"E" - NOTES

NEWSLETTER OF THE OHIO VALLEY ENVIRONMENTAL COALITION FO Box 970 Proctorville OH 45669 September 1992

\$75,000 IN GRANTS!

OVEC has recently received grants from four national foundations: \$25,000 from the Win Alton Jones Foundation in Virginia: \$20,000 from the Public Welfare Foundation in Washington PC: \$28,000 from the Florence and John Schumann Foundation in New Jersey: and \$10,000 from Town Creek Foundation in Maryland:

With this funding we've hired three staff persons: Kim Baker as Organizer, Janet Fletcher as Project Coordinator, and Dianne Bady as Director.

Our intention is to build a larger democratic organization capable of

stimulating improvements in the Tri-State's environment. We've begun a major outreach effort and will be talking to members and other local citizens to identify environmental concerns and seek ideas for ho people can work together to make o region a cleaner, healthier place live and work.

While we recognize the necessity of the staff taking some leadership roles in the beginning of this organizing process, our goal is to lead and control as little as possible in order to encourage others to lead. Our role is not just to fight injustice but to foster justice.

Lets Get Together

DISCUSSION GROUP

We need to encourage all levels of environmental education. Please let us know if you'd like to be a part of an evening book discussion group. One possible book is Al Gore's Earth in the Balance, which could help us understand how our regional problems relate to global problems, and how our work here can further

the larger cause of global environmental justice.

TAKE TIME TO ENJOY NATURE

We must take the time to celebrate and appreciate the abundant natural beauty in our region. Please join us on Oct. 3 to take a walk to the beaver pond at Beech Fork State Park. Let's meet at the visitor's center near the marina at 3:30 PM.

Call Janet 525-6984 or Kim 522-9562 for details.





WHAT TO DO WITH ALL THE GARBAGE

For more than 2 years the City of Huntington and the Cabell County Solid Waste Authority (CCSWA) have debated the fate of the old Dietz Hollow landfill. The unlined landfill does not meet environmental regulations and the March 1993 closing deadline approaches with no agreement regarding future solid waste disposal for either the city or county. Closure costs are expected to be \$11 million, provided by the sta and will pay for design, COL uction and around water morntoring. Dumping fees have been increased to help pay for closing the site.

Mayor Nelson, with support from the Huntington City Council and CCSWA, wants to open a new landfill next to the old one. Critics of this plan, like OVEC's Alice Horn, expressed concern that well water on Hillview Drive is already unsafe to drink and that residents there at least should be provided city water.

The mayor still favors building the "dirty" materials recovery facility (MRF) at the new landfill. At an MRF. garbage is sorted, and recycleble and compostable materials removed. Since the garbage was allowed to be mixed in the first place, the recyclables are dirty and less marketable. The remaining material composted. landfilled incinerated. The CCSWA and OVEC favor curbside recycling over the MRF. This would avoid the mixing of different types of trash, making marketing easier.

Helen Gibbins (League of Women Voters) says there is still time for citizen input. We urge OVEC members to attend a council meeting, or to write to your city or county representative to oppose the MRF, request city water for landfill neighbors and to support curbside recycling. Call James 525-6984 for more info.

BFI is interested in handling a curbside recycling program at a cost of \$500,000 per year. City residents would be given a single bin for all recyclables. Because the recyclables are never mixed with other garbage, they remain cleaner and more marketable. This would dramatically reduce the amount of trash to be landfilled, thus saving costs. Recycling also reduces the pressure on our world's dwindling resources.

STRIPPING THE WAYNE

Dan Kash and Bill Ragette' continue to work with other groups and individuals to prevent major strip mining in Southern Ohio's Wayne Nat'l Forest. Several challenges have been successfully met, but more needs to be done. If stripping is allowed here, it would set a dangerous precedent for other national forests. For more info call Dan at (606) 928 4539.

THANKS TO: .

Bill Regette' has volunteered to manage OVEC's finances. Former treasurer Judy Whitey and her husband Russ have left for an extended trip to visit Central America.

AGENCIES RIAN MORE STUDY OF TRI-STATE ENVIRONMENT

The US EPA and the environmental agencies of Kentucky, West Virginia, and Ohio are beginning work on an ambitious study of the Tri-State environment. The purpose of the study is to: "Ascertain environmental problems in the Tri-State area and develop and implement a plan to respond to these problems."

Thus far few specifics are available. The project coordinator, David Morgan of the KY Bureau for Environmental Protection can be reached at (502) 564-2150.

A previous EPA study, limited to air quality, was released in 1990. It concluded that the Tri-State had serious air problems, primarily due to frequent industrial malfunctions. The University of Pittsburgh doctor hired by the US EPA to analyze evidence of health effects, was surprised to find Ashland Oil representatives trying to deny health problems in the area. "You'd have to be out of your mind to say there's no air pollution problem here", he said (Lexington Leader, 12/11/90).

OVEC demonstrated that during the increased monitoring for the last study, the area's air quality improved! One EPA employee even commented that this showed that area industries can do better—when they know someone is watching. The new study will examine air water, soils, and past and present toxic waste disposal. OVEC hopes to have representation on the citizens review committee, and

has already sent some suggestions as to what is needed in the study.



APPLE GROVE PULP MILL

WV Governor Caperton has been saying the proposed Apple Grove pulp mill (upriver of Huntington in Mason County) may be possible to build without the relaxing of the state water standards that had been requested by the company. Pulp mill proponents have asked for allowable dioxin levels 80 times greater than that recommended by the US EPA.

Concerned citizens should remain skeptical. Unless the company is willing to use newer, less polluting technologies, problems are inevitable. Chlorine bleaching is now banned in some countries and newer methods are successfully being used. Why not here?

OVEC has joined with the WV affiliated Construction Trade Union Foundation in urging the state to set a dioxin drinking water standard of "non-detectable".

Another pulp mill concern deals with enforcement of environmental regulations. Bobbie Holtzer of Gallipolis has recently spoken to WV officials who confirmed the severe understaffing of environmental agencies. How can the largest pulp mill in North America be regulated if the state doesn't have enough inspectors to handle the work load now?

BBC. NEW YORK TIMES COME TO TRI-STATE

Responding to widespread British anger over President Bush's weak stance at the Rio Earth Summit, the British Broadcasting Corporation sent a film crew to the United States to give their viewers a better sense of environmental controversies in this country. The BBC focused on the Tri-State, interviewing regional industry workers. executives and environmentalists. as well ลร providing shots of smokestacks and hazy air. (To see a video tape of the report, call Dianne at 886-5796).

The New York Times recently ran a front page article, datelined Kenova WV, which used our area's air quality as an example to illustrate how the federal Clean Air Act is and isn't working.

In addition to this news coverage, the federal EPA's new Tri-State environmental study and four grants to OVEC from national foundations indicate a growing outside awareness of our environmental issues. Yet the environment did not make it into the list of issues of local importance identified in the Herald-Dispatch's Focus 2000 project.

ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTER FIRED

Monty Fowler. former environmental reporter for the Huntington Herald-Dispatch, was abruptly fired earlier this summer. It seems that Fowler's reporting ability performance were not question, in fact, some of his news

writing has just received a major statewide journalism award.

We don't know the exact reasons which led to the reporter's dismissal. but we do know that for some time now, his investigative environmental reporting has angered some industry managers, especially at Ashland Oil. While Fowler's reporting allowed industry and environmentalists equal time, our sense is that many powerful people don't want to see local environmental controversies so discussed frequently in our newspapers. Since Fowler's forced departure, some folks in Kenova have been passing around news articles from the Ashland Daily Independent to keep informed on issues relating to their environment of the

Rick and Dianas Bady met with Herald-Dispatch executive editor Randy Hammer; who said that another reporter will be assigned to the environmental beat. So far this doesn't seem to have happened.



ASPHALT PLANT STALLED

An asphalt and waste plant proposal in Ashland was defeated by citizen opposition. This plant would have mixed contaminated soils and incinerator ash with asphalt for paving area roads. Residents of the largely upscale neighborhood emphasized that they do support this plant being built in the Tri-State just somewhere else. Watch for a proposal in a poorer neighborhood.

ALEGIST OF



A.O. AIR VIOLATIONS

555 MAN 1970 1977

It has been well over a year since the federal EPA forced by public pressure to step into the Ashland Oil problem, charged the company with major violations of the Clean Air Act. With no resolution of the violations, the company continues to "negotiate" with the government. In the past the EPA always has allowed the company to agree to pay fines and make promises to do better in the future, instead of dragging them into court where a trial would cause even more delays and legal expenses for both the company and taxpayers.

The violations involved inadequate equipment and operations which did not comply with regulations or permits. Among other things, the EPA found that emissions of nitrogen oxides and particulates from the RCC unit were far in excess of those described in the company's construction permit. (The company has never been able to get an operating permit for the unit).

Settlement of the Clean Air Act violations is complicated by the fact that the state of Kentucky has charged the company with even more violations since the EFA stepped in.

The EPA has hired a contractor who has completed an internal, engineering study at the refinery in connection with the charges. OVEC has been requesting such a study for some time, and we're quite pleased it has been carried out. We've requested a copy of the study, and we hope that Ashland will not be able to prevent its public release.

Earlier this year, OVEC released a study of emissions from the refinery that showed that, per barrel of oil processed, the facility emits far more air pollution than most other large US oil refineries.

THE REVOLVING DOOR

former two highest environmental officials in Kentucky have been replaced and have now set up a consulting business to help polluting industries deal with government. Carl Bradley, former secretary the of **Environmental** Cabinet, and William Eddins, former commissioner of the Bureau for Environmental Protection, may now be advising industries they used to regulate.

Bradley and Eddins were in charge during the 1980's when Ashland Oil constructed and operated the equipment that has led to the massive civil lawsuits that now plague the company. Lax regulatory effort during their leadership may have also played a role in the intervention by the federal EPA into the Tri-State's pollution problems.

The revolving door from government to industry has been criticized by many and has been addressed by laws in some states. According to EPA official William Sanjour: "It should be perfectly clear that a person cannot serve the public faithfully in a regulatory agency if he views the agency as a stepping stone to a better paying job with the people he regulates."

KENTUCKY PLANS FEES FOR AIR POLLUTERS

Industries that emit large amounts of some of the most common air pollutants will have to pay a fee based on how much they emit, when a new Kentucky state regulation goes into effect. This is a positive step which will generate funds to pay some of the expenses of the Division for Air Quality, and will provide an incentive for industries to reduce emissions.

Emissions to be taxed include sulfur dioxide. nitrogen oxides. particulates, and VOC's. Emission estimates are calculated by the industries themselves, although the numbers can be verified by the DAQ. OVEC has often expressed the concern that the amount of actual air testing (as opposed to theoretical calculations) to verify industry estimates is inadequate. We have also suggested that more pollutants be covered by the fee system.

STAFF PROFILES

Kim Baker of Huntington, has worked as an organizer for the Charleston based Council of Senior West Virginians. She has served as volunteer vice-president of the West Virginia Environmental Council, and has received organizing training though the Midwest Academy and the Southern Empowerment Project.

Janet Fletcher, also of Huntington, has served as the President of the Huntington Tri-State Audubon Society. Her interest in wetlands preservation led her to co-found the Greenbottom Society, which has worked on protecting the

Greenbottom Swamp. Janet is completing her Masters degree in biology at Marshall with an emphasis on water quality research.

Dianne Bady of Proctorville cofounded OVEC in 1989, when the group was formed to successfully fight a toxic waste incinerator proposal near Ironton. In the early 1980's, she served as President of the Rusk County (Wisconsin) Citizen Action Group. Here in the Tri-State, Dianne has been heavily involved in Tri-State air quality issues.

BRIEFLY...

*OVEC has joined with the Natural Resources Defense Council to apply pressure on the EPA and the state agencies of Ohio, West Virginia and Kentucky to move forward with automobile emissions testing in our region. Because our air has exceeded the federal health standard for ozone, the 1990 Clean Air Act amendments mandated immediate implementation of the auto testing.

*Joe Szakos, coordinator of Kentuckians for the Commonwealth, has agreed to serve as an organizing mentor for OVEC staff. KFTC has been extremely successful in organizing citizens in Kentucky over coal issues, waste disposal, and other social justice concerns.

*Janet Brown of Greenup Residents Opposing Waste Landfill (GROWL), is urging citizens in Kentucky to question a new outside waste importation plan. Rossko Inc, proposes to import sewage sludge and utility ash for unlined landfill disposal in Boyd County.

WHY ORGANIZE?

Organizing focuses on winning improvements in people's lives and altering the relations of power. Power is the key word here. Whenever we deal with an unjust institution, we need to recognize our own power, and use it wisely.

Our power is immense if we organize, and nearly non-existent if we don't industry's money wields intimidating power. The only way to balance that power is to organize to hold government and industry accountable.

As OVEC grows, we will be looking at power relations and the ways we can increase and utilize the power we have. We must carefully choose issues, develop strategies and tactics, and build a powerful grassroots organization.

The staff needs to hear your concerns about the environment. Please take the time to contact a staff member about your concerns and to let us know of anyone who might be interested in OVEC. Call Kim (522-9562), Janet (525-6984) or Dianne (886-5796).

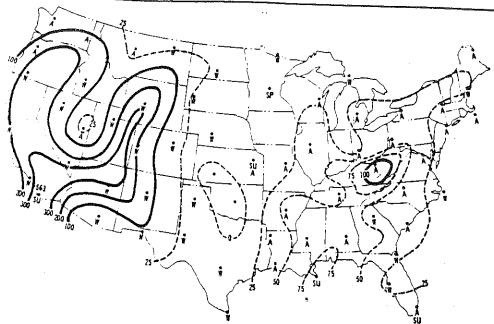


		JOIN OVEC AND HE TRI-STATE ENVIRONMENT		
	5.00 5.00	Regular membership Contributing membership Contribution	Mail to: OVEC PO Box 970 Proctorville, OH 456	669
Name	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·		 .	
Address		a.		
Phone				

Contributions to OVEC are tax deductible!!

Country

AIR POLLUTION POTENTIAL



"Because of meteorological conditions, the potential for air pollution in the Ashland-Huntington-Ironton Tri-State area is greater than for any other urban area in the eastern United States." – US EPA

OHIO VALLEY ENVIRONMENTAL COALITION Box 970 Proctorville OH 45669