

Coalfield Review

CENTER FOR COALFIELD JUSTICE

First Annual Banquet!

With the additional staff at Center for Coalfield Justice this year and the continued need for membership development and community support, we have decided to hold our first Annual Banquet at Washington and Jefferson College this November the 17th, at 6:00pm. The banquet will feature a dinner, silent auction, presentation of the Wyona Coleman Award for Coalfield Justice to Peggy Clark, and a memorial for Diane Brendel, who valiantly fought the coal industry during her life.

The evening will focus on a light-hearted night of entertainment and a chance to honor those who have contributed to coalfield justice throughout the years as well as new members and advocates. Our silent auction will feature over twenty items, most of them contributed by "Green" organizations, as well as many organizations from the greater Pittsburgh area. Included in the silent auction are items such as tickets to *Capuletti* from the Pittsburgh Opera, admissions passes to multiple Carnegie museums in Pittsburgh, a one night stay

at the Washington Bed and Breakfast Rush House, and a basket of environmentally friendly cleaning products and organic towels.

This annual banquet will mark the first time Center for Coalfield Justice has called for members, supporters, and the community to join together for good food and company while keeping the issues of coalfield residents on their minds. Invitations were sent out at the beginning of October. If you or someone you know didn't receive our invitation and would like to, please call us so we can update addresses and resend invitations.

We hope this will be a time spent with people who share our cause to renew membership, to meet with old friends, and to welcome new friends from the community. Please support our endeavor to increase our membership and to honor those members that have helped us so much already.

November 2007

Volume 5 Issue 3

We are always looking for article submissions from our members. Don't miss this opportunity to draw attention to your local issues!

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E-newsletter available monthly!

For the past six months, the e-newsletter has provided articles on the Center's projects, progress, and issues. The e-newsletter provides a more up to date, in depth version of the newsletter, with many of the e-newsletter articles reproduced in the newsletter.

Contact Rebekah by email at rebekah@coalfieldjustice.org or call if

you prefer the monthly, up-to-date version of our newsletter via e-mail. Please specify your name, e-mail address, and whether you would like to receive only the e-newsletter.

By distributing our e-newsletter rather than the paper newsletter, we save resources. Thank you for your help and support.

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Diane Brendel Memorial

It is with great sadness that we report the recent passing of Diane Brendel. Diane and her husband Roy spent more than 6 years battling with Consol Energy over damage caused to their property from longwall mining. Their home, built in 1939 by Major Ernst Thralls was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This designation, however, could not save the home from the devastating effects of longwall mining, and the home was eventually torn down.

Diane was always gracious in allowing tours of her home to publicize the damage done by longwall mining. These tours included everyone from legislators to environmental journalists to college environmental studies students. As a retired school teacher, she participated in many activities to educate the public about the impacts of mining on both the environment and the quality of life of those living in the coalfields. Diane was featured in both local and national newspapers, the March/April 2005 issue of Audubon magazine and the video "Subsided Ground... Fallen Futures". The pride in her voice was evident as she spoke of her family and home before the mining occurred with the pain equally as evident as she detailed how their lives were impacted by the mining.

Diane is survived by her husband Roy, mother Mona Shields, daughter Michelle Bowser and husband Landon, grandson Jonah Greidel, brother Leigh Shields and wife Lillian, sister Elyn Nimmo and husband Robert, niece Diana Nimmo, nephews Richard Nimmo, Alexander and Victor Shields.

The Center will be paying tribute to Diane at our first annual banquet on Nov. 17th.



Students listen to Kim Jones discuss stream damage.

Dickinson Tour

The Center once again played host to a group of students from Dickinson College. We took them on a tour of streams damaged by longwall mining and visited several private properties that had damage. They were able to meet with several residents of Greene County to discuss the damage and impacts residents must suffer.

The students are on a 3-week tour headed towards New Orleans, stopping to meet with various environmental organizations. You can read their blog of the trip at <http://blog.dickinson.edu/luce>.

Wyona Coleman Fund

The Center for Coalfield Justice is honoring one of our founding members, Wyona Coleman, with a memorial fund. Wyona passed away 2 years ago this month, and the Center has started an educational fund in her memory.

Wyona spent many years battling for justice in the coalfields and was involved with the development of the federal Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (SMCRA). She was in the White House Rose Garden when Jimmy Carter signed the act into law in 1977.

Wyona also spent many years fighting the problems caused by longwall mining. She served as a mentor to many that are involved in the movement.

If you would like to contribute to the fund, send your donation to the Center for Coalfield Justice with Wyona Coleman Fund on the memo line.

Volunteer Night: First Thursday of the Month!

As the Center for Coalfield Justice grows and expands its projects and community outreach, it becomes extremely important to work with volunteers.

On the first Thursday of every month, CCJ will be holding a volunteer night from 5:30-7:30. The night will include food, organization of the Center's library, and work on posters and information for future events. If you can join us, please call or email (724) 229-3550, rebekah@coalfieldjustice.org



“Pull the Rule, Enforce the Law”: Stream Buffer Zone

A number of groups and citizens gathered to protest and offer testimony at the four hearings on the proposal of revisions to the Stream Buffer Zone Ruling. Under the new proposal, streams would be in danger of coal mining within one hundred feet of them as well as “excess spoil” being dumped into their beds. The proposal came from the Office of Surface Mining (OSM).

One of the four hearings held was at the Ramada Inn in Washington, Pennsylvania, which provided local groups and citizens the opportunity to call the OSM to “Pull the Rule and Enforce the Law.” Members of the Center for Coalfield Justice, Citizens Coal Council, and Mountain Watershed Association assembled in front of the Ramada entrance to call attention to the OSM’s proposed weakening of the Stream Buffer Zone Rule.

Despite the OSM’s Vision to “ensure the protection of citizens from abusive mining practices, [and to] be responsive to their concerns,” the OSM only offered four hearings in United States, and seemingly catered the proposal to the desires of the coal company. Citizens from as far as Maryland offered testimony, citing the difficulty of working with the OSM, the unreasonableness of the lack of time to prepare for the hearing and the lack of opportunities given to the Western States to testify, most also attesting to the poor job the OSM is currently doing of protecting our national waters.

Of thirty-two comments given, only one of those comments was in favor of the proposed rule change, this coming from an employee of a mining company. Notable speakers in the hearing included scientists Ben Stout from Wheeling Jesuit University and Cynthia Waters from St. Vincent College. Both scientists called on the OSM to rescind the proposal and to give the United States the truth about the devastating effects this decision will have. Ms. Waters called on the OSM to use the best available technologies to provide evidence for this proposal, which she pointed out, was full of falsities. As the testimony concluded, the message was clear: “Pull the Rule, Enforce the Law.”

We Discuss Coalbed Methane (CBM) with the EPA

With the EPA working on regulations to govern surface water discharge from Coalbed Methane drills, the Center for Coalfield Justice along with other environmental organizations including Mountain Watershed Association and our CBM strategy group requested a meeting to be held in Pennsylvania.

Surface water discharge is water used to fracture the well and water removed from the coal seams in order to obtain the methane gas. According to the EPA, “CBM produced water may also contain small amounts of metals and some volatile and semi-volatile organic compounds.” This water is currently used in some places for irrigation of farmlands. Some farmlands have even faced barren fields and with the unknown long-term effects of using this produced water, we cannot begin to predict its effects. With many questions about CBM effects and the treatment and use of produced water, we eagerly awaited the meeting on October 11th at Mountain Watershed’s office in Melcroft, PA.

The tone of the meeting was quickly set when the EPA was a half an hour late and brought some unexpected visitors from the Department of Energy (DOE). Requesting to skip the EPA’s presentation we had already viewed, we directed our questions to the only member of the EPA in attendance. The other group member who had thus far been the only person from the EPA we corresponded with, never came to the meeting, the flat tire causing their late arrival his primary concern.

Question after question, the EPA couldn’t answer or were not considering in their study, including the long-term effects, and landowners’ rights, despite the EPA’s in depth analysis on the financial feasibility of treating water in the industry. They are considering if the industry can afford to treat this water, but they will not consider how these wells on private landowners’ properties effect property value, land used for farming, and the destruction on the landowners property. Disappointed by the EPA’s lack of answers to our questions despite having them weeks in advance of the meeting, we concluded the meeting with a promise to continue being involved in the process.

If you are interested in being involved in our CBM strategy group, please contact Rebekah at rebekah@coalfieldjustice.org or at (724) 229-3550.



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Current resident or

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Please Join Us!

Our members give us the resources we need to win the fight for justice in the coalfields. Without the generous donations of time and money from our members we would not have the ability to continue our mission. Become a member of the Center for Coalfield Justice today and join the fight for justice!

Detach and fill out this form, then mail it along with your donation to the address below:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip code: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

_____ \$10 individual

_____ \$15 family

_____ \$25 group/business

_____ \$5 student/senior

_____ donation (tax-deductible)

Make checks payable to:

Center for Coalfield Justice

PO Box 1080

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If you have any questions, please call us at 724.229.3550

The official registration and financial information of the Center for Coalfield Justice may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.