

Groups Work to Bring the Public Voice into Gas Pipeline Projects

Coalition seek answers from WV Department of Environmental Protection

Charleston, W.Va. — Members of a coalition of groups including West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, West Virginia Rivers Coalition, and the Dominion Pipeline Monitoring Coalition commissioned the consulting firm Downstream Strategies to investigate public input opportunities related to the onslaught of proposed natural gas pipeline construction projects across the state. Special focus is given to one of the proposed large-scale interstate transmission lines, the Atlantic Coast Pipeline – a 42” diameter pipe set to cross a total of 100 waterbodies within West Virginia.

“The pace of new pipeline development in West Virginia is overwhelming,” said Cindy Rank, of West Virginia Highlands Conservancy. “Residents are concerned about the damage they’re already seeing to their land and local streams, so we’re working to better educate ourselves and others about WVDEP’s role in the permitting process.”

The groups’ initial research resulted in a report released today, [*Atlantic Coast Pipeline in West Virginia: Opportunities for Public Engagement regarding Erosion and Sedimentation*](#).

Erosion and sedimentation causes nearby waterways to be unnaturally muddy to the point of impacting stream life.

“The rush to build pipelines raises serious concerns for water quality,” said Angie Rosser, executive director of West Virginia Rivers Coalition. “We’re seeing that efforts to control run-off and slides from these projects aren’t working and our streams are paying the price.”

The report lays out points for public participation in decision-making around the Atlantic Coast Pipeline; however it presents as many unanswered questions as answers. The coalition of groups is committed to seeking clarification from the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection on the state’s storm water permitting process for natural gas pipeline construction.

"Although pipeline companies promise to comply with regulations and avoid impacts to landowners, the reality on the ground is quite different," said Rick Webb, Coordinator of the Dominion Pipeline Monitoring Coalition. "The companies show very little respect for either people or the environment. The fines they sometimes pay are simply the cost of doing business. It seems that non-compliance is cost effective."

**The Atlantic Coast Pipeline in West Virginia:
Opportunities for Public Engagement
regarding Erosion and Sedimentation**

Evan Hansen
Joseph James

Downstream Strategies

295 High Street
Suite 3
Morgantown, WV 26505
www.downstreamstrategies.com

July 25, 2015

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An example of fines for non-compliance came last week when WVDEP agreed to a settlement in which MarkWest Liberty Midstream & Resources will pay \$76,000 in fines for a long list of water pollution [violations](#) related to at least five of its pipeline projects.

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The report is available at www.wvrivers.org/archive/pipelinereportdownstreamstrategies.pdf

Groups involved in these efforts include [Dominion Pipeline Monitoring Coalition](#), [Greenbrier River Watershed Association](#), [WV Highlands Conservancy](#), [WV Rivers Coalition](#), and others.

CONTACTS:

Angie Rosser, [304-437-1274](tel:304-437-1274), arosser@wvrivers.org

Cindy Rank, [304-924-5802](tel:304-924-5802), clrank2@gmail.com

Rick Webb, [540-468-2881](tel:540-468-2881), rwebb.dpmc@gmail.com