

# Mountaintop Removal Destroys Our Communities

**Loss of Heritage**  
Mountains are the heart of Appalachian culture. Mountaintop removal mining displaces people and destroys ancestral homes and access to cemeteries. The places that helped shape the culture are destroyed, and a people's way of life are forever altered.

## Destruction of Mountains and Habitat

Over 500 mountains have been destroyed by mountaintop removal, permanently removing habitat for hundreds of species. Conservative estimates say that over 2,000 miles of streams have been destroyed by dumping waste into valley streams.

**Damage From Blasting and Dust**  
Blasts shake and crack homes, destroy wells and send huge rocks rolling down hillsides. Mining dust covers homes and can cause deadly lung diseases.

The mining companies want to destroy the land and the water, but I'm not leaving. I'm here for the long haul. I'm going to continue fighting.

Maria Gunnoe, Bob White, WV

**Increased Flooding**  
Topsoil and trees absorb rainfall, which helps protect valley communities from flooding. Mountaintop removal sites are hard and barren, causing flash floods and landslides.

**Contamination of Water Supplies**  
Many rural areas are dependent on well water. Toxins from coal processing poison entire communities' drinking and bath water, and pollute streams. Valley fill runoff releases harmful chemicals into water. The waste from coal processing—called sludge or slurry—is disposed by pumping it underground or filling valleys to create giant retention ponds known as sludge impoundments.

**Job Opportunities**  
Mountaintop removal takes fewer workers than underground mining. Some claim flat land is needed for economic development, but less than 5% of mountaintop removal sites have been developed.

## Loss of Economy and

Appalachian coal counties worked hard to fuel the nation and make America rich—and yet they remain among the poorest regions in the United States.

However, many new projects seek to create a more just and sustainable transition away from the unstable boom and bust economy of coal.

- **Energy Efficiency and Conservation** creates jobs, saves residents money and reduces coal use.
- **Renewable Energy** projects can provide healthy jobs, permanent energy, and a stronger economy.

- **Tourism** is among the fastest growing industries in Appalachia and encourages small business growth.
- **Sustainable Forestry** provides long-term income while preserving valuable native plants.

“We should not divorce our history, but it is time that we begin to create a new history, and become part of a solution to save our state, our country, and the world.”

Kathy Selva, Wise County, VA

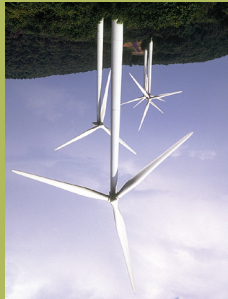


Photo by Mark Schmeidler



But There IS Another Way..

“Coal is not cheap. Not for the residents. Not for the miners. The truth about coal is my baby girl is paying for coal with her childhood and her health, and to me that's not cheap at all.”

Erica Urias, KY

“This isn't mining—this is the wholesale destruction of a land and people.”

- Ann League, Tennessee

**The Alliance for Appalachia** is a coalition working to end mountaintop removal coal mining and support a just, sustainable economy in Appalachia.

# MOUNTAINTOP REMOVAL COAL MINING

Devastating communities in Appalachia and destroying America's oldest mountains.

## WHAT IS MOUNTAINTOP REMOVAL?

Mountaintop removal is a method of extracting coal that occurs in Kentucky, Tennessee, West Virginia and Virginia. This dangerous and destructive practice has destroyed over 1 million acres of land.

The trees are bulldozed, the mountaintops are blown off, and tons of debris are dumped in the valleys. Less than 5% of mountaintop removal sites have been “reclaimed” for commercial / economic use; native forests destroyed during the process will not grow back for generations—if ever.

Our electricity connects us to mountaintop removal coal mining. When we flip our light switches, we may be contributing to the destruction of mountains, communities and even lives.

## TAKE ACTION TO STOP IT

- Find out if your home uses mountaintop removal coal for electricity and hear community members' stories at our partnership website [ilovemountains.org](http://ilovemountains.org).
- Support the **Clean Water Protection Act** in the House and the **Appalachian Restoration Act** in the Senate, to ban valley fills at the federal level. Urge your legislators to enforce regulations on coal and endorse renewable energy, energy efficiency, and conservation.
- Spread the word by hosting speakers and movie nights, planning fundraisers, writing letters to your local paper, and sharing info on the internet.
- Use less energy and work for renewable energy at home, at work and in your community.

Please contact a member of The Alliance for Appalachia to learn how you can see mountaintop removal firsthand and to get involved in stopping this destructive practice.

### KENTUCKY

- **Appalachian Citizens Law Center**  
[appalachianlawcenter.org](http://appalachianlawcenter.org) / (606) 633-3929
- **Appalshop**  
[appalshop.org](http://appalshop.org) / (606) 633-0108
- **Kentuckians For The Commonwealth**  
[kftc.org](http://kftc.org) / (606) 878-2161
- **Mountain Association for Community Economic Development (MACED)**  
[maced.org](http://maced.org) / (859) 986-2373

### TENNESSEE

- **Save Our Cumberland Mountains**  
[socm.org](http://socm.org) / (865) 426-9455

### VIRGINIA

- **Southern Appalachian Mountain Stewards**  
[samsva.org](http://samsva.org) / (276) 523-4380

### WEST VIRGINIA

- **Coal River Mountain Watch**  
[crmw.net](http://crmw.net) / (304) 854-2182
- **Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition**  
[ohvec.org](http://ohvec.org) / (304) 522-0246
- **West Virginia Highlands Conservancy**  
[wvhighlands.org](http://wvhighlands.org) / (304) 924-5802

### REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

- **Appalachian Voices**  
[appalachianvoices.org](http://appalachianvoices.org) / (828) 262-1500
- **Heartwood**  
[heartwood.org](http://heartwood.org) / (812) 723-2437
- **Sierra Club Environmental Justice Program**  
[sierraclub.org/ej](http://sierraclub.org/ej) / (304) 389-8822 / (423) 944 3220
- **SouthWings**  
[southwings.org](http://southwings.org) / (828) 225-5949

[www.TheAllianceForAppalachia.org](http://www.TheAllianceForAppalachia.org)

Join us as we create a more sustainable path