

12/22/14

2014 Year-End Report – Highlanders for Responsible Development

2014 has been an active year for Highlanders for Responsible Development. In May we learned about Dominion Resources' proposal to build a natural gas pipeline through Highland County. The project, which would be the largest development ever to occur in our area, raises serious questions about its impact on the ecology, economy and life of Highland County. Most of our activities for the past 7 months have been spent addressing the pipeline proposal, now known as the Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP).

In the ensuing 7 months we have studied the project at great length, including hosting a well-attended public meeting in August to afford Highland County citizens the opportunity to learn more about the ACP and express their own views. Based on input from that meeting we adopted in September a position in opposition to the ACP, citing the serious and permanent damage it would impose on the county. A copy of our policy position is attached. HRD has also become active in helping organize and lead two multi state coalitions of interests in opposition to the pipeline project, the Allegheny-Blue Ridge Alliance (www.abralliance.org) and the Dominion Pipeline Monitoring Coalition.

We will continue to express our concerns to Dominion Resources, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), which has the final authority over whether the ACP, and the National Forest Service, which has authority over whether and how the pipeline would be built through the George Washington (GWNF) and Monongahela National Forests. We will be filing comments in early January with the GWNF to urge that it not permit surveying for the ACP. We urge concerned Highland citizens to express their own views to the GWNF by the January 9 deadline for comments. More information on this is available on our new website, www.protecthighland.org.

HRD will also be devoting attention to other initiatives in 2015. We began work in the past year to promote a greater appreciation among students in the Highland County Public Schools for our county's unique natural resources by co-sponsoring with the Highland County Arts Council a special education program, Science Songs Rock. We plan to explore with the school system education projects in which we can be of assistance. In the coming months we will be developing a series of rack cards and brochures for distribution to Highland County visitors on the special natural resource attributes of Highland County. We welcome your suggestions for projects on which HRD should consider working on in 2015.

Board Members and Officers for HRD in 2015 will be (*new member): Lewis Freeman (President), Rich Holman (Vice President), Patti Reum (Secretary); Lee Taplinger (Treasurer), Norm Bell, Sarah Collins, Fran Davenport, Deborah Ellington, Rick Lambert*, Rich Laska, Melissa Moyers, John Vance* and Rick Webb. We extend thanks to Charlotte Stephenson, Dan Foster and Chris Swecker, who have left the Board, for their service and many contributions.

We appreciate the interest of so many Highland County residents in the work of Highlanders for Responsible Development. But, our efforts are not without cost. End-of-the-year financial contributions in any amount are welcome. A form to return with your check is attached. Thanks for your support.

Lewis Freeman

President, Highlanders for Responsible Development
540-468-2769 (h) 703-298-8107 (c)

Links to:

[HRD Contribution Form](#)

[HRD Statement in Opposition to the Atlantic Coast Pipeline](#)