisis time. A time in which many coalfield community groups are forced to operate, because they are closest to the most intensified negative externalities of the coal industry: flooding, blasting, eviction, union-busting, layoffs, and so forth.

**Cumulative permititis** – A syndrome fostered by the “general permit” for mountaintop removal mines, which is used to approve projects less than 250 acres. Larger projects must undergo the more rigorous oversight of an “individual permit.” Consequently, in order to mine tracts of land extending for thousands of acres, coal companies take out multiple adjacent permits of 249 acres. Likening the practice to a pathological condition, some in the coalfields call this syndrome “cumulative permititis.”

**Dead county** – A county stripped of its surplus value and finally abandoned by the coal industry as no longer productive.

**Delay Tactics** – used on both sides to buy time (here time may be bought with trust, or with the loss of an ambiguity that facilitated survival – as in the lawsuits that led to the clarification of the stream buffer rule, but then triggered a legislative maneuver to overturn that rule in favor of the companies.)

**Divide and conquer:** a practice whereby the corporate state pits potential allies against each other. In the coal truck weight controversy, paying by the load rather than by the hour pitted truck drivers against citizens who want safe roads.

**Environmental Impact Statement (EIS):** While environmental assessments are routinely conducted as part of the permitting process for any development that requires federal involvement, they are not as in depth as what is called a Programmatic EIS, a study which looks thoroughly at the impacts of a process like mountaintop removal or logging road construction in National Forests. Plaintiff in the lawsuit Bragg vs. Roberts agreed to drop the suit in exchange for a programmatic EIS on mountaintop removal mining. This EIS may be accessed through the OVEC website.

**Face-to-face networking** – One of OVEC’s most effective means of coalition-building. (Corinna McMackin, notes, 6/14/02)

**Fact Sheets** – Data on particular issues, researched and compiled for distribution at public meetings. This practice generates the knowledge people need in order to plan for the future.

**Fast Track** – A trade promotion bill, “Free Trade of the Americas,” that extends NAFTA to the whole hemisphere and increases the power of the World Trade Organization at the expense of labor standards and environmental protection. “Fast Track” references a time sequence that restructures social and political relations on a global scale. Designed to ease corporate access to raw materials and markets, international agreements like GATT and NAFTA empower organizations like the WTO, the IMF, and the World Bank to challenge local and national laws that constitute impediments to free trade. In an action alert OVEC translates the implications of this for mountain communities: “...an un-elected, unaccountable panel of ‘judges’ from the World Trade Organization could overturn laws written to stop MTR.” This is an example of how OVEC works to reveal challenges (emerging behind the scenes) to communities trying to survive in a changing world.

**Fast-track professionalism** – Opposite of civic professionalism; professional expertise rendered in the service of the neo-liberal economic fast track agenda; generally not community-based; focused on economic space rather than on life space.

**Flatlanders** – Apologists for mountaintop removal mining who argue that West Virginia is too hilly and could use some level places in order to develop such amenities as prisons, chicken factories, malls, golf courses, and airports. (See also Cosmic Exiles)

**Flip-Chart Inscription** – Technique of simultaneous brainstorming and note-taking in public, which facilitates “participatory reason” (Taylor and Reid).

**Harmonizing:** Tom Fitzwater: “Bringing policies into conformity along the lines of the least common denominator.”

**Hearing:** in contrast to façade performance, a hearing is an event in which elected officials and government employees face the public in order to take comments and answer questions on a proposed course of action. No decisions are made at hearings, and often government representatives are enjoined from engaging in open discussion, as at permit hearings for specific mountaintop removal projects. Nonetheless hearings form important sites of political struggle.

**Leadership:** enabling, connecting, collective meaning-making.

**Legalized bribery** – a way of thinking about unlimited campaign contributions (Janet Keating to Corinna McMackin)

**Liberal Democratic Polity** – an archipelago of community-based mediating organizations working in tandem with elected officials and civic professionals to shape and defend the public space in which democracy is grounded. OVEC provides glimpses of the LDP in action and facilitates access to its spaces: June 6th

**National Sacrifice Zone** – Space that results when national policies support market needs over the needs of society in some places, while supporting societal needs over the needs of the market in most others. This space, and the resulting social inequalities and dislocations, is the result of uneven geographic development. During the middle decades of the 20th century, when progressive economic policies were operating in America at large (cf. “The Great Society”). Central Appalachia functioned as a national sacrifice zone, even while it was ostensibly the focus of the war on poverty.

**Organized chaos** -- Democracy in its chrysalis phase.

**Overburden** – Technically defined as materials that cover ore or other useful minerals.

**Passing the microphone** – The capacity to “pass the microphone” is a prerequisite for leadership in OVEC. This phrase was coined by Joan Minieri of Community Voices Heard to summarize the imperative to subordinate one’s ego to the needs of the community and the group in order to accomplish the work. (Interview, Janet Keating with Corinna McMackin)

**Peak reduction** – euphemism coined by industry for mountaintop removal.

**People’s Election Reform Campaign** – (PERC)

**Permeable Sabbatical** -- The kind of time off that activists arrange to take in order to be available for quick consultation or action when needed.

**Porch sitting** – A kind of discourse in which OVEC engages, essential to coalition building and community organizing. Discourse conducive to problem sharing and relationship building; not governed by clock time.

**Pressure points** – term used in Sustaining the Mountains Symposium to describe mode of activism that works by identifying new pressure points – here the system is imagined as something with a form that has an inside and an outside and that manifests itself at local, state, regional, national, and global levels. Setting the stage for a kind of socio-ecological acupuncture, coalition building makes it possible to exert pressure at the national level in order to effect change at the local level. Unlike acupuncture, in which pressure may be applied to the same place over and over to cure the same malady, in the system OVEC works, maladies build up immunities to pressure applied repeatedly at the same points (i.e. legislators will change a law or policy that activists may invoke). This necessitates a continual search for new pressure points.

**Radical trust** – term used by OVEC leaders to describe their conviction that action grounded in value on spiritual and social relationships will yield positive results.

**Relationship** – The web of interaction in which organisms -- be they individuals, communities, or corporate entities – are continually engaged. Relationships form the field that is the object of and medium for OVEC’s leadership. “Work flows out of a sense of the importance of relationship.” (Dianne Bady)

**Right to subsidize** – privilege invoked by coal companies wishing to open longwall mines in Pennsylvania and Ohio (Coal Summit, June 2002)

**Safe Space** – the kind of space that OVEC and its affiliates try to create at their events to enable people to feel free to speak. (Corinna McMackin, fieldnotes on CORA meeting, October 2002)

**Scoping Process:** process used by federal agencies to determine scope of a proposed study.

**Self-care** – loving stewardship of one’s spiritual, emotional, and physical resources as the foundation for life-long capacity to build community.

**Severance of ownership from occupancy** – term used in the report of the West Virginia Governor’s Task Force on Mountaintop Removal Mining to describe the process whereby industrial capitalists gained control of West Virginia’s mineral and timber reserves.

## Appendix II: A Year and a Half in the Life of OVEC:

### Martin Luther King Day 2002-Earth Week 2003

The OVEC Action Alerts, posted regularly to electronic lists by OVEC's Outreach Coordinator Vivian Stockman, form a rhythmic interruption of the corporate state's celebrations of history as a particular kind of progress and the rhetoric of inevitability that stifles debate. Sites on the OVEC annual calendar are windows onto a struggle between memory and forgetting. Activities staged in protest, thanksgiving, petition, public education, and celebration are critically articulated with alternative calendars and forms of time.

**January 21:** Martin Luther King Day – remembering political inequity and discrimination in a time of environmental injustice.

**February 14:** Stop overweight coal trucks on Valentine's Day (Janet Keating demonstrated outside of the legislative offices. Her sign "Rep. Capito don't break our hearts – Vote for Shays-Meehan," gained her an audience with Capito on the spot.)

**February 22:** E-day ("Flood the Capitol in green."): an environmental day, sponsored annually by the West Virginia Environmental Council at the State Capitol in Charleston.

**February 26:** Anniversary of the Buffalo Creek Disaster in 1972, in which a makeshift dam in Logan County collapsed under heavy rain, unleashing a wall of blackwater that swept through the long hollow in minutes, killing 1?? Residents. Pittston Coal Company called this "an act of God," but public outcry against the impoundment of blackwater led to the passage five years later of the federal Surface Mine Control and Reclamation Act.

**March 15:** The Ides of March Black Lung Widows Rally

**March 22:** Treehuggers' Ball – annual spring event – celebrating with people who share that identity

**April 1:** April Fool's day – Only Fools Bury Streams (This protest of the nationwide permit allowing companies to dump mine waste in the nation's headwaters took place at the Corps of Engineers offices in Huntington, to finish the protest of December 10, 2001, that had been cut short by Laura Forman's collapse and death at the front door of the COE offices.)

**April 19:** Granny D. give a public address honoring Laura Forman for Earth Day

**May 15:** Lobbying on Capitol Hill

**June 6:** Hearing on Valley Fills in Washington, D.C.

*Right: Larry Gibson showing mason jar filled with sludge to legislators at the hearing on valley fills. Photo by Mary Hufford.*

**June 9:** Citizens for Clean Elections meeting, state level.

**June 10-11:** Coal Truck Weight Hearings in Charleston.

**June 13:** Strategy meeting – Regional groups and individuals assemble to discuss Judge Haden's ruling that the Bush Administration could not legalize dumping of mine waste in mountain



streams and to develop a “post-Haden decision strategy to end mountaintop removal.”

**June 14:** DEP Release of runoff study by the West Virginia Governor’s Flood Analysis Technical Team (FATT), containing recommendation that industry stop dumping overburden over the edges of mountaintop removal mining sites, and instead build the valley fills from the bottom up. (As of 2007, this recommendation appears to have been buried and forgotten.)

**June 20-21:** Coal Summit: The True Costs of Coal: a gathering of local, regional, and national activist organizations in Charleston, featuring presentations by scientists on air and water pollution and alternative energy sources, and by artists, filmmakers, and activists on the offsite impacts of blasting, deforestation, and flooding.

**June 30:** Former Secretary of State Ken Hechler is a guest on a radio call-in program devoted to the overweight coal truck issue.

**July 4:** Fourth of July – Peaceful exercise of right to free speech and political expression. “Some West Virginians want to declare independence from the tyranny of the coal industry, which results in mountaintop removal, and they’ll be on hand at the Ripley Fourth of July celebration to let President Bush know that.”

**July 6-7:** Fourth of July Celebration on Kayford Mountain, “a green island surrounded by a moonscape of mountaintop removal.”

**July 9:** The *Economist* lead story identifies Coal as Public Enemy Number 1

**July 14:** Interfaith Prayer Service on Overweight Coal Trucks – to pray that the legislature will do what is right and just and that coalfield communities will be protected.

**July 25:** Opening reception for Exhibition of Art Quilts at Taylor Books’ Annex Gallery (by Winter Ross. Sales from Ross’s Earth Goddess series to benefit OVEC. (Ross’s artistic work and ideas form a resource that channels cultural and fiscal capital into the activist community)

**July 27:** Protest at the site of Massey Company Picnic, which is held on Magic Island – a public space taken over for 11 days by the mining company (renting it from the state). Defense mounted against the shrinking of public space. Meanwhile, on this day, a valley fill collapsed in southern West Virginia.



*Wind-powered vessel protests the closing of Magic Island to the public for the Massey Corporation’s exclusive use for its company picnic. Photo courtesy of OVEC.*

**August 2:** Bill Moyers airs a segment on Mountaintop Removal and the Clean Water Act, providing national visibility for the issue.

**August 3:** Sustainable Fair, Alum Bridge, West Virginia, calling attention to alternatives to fossil fuel. Subscribers to the electronic lists are encouraged to support the Shays-Pallone Act

**August 19:** Library of Congress makes Mountaintop Removal an official subject catalog heading; furthering national visibility and research capacity.

**August 21:** Hume Davenport, pilot and director of Southwings (a non-profit environmental advocacy group), provides further national visibility, flying aides of Senators

Lieberman and Jeffords over miles of mountaintop removal mining activity. West Virginia Activists refuse to meet with Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton. Announcement of Bush's "Healthy Forest" initiative, which proposes to control forest fires through an accelerated program of timber-cutting.

**August 31:** A small airplane flies over the Marshall University vs. Appalachian State football game trailing a banner that says: "Stop Mountaintop Removal."

**September 2:** Labor Day Picnic with the United Mineworkers of America. Governor Wise, Senator Rockefeller, and UMWA president Cecil Roberts attend the event held annually at John Slack Park in Racine, WV. The issue of limiting coal truck weights is paramount.

**September 3:** Take action on floods and on forests. Pressure Governor Wise to accept the findings and recommendations of his own task force.

**September 4:** "Making Contact," an international radio program, airs a story on the refusal of West Virginia activists to meet with Secretary of the Interior Gayle Norton.

**September 5:** Activists hold a Coal Truck Press Conference and Memorial Service to mark the **Anniversary** of the deaths of Jimmy Nelson and Mary Justice in a coal truck accident.

**September 6-8:** WV Environmental Council meets in Hinton to focus on the issue of sludge impoundments. List subscribers are invited to send printer cartridges to OVEC, which OVEC will redeem for cash. Announcement: McKnight's song "Company Town," composed at a gathering of musicians on Kayford Mountain, is now available at [mp3.com](http://mp3.com)

**September 23:** Listen for "The Floods Next Time" – an upcoming WV Public radio documentary on Mountaintop Removal Mining and the recent flooding that has placed southern West Virginia in a state-of-emergency. Call for removal of J. Steven Griles from high appointment in Department of the Interior.

**September 30:** Attention devoted to National Energy Policy. Protest against drilling in ANWR and the fossil-fuel dependent energy policies behind it; encourage alternatives that are now within reach, including a hydrogen fuel economy and renewable electricity standards.

**October 1:** Highlands Conservancy mounting campaign to save Blackwater Canyon. Link to slideshow of related images.

**October 4:** "Calling on a Higher Power for Help:" Prayer vigil with Kentuckians for the Commonwealth near McRoberts, KY at TECO mountaintop removal site. Flooding is a problem in that town. Structure of event: bring reading, song, or prayer; followed by tour of site. Simultaneous service to be held in WV.

**October 8:** OVEC launches new interactive web pages, featuring a set of maps showing the locations of slurry ponds, based on information housed at DEP.

**October 10:** Flooded Out Film Festival in Charleston, WV, featuring movies made by independent film makers about flooding in the coalfields. This public education event is also a fundraiser for flood victims, on the eve of the Anniversary of a sludge spill from a Massey impoundment in Martin County, KY that sent 300 million gallons of sludge into the Ohio River (Oct. 11, 2000).

**October 11:** WV Secretary of State Ken Hechler, a staunch opponent of strip-mining in all its forms, delivers a paper at Marshal U: "How the Overweight Coal Truck Issue Awakened The Sleeping Giant of West Virginia Public Opinion to Score a Victory Over the Power Structure." Discussion led by Charleston Gazette editorial writer Dan Radmacher and a WVU Professor.

**October 15:** Meet the Candidates – sponsored by Citizens for Clean Elections (in support of WV Clean Elections Act)

**October 16:** Plaque Flack, a demonstration against the glorification of mountaintop removal mining technology to “Tell the Whole Story About Coal.” This protest is waged against images of mountaintop removal and longwall mining technology cast in relief on a bronze pedestal beneath a bronze statue of a coal miner. Examples: “Tell the Whole Story: 125,000 miners in 1940s, 15,000 today” Tell the Whole Story: Buffalo Creek Flood, Acid Rain, Coal Sludge Disasters.” At the event, activists begin to transform the site, reconstituting it as a memorial for the mountains. They leave sympathy cards and flowers for West Virginians, along with “Stop Mountaintop Removal” brochures and bumper stickers.

**October 28:** Peoples’ Election Reform Press Conference: “Come and see who is giving how much to your favorite politician.” Save WV’s Stream Gages from becoming a casualty of Wise’s cuts from the Office of Emergency Services. Providing information on pollutants, the gages assist the research side of community development and environmental protection. “What is Wise afraid of knowing?”

**October 30:** Radio Call-In program on Development in West Virginia –

**October 31:** Activists picket President Bush during his visit to Charleston Civic Center, protesting his ties to the coal industry, his administration’s dismantling of environmental laws (Clean Water, Clean Air) and his appointment of mining lobbyists to key federal regulatory posts.

**November 18-23:** Marshall University Action for Peaceful Solutions (MAPS) holds a “Just Gimme Some Truth” conference. Anniversary of Emma Goldman’s arrest at the Mother Earth Ball. Write to the US Fish and Wildlife Service to support the inclusion of the Cerulean Warbler on its Threatened and Endangered Species list. “Threats to this lovely bird include loss of summer forested habitat in North America (mountaintop removal, poor timbering practices etc.) and loss of winter forested habitat in South America.” The letter is to go to the Ecological Services Field Office.

**November 19** Alert: “Clay County in MTR crosshairs.” Thank Nancy Pelosi – a California rep and new House Minority Leader – for the sympathetic reception she gave to activists during the June lobbying action in Washington, D.C.

**November 22:** Attend the hearing in Raleigh County’s Beckley Courthouse on the Brushy Fork impoundment, which was shut down for nine days because of violations. Support Coal River Mountain Watch by turning out. E-tour the Coal River. Write to UK to protest its mining of reserves it owns under Robinson Forest. The congressional authorization of the new Department of Homeland Security has implications for coalfield communities. It places at risk public access to information on health and environment and it jeopardizes the “right to know” program fostering public disclosure of chemical safety risks. Drive to Survive – support the move to the new hydrogen economy. “No foreign oil! Free our economy and help the environment.” A hydrogen fuel cell car to cross the country. Litany of “Bush Attacks” delivered: on Clean Air (new source review to be tanked); on forests (dismantling of National Forest Management Act) New job announcement: –executive coordinator for Ohio’s Buckeye Council, a forest advocate group (\$25-\$30K plus benefits).

**December 4:** Hearing on Judge Haden’s Valley Fill Ruling. Haden’s ruling was that most valley fills are illegal under the clean water act because most of them have no legal post-mining development plans.

**December 10:** Court case: Dust Busters vs. Massey in Sylvester. Write to FCC in opposition to rollbacks of limits on media consolidation.

**December 10:** Prayer on the Mountains, in Neon, Kentucky

**December 20:** DEP flood investigation advisory committee meets in Nitro, West Virginia, to discuss proposed regulatory changes for valley fills. The controversial recommendation that industry build valley fills from the bottom up, which industry does not want to do, will be discussed.

**January 2, 2003:** Plaque Flack continues. West Virginia’s Capitol Building Commission holds a public meeting, at OVEC’s request, to discuss the appearance of giant earth moving machinery on the base of the

statue to honor miners. The Commission announces that it has no authority to make changes, therefore the plaque will not change.

**January 3:** Formal dedication, at the West Virginia State Capitol, in Charleston, of miner's statue and its base, which features bas relief depictions of the giant earth moving technology in which the coal industry invested in order to whittle down the work force.

**January 8:** Overweight Coal Truck Press Conference timed to coincide with opening of 2003 Legislative Session. Coal River Mountain Watch, Citizen Action Group, We the People will attend the event in the Secretary of State's Conference Room in Charleston. Bill Raney, president of the WV Coal Association is one of three lobbyists "orienting" freshman legislators on lobbyists. OVEC asks its members to request an EIS from the US Forest Service on the Blackwater Canyon proposal, and also to request their Senators to support the Edwards Amendment which would block the Bush Administration's effort to weaken the Clean Air Act by eliminating the new source review requirement.

**January 21:** WV DEP public presentation, Charleston, on valley fill proposals. Deadline for sending in comments on placing Cerulean Warblers on the US Fish and Wildlife Threatened and Endangered Species list.

**January 22:** Screening of "Coal Bucket Outlaw" in Marmet Community Building. Wednesday: 7-9 p.m. Turn off electric lights for peace. Sit in dark, pray, starts with Psalm 27:13: sit in the dark and pray for peace. Janet Keating travels to Mexico. Dianne Bady and Vivian Stockman attend the World Social Forum in Brazil. The House version of the Clean Elections Act is introduced in WV. Kentucky Waterways Alliance seeks an outreach director (\$25-30K)

**February 2-3:** Auditions for play about mountaintop removal, "Final Assault." Clean Elections reception and Press Conference with Boyd Marley, from Maine – one of the first Clean Elections candidates nationally to be elected to public office.

**February 3:** Rally at State Capitol with WV AFL-CIO regarding workers' compensation bill and other issues. "Remember, coal companies bilked the state out of hundreds of millions of dollars in workers' comp payments, helping to create the workers' comp debt crisis." Mike Caputo wrote that it would "take away benefits from injured workers and make permanent total disability benefits very difficult to obtain for deserving workers that are injured on the job. We cannot allow this debt to be balanced on the backs of working West Virginians."

**February 5:** Closing arguments in the Sylvester Dustbuster vs. Massey Energy lawsuit. The Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals (a conservative pro-business court) overturns the Haden Ruling.

**February 11:** Alert: New Coal Bill, SB 480 and HB 2956, harmonizes state law with federal law, relaxing state laws found to be more "stringent" than federal laws. Calls to legislators advised. Tell legislators not to increase weight limits on coal trucks. Beware of attempts to sneak this into pending legislation.

**February 12 :** Shays-Pallone bill introduced in U.S. legislature: Bipartisan bill to reverse Bush Administration decision on Mountaintop Removal This legislation "protects the definition of 'fill material' in the Clean Water Act from being expanded to include mining wastes and other pollutants.

**February 13:** Meeting at Capitol Complex to track progress of SB 583 – the bill to increase coal truck weights – referred to Senate's Energy, Industry, and Mining Committee. Thank Delegate Virginia Mahan and House Judiciary Chair Jon Amores for adding an amendment to HB 2603, the bill to implement the DEP's Flood Task Force recommendations. The amendment retroactively governs surface water runoff and sediment ponds.

**February 15:** Peace gathering in Spencer, West Virginia, to coincide with peace rally in NYC. War is environmentally disastrous, and therefore an OVEC issue. OVEC invites interested people to a meeting afterwards to synchronize the six or seven peace groups operating in WV without awareness of each other.

Doonesbury comic strip features Mountaintop Removal.

([www.doonesbury.com/strip/dailydose/index/.cfm?uc\\_full\\_date=2003012](http://www.doonesbury.com/strip/dailydose/index/.cfm?uc_full_date=2003012))

State legislature takes up SB 480 and HB 2956 Roll Back Coal environmental regulations (see Feb. 11)

**February 16:** Interfaith Peace Service, including Grail Liturgy, refreshments, fellowship, and sign-making at the Unitarian Fellowship of Huntington.

**February 17:** Peace Rally at Huntington City Hall.

**February 19:** State Senate Energy, Industry, and Mining Committee Hearing on SB 480

**February 20:** National Issues Forum on America's Role in the World at Marshall University. How should America use its resources and influence?

**February 21:** Screening of "Razing Appalachia." Forest Organizer for Sierra Club (\$27K plus benefits) based in Charleston.

**February 25:** E-Day (environmental day, sponsored by WV Environmental Council annually). State Capitol.

**February 28:** Book-signing for the release of *Fallam's Secret*, Denise Giardina's new book, at Taylor Books in Charleston. "Wow! A book, a play, and a film – the Stop Mountaintop Removal Movement expands – artily!"

**March 4:** No to Raising the Weight Limit on Coal Trucks Rally – Capitol Building, Charleston.

**March 7-9:** Fourth Summit on the Mountains, Pipestem, WV

**March 7:** Getting out of the Overburden and Onto the Map (workshop by the Center for Folklore and Ethnography, a prequel to symposium at the University of Pennsylvania in preparation for the US EPA's release of the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement on Mountaintop Mining and Valley Fill.)

**March 22:** U.S. Senate defeats proposal to drill in ANWR. Allegheny Electric puts Cheat Canyon up for Public Sale

**March 24:** MTR Permit Hearing on the proposed Edwight Surface Mine, at Marsh Fork High School.

**March 27:** MTR Permit Hearing at Logan High School Little Theater

**April 16:** Judy Bonds, Community Outreach Coordinator for Coal River Mountain Watch, receives Goldman Environmental Award for North America.

**April 18:** Final Assault – Mountaintop Removal Play, Capitol Theater Center, Charleston. OVEC fundraiser/reception. Patriot Act fosters climate in which Religious organizations and environmental activists could be dealt with as terrorists.

Lawsuit filed in Kentucky to halt mountaintop removal in Daniel Boone National Forest.

**April 21:** Press Conference Outside John Amos Power Plant. Observing Earth day by monitoring mortality rates in WV, second highest behind KY. Suspected relationship to location downwind of power plants.

**April 22:** Earth Day Speak Out -- online interactive forum: "Ask the White House" features Christie Todd Whitman.

**April 23-24:** Sustaining the Mountains Earth Week Symposium, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA

**April 25:** Tree Huggers Ball, Calamity Café

**April 25 – 27:** WV Highlands Conservancy tour of Wind Farms (in WV)

**April 26:** Artists for the Environment – Charleston, WV

**April 30:** Grilling Griles: Senator Lieberman seeks conflict of interest Probe on J. Stephen Griles

**May 8:** Rally to Stop Black Lung Disease Support the UMWA protest of proposed new coal dust regulations which would expose miners to four times the dust presently allowed.

**May 17:** Free Trade Agreement of the Americas Conference

**May 20:** Razing Appalachia, film by ? airs on PBS

**May 23-25:** “The Good, the Bad, the Ugly (and the Beautiful) Tour”; Memorial Day Weekend in the Woods (Heartwoods 13th Annual Forest Council, Blanton Forest, Harlan County, KY)

**May 30:** Draft Mountaintop Removal EIS slated for release

## Appendix III: MOUNTAINTOP REMOVAL COURT CHRONOLOGY

Compiled by Vivian Stockman

The following is a chronology of significant events in two mountaintop removal cases: Bragg v. Robertson and Kentuckians for the Commonwealth v. Rivenburgh.

**April 18, 1998:** The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy (WVHC) and 10 coalfield residents (including an Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition board member) filed a formal notice of intent to sue the state Division of Environmental Protection and the Army Corps of Engineers over mountaintop removal permitting. The case is called Bragg v. Robertson, named for one of the coalfield citizens, Patricia Bragg, and the district chief of the Corps of Engineers, Col. Dana Robertson.

**July 16, 1998:** Sixty days after their warning notice, lawyers for the WVHC and the citizens filed a complaint in U.S. District Court in Charleston against the WV Division of Environmental Protection (WV DEP) and the COE. The complaint alleged that both agencies regularly issued mountaintop removal permits that violate water quality regulations and reclamation rules.

**Nov. 4, 1998:** Then-DEP Director Michael Miano issued a permit for Arch Coal Inc. to expand its Dal-Tex mountaintop removal site near Blair, Logan County. The 3,100-acre permit was at that time the largest to be issued in West Virginia history.

**Dec. 23, 1998:** Lawyers for WVHC agreed to drop their complaints against the COE. In return, federal officials promised to more closely scrutinize **mining** permits and have the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) conduct a detailed study of mountaintop removal and valley fill mining: a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement.

**March 3, 1999:** After several days of hearings and a tour of the proposed site, Judge Haden issued a preliminary injunction blocking Arch's Dal-Tex expansion permit. The judge said that the helicopter flyover of Southern West Virginia had revealed, "The extent and permanence of environmental degradation this type of **mining** produces."

**July 23, 1999:** Declaring it impossible to continue mining without the expansion permit, Arch Coal laid off nearly 400 United Mine Workers at its Dal-Tex mine

**July 26, 1999:** Lawyers for WV DEP and the citizens agreed to settle most of the lawsuit. The WV DEP promised to write strict new rules requiring operators to rebuild mountains and replant forests. The two sides agreed to ask Haden to decide the one issue they couldn't resolve - whether the stream buffer zone rule prohibits valley fills in perennial and intermittent streams.

**Oct. 20, 1999:** Judge Haden ruled that the citizens were right. The buffer zone rule prohibits most large valley fills. The judge blocked DEP Director Michael Castle from approving any new fills in perennial and intermittent streams. A firestorm of protests erupted from the UMW, the Underwood administration, the coal industry and the state's congressional delegation.

**Oct. 29, 1999:** Citing the "shrill atmosphere" created by industry and the state, Judge Haden suspended his ruling, pending an appeal to the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Richmond, VA.

**Nov. 18, 1999:** Sen. Robert C. Byrd, D-WV, failed in his bid to pass a legislative rider to overturn Haden's ruling, blocked by the Clinton White House in response to a call-in campaign mounted by OVEC and activists nationwide.

**April 2000:** Massey Energy subsidiary Martin County Coal Corporation sought a COE permit for a **mining** project that would bury more than 6 miles of Eastern Kentucky streams beneath 27 valley fills.

**Dec. 7, 2000:** Lawyers argued for an appeal of Judge Haden's 1999 ruling to a three-judge panel at the 4<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court.

**January 2001:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency tried to block the Martin County Coal permit. US EPA said the proposal would result in "an unacceptable adverse impact to wildlife and recreational areas." Eventually, the COE refused to stop the permit.

**April 24, 2001:** The three-judge panel at the 4<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court overturned Judge Haden's ruling on a technicality: the case belonged in state, not federal, court.

**Aug. 21, 2001:** The citizens group Kentuckians for the Commonwealth filed suit in Haden's court, seeking to block the Martin County Coal permit. The permit is at some point transferred to another company, called Beech Fork Processing. The case is called KFTC v. Rivenburgh, named for the citizen group and for the district COE engineer, Col. John Rivenburgh.

**Jan. 23, 2002:** The U.S. Supreme Court declined to hear an appeal of the 4th Circuit's decision in the Bragg v. Robertson case.

**May 3, 2002:** The Bush Administration's EPA and the COE issued a joint announcement that they had finalized a Clinton-era rule change aimed at legalizing valley fills. The change added mountaintop removal waste rock and dirt to the list of materials that can be authorized for disposal in streams under the COE Clean Water Act Section 404 permits.

**May 8, 2002:** Judge Haden ruled that the regulation change doesn't matter, because the Clean Water Act itself generally prohibits valley fills. Subsequently, Beech Fork Processing told the COE it could mine its coal without burying any streams.

**June 17, 2002:** Judge Haden declined to suspend his ruling pending another appeal to the 4th Circuit.

**Dec. 4, 2002:** A three-judge panel of the 4th Circuit heard oral arguments on the appeal.

**Jan. 29, 2003:** Judge Haden's valley fills ruling overturned again. The 4th Circuit's decision is available on the Internet at <http://pacer.ca4.uscourts.gov/opinion.pdf/021736.P.pdf>. Additional information about the case is available on the *West Virginia Charleston Gazette* web site at <http://wvgazette.com/static/series/mining/hadenrule.html>.

## **Appendix IV: Some highlights of West Virginia citizen activism on mountaintop removal / valley fill strip mining**

**June 1997:** First public forum on mountaintop removal / valley fill strip mining in West Virginia, at Marshall University. Organized by Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition (OVEC) based in Huntington WV.

**August 1997:** First major national coverage of mountaintop removal / valley fill strip mining (MTR) in West Virginia appears in US News and World Report.

**December 1997:** In response to citizen concerns, the Huntington *Herald Dispatch* sponsored a public forum on MTR.

**July 1998:** Coal River Mountain Watch, a then-new coalfields group, organized a public rally to educate people about the problems associated with MTR. Orgas, WV.

**October 1998:** By this date, citizen outreach to churches, organized primarily by OVEC, resulted in resolutions being passed for an immediate halt to MTR in WV, until such time as the environmental and social costs of MTR were fully studied. These church bodies passed such resolutions: Commission on Religion in Appalachia, United Methodist Church of West Virginia, Evangelical Lutheran Church – West Virginia and western Maryland synod, Episcopal Church of West Virginia, the Presbyterian Church – Shenandoah, and the Catholic Committee of Appalachia.

**January 1999:** The first Rally for the Mountains at the WV state capitol in Charleston. Organized primarily by OVEC with the involvement of Coal River Mountain Watch and WV Highlands Conservancy.

**April 1999:** The second Rally for the Mountains at the WV state capitol in Charleston. Attended by 600 people. Featured Carol Jackson's mountaintop removal cemetery that contains over 1000 cardboard tombstones, each with the name of a creek or mountain destroyed by MTR, or a community seriously impacted by MTR.

**May 1999:** OVEC receives the national Methodist Federation for Social Action's highest award for Outstanding Social Justice Action.

**July to August 1999:** Larry Gibson, often accompanied by others, especially Julian Martin, completes a 500 mile Walk for the Mountains. This walk from one end of West Virginia to the other, featured numerous forums and gatherings throughout the state for the purpose of educating people statewide about the serious impacts of MTR. Great media coverage throughout the state. Organized by OVEC.

**1999 – 2002:** NUMEROUS public protests of mountaintop removal, targeting state and federal agencies (WV DEP, WV Office of Surface Mining, US Office of Surface Mining, US Army COE, Huntington office) for lax enforcement and for granting legally questionable permits. Organized primarily by OVEC with the involvement of Coal River Mountain Watch and WV Highlands Conservancy. State and federal officials receive the clear message – citizens are suffering from the impacts of MTR and want it stopped! Extensive media coverage of these protests brings the message to the wider public.

**February 2000:** West Virginia Citizens Speak Out Against Mountaintop Removal at the national capitol in Washington DC. Organized primarily by OVEC.

**March 2000:** OVEC organizes the second Summit for the Mountains to bring together coalfield residents, other concerned people and folks from other organizations, to support each others' work and to develop cooperative action plans.

**October 2000:** Kentucky sludge disaster. Over 300 million gallons of coal sludge at KY's largest mountaintop removal site breaks through a coal sludge impoundment and into the underground mine works located underneath the impoundment. Sludge spills into streams and rivers, polluting over 60 miles of rivers.

**October 2000:** OVEC organizes the Funeral for the Mountains at the WV state capitol. Hundreds of people gather to mourn the loss of mountains, streams, communities and even democracy in West Virginia, due to the increase in MTR mining.

**2000-2001:** Several national politicians try to change the Clean Water Act rules in order to make large valley fills legal. OVEC and other groups mobilize citizens to pressure the Clinton administration to prevent this rule change, and organize lobbying trips to Washington DC to fight the rule changes. The Clinton administration refuses to allow the Clean Water Act to be rewritten to promote more MTR.

**2000-2002:** A series of legal appeals brought by Coal River Mountain Watch result in concrete victories for the citizens, including temporary shutdowns of coal facilities that are violating the law.

**2001:** Laura Forman, Janet Keating and Dianne Bady of OVEC win one of the Ford Foundation's inaugural Leadership for a Changing World Awards, along with \$130,000 for OVEC.

**July 2001:** severe floods in the southern WV coalfields lead to destroyed homes, businesses, and loss of life. Impacted citizens point to heavy rain runoff from neighboring MTR operations and demand that WV DEP officials take action to prevent further flooding. Two hundred citizens gather at Coal River Mountain Watch's office to meet with DEP's mining director.

**2001:** WV Governor Wise demands that the impact of logging and mining on flooding be examined by the WV Division of Environmental Protection. Members of Coal River Mountain Watch and WV Highlands Conservancy are appointed to the flooding Citizens Study Panel. Modeling performed by the WV DEP leads panelist to conclude that mining and timbering contributed greatly to the severity of the floods.

**October 2001:** Citizens again target Massey Energy for their frequent violations of environmental laws at their MTR mines. People protest at Massey's Charleston headquarters.

**2002:** Cindy Rank of the WV Highlands Conservancy wins the national Friends of the Earth's highest citizen award for clean water activism.

**May 2002:** Severe floods in the southern WV coalfields destroy homes and businesses.

**2003:** Sylvester WV citizens win their lawsuit against Massey Energy's Elk Run coal processing facility in their community. Elk Run Coal is forced to implement dust-control measures and pay settlements to the citizens. But problems continue there.

**2003:** Judy Bonds, of Coal River Mountain Watch, wins the Goldman Environmental Prize for North America for her activism against MTR. She receives \$125,000 with this prestigious prize.

## **Appendix V: Center for Folklore and Ethnography Workshop at the 2002 Pipestem Summit: Getting Out of the Overburden and Onto the Map**

We asked participants in this workshop to identify amenities that are not measured in the planning process for mountaintop removal. As a prompt, we used a graphic of the seasonal round of activities pursued by people living in the Coal River watershed who participated in a project documenting the community forest there. Inscribing the comments of Pipestem Summit participants onto a flip chart, we came up with a list of cultural amenities and ecological services provided by the mountains. These services are not being measured in the present system of environmental review, and are therefore not accommodated. These services could be mapped. The comments are transcribed here as they were called out and interpreted during the workshop.

- Registering cemeteries
- Zoning laws – too close to communities
- Loss of hunting and fishing grounds
- Not free to walk -- health
- Spirituality (connectedness) being lost
- Ginseng and other herbs
- Cumulative permititis (smaller)
- Paths, trails, old roads
- Cemeteries (civil war, revolutionary)
- Mine history
- community-centered agriculture
- family agriculture
- reclaiming the language
- psychological impacts of the devastation (loss of beauty);
- property values (tax losses, education suffers)
- health impacts – chemicals – stress
- effects on biodiversity (invasives, monoculture)
- soil – protecting soil as a resource -- F and G
- loss of independence (loss of the “second paycheck”)
- loss of the resource of human skills developed over generations – an economic and cultural resource
- loss of traditional medicine – (pharmacogenetics rooted in mixed mesophytic understory)
- cultural genocide
- flooding (impacts on community)
- genealogical memory (generational connectedness)
- changing topography affects:  
peace of mind  
micro climates
- stress factors
- value and respect given to skills
- connections between generations
- night sky (light pollution)
- music / poetry / prose – eco-aesthetics

## Appendix VI: Local, Regional, and National Collaborators with OVEC

### Key to acronyms, denoting areas of shared interest:

CFR- Campaign Finance Reform  
CSI- Coal Slurry Impoundments  
D- Dioxin  
EAR – Economics in the Appalachian Region  
MTR- Mountain Top Removal  
OCT- Overweight Coal Trucks  
PP- Power Plants  
WQ- Water Quality

### OVEC- Collaborators (local/West Virginia)

Affiliated Construction Trades Foundation (WV union)-  
• Began 1993 with the proposed non-union pulp mill in Apple Grove, WV

Big Creek People in Action- Caretta, McDowell County  
• Began 1997  
• Issues include CFR, Project EAR

Coal River Mountain Watch- Whitesville  
• Issues include MTR, OCT, CSI

Common Cause West Virginia- Charleston  
• Issues include CFR

Concerned Citizen's Coalition- Roane, Calhoun & Gilmer Counties  
• Issues include MTR

Greater Huntington Parks & Recreation Service- Huntington  
• Began 1992 by co-founding the *Web of Life* a week-long nature day camp. OVEC was directly involved 1992-1996, and continues to sponsor the camp.

Heizer Manila Creek - Poca  
• 2000-2001  
• Issues include PP & D

Huntington Tri-State Audubon Society- Huntington

NAACP (national organization)- Huntington branch

Stanley Heir's Foundation- Kayford Mountain  
• Issues include MTR

Students Active for a Vital Earth- Marshall University, Huntington

United Mine Worker's Association (national group)-  
• Began 2000 when 12-20 miners showed up at a protest of the Brushy Fork Impoundment in Whitesville  
• Issues include Massey Energy & OCT

West Virginia Citizen's Action Group- Charleston  
• Issues include CFR, MTR

West Virginia Citizen's Research Group- Charleston  
• Issues include CFR, MTR

West Virginia Council of Churches (statewide group)- Charleston

West Virginia Environmental Council- Charleston

West Virginia Highlands Conservancy- Charleston  
• Issues include MTR

West Virginia Interfaith Global Climate Change Campaign- Talcott  
• Began 2000  
• Issues include the effects of coal-burning on global climate change and air quality

West Virginia Rivers Coalition- Elkins

### OVEC- Collaborators (regional)

Appalachian Voices- Boone, N C  
• Issues include MTR

Appalshop- Whitesburg, KY

- Began 1993
- Issues include the Apple Grove pulp mill, CSI & MTR

Buckeye Forest Council- Athens, OH  
 Commission on Religion in Appalachia- Charleston, WV  
 Democracy South- Carrboro, NC

- Began 1997
- Issues include CFR

Heartwood- Bloomington, IN  
 Kentuckians For The Commonwealth- London, KY  
 Kentucky Resources Council- Louisville, KY

- Issues include MTR

Kentucky Waterways Alliance- Munfordville, KY

- Issues include MTR

Ohio Environmental Council- Columbus, OH  
 Recover- Marietta, OH

**OVEC- Collaborators (national)**

American Rivers- Washington D.C.

- Issues include MTR, WQ

Center for Responsive Politics- Washington D.C.

- Began 1997
- Issues include CFR

Citizen's Coal Council- Denver, CO & Washington D.C.

- Issues include MTR

Citizens for Health, Environment and Justice- VA

- 2000-2001
- Issues include PP & D

Clean Water Network- Washington D.C.

- Issues include MTR, WQ

Earth First! - Tucson, AZ

- 1993-1997
- Worked together to fight the proposed pulp mill in Apple Grove, WV\*

Earthjustice- Washington D.C.

- Issues include MTR

Friends of the Earth- Washington D.C.

- Issues include MTR

National Lawyers Guild- New York, NY

- Began 2002
- Issues include MTR

Native Forest Network- Missoula, MT & Burlington, VT

- 1993-1997
- Worked together to fight the proposed pulp mill in Apple Grove, WV

Natural Resources Defense Council- New York, NY

- Issues include MTR

Public Campaign- Washington D.C.

- Issues include CFR

Sierra Club- San Francisco, CA

- Issues include MTR

Waterkeeper Alliance- White Plains, NY

- Began 2002
- Issues include MTR, WQ

\*National organizations joined OVEC in opposition to the Apple Grove pulp mill because the mill would have been the largest in North America, devastating regional forests for source materials, and pumping deadly dioxin into the Ohio River.