

Stop Mountaintop Removal

Call to Action—Mountain Justice Summer, Appalachia—Summer 2005

anon.

2005

The region known as Appalachia is one of the most beautiful and biologically diverse areas of this gorgeous little green-and-blue planet that we call home. The mountains and forests of Appalachia filter air and water, create soil, provide habitat and spiritual sanctuary, and generally make life possible and desirable. The beauty and diversity have been evolving here for eons.

A new form of industrial exploitation has laid siege to Appalachia. It is called mountaintop removal and it's all about extracting coal cheaper and faster in order to line the pockets of greedheads up on Wall Street and to fuel the wasteful extravagance of a mindless, homogenous, consumer culture run amok. Mountaintop removal is exactly what the name says it is. The tops of mountains are blasted and bulldozed off into adjacent valleys in order to access thin seams of coal. The resulting landscape looks like it has been bombed. The coal is shipped out to energy companies and burned to make electricity. The valleys and hollows are filled with rock, rubble and mine spoils that obliterate springs, streams and forests. So many mountains have been destroyed that it is now referred to as mountain RANGE removal. It is a war against the earth.

Dynamite is cheaper than people, so mountain range removal does not create any new jobs. Communities adjacent to mountaintop removal coal mines suffer from poverty, have their foundations and wells ruined from blasting, must endure catastrophic flooding and are in danger from hazards of overloaded coal trucks careening down small, windy mountain roads. Mountain range removal has destroyed approximately 1,000 miles of streams and 500 square miles of land in West Virginia. It is wrecking eastern Kentucky and southeastern Virginia and has recently appeared in Tennessee. It is an industrial cancer that is spreading and must be stopped.

Long viewed as powerless, ignorant hillbillies, mountain people in the coal country of Appalachia are organizing to save their homes, communities, culture, and life supporting natural environment.

Save a Mountain This Summer

In the last half of the 20th century, two significant movements for justice in the United States provide us with inspiration for what is necessary to stop Mountain Range Removal.

During Freedom Summer in 1964, civil rights activists came to Mississippi and other Southern states to try to end the long-time political disenfranchisement of African-Americans in the region. Redwood Summer was organized by North Coast Earth First! in California in 1990 in an effort to save the last of the ancient Redwood Forest groves. Both Summers gave fresh energy to struggling social movements and empowered them to succeed.

Moved to action by outrage at the clear injustice of mountain range removal and inspired by these two movements, groups from Appalachia are organizing Mountain Justice Summer. Through creative, non-violent, direct actions and grassroots organizing we will confront the dark crimes being committed against nature and our families.

We invite you to join our struggle. To our neighbors in these mountains, find your voice and stand with us. Come to the spectacular Appalachians, “the most beautiful place in the world,” and help. Down with King Coal!

Learn more about Mountain Range Removal and how to be a part of Mountain Justice Summer at www.mountainjusticesummer.org

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