

# FIGHTING FOR OUR FUTURE

2017 ANNUAL REPORT



AppalachianVoices



## **A Watershed Year and the Road Ahead**

Appalachian Voices fights every day for a healthy environment, sustainable communities, and just economies that value our region's natural heritage. Throughout 2017, and in the face of new and enduring threats, we honored our commitment to the Central and Southern Appalachian region by seizing opportunities locally, at the state level, and in Washington, D.C., to advance our mission.

Together with our members, we've come too far to stand by as profit-driven, polluting industries and shortsighted policies put vulnerable communities, the climate, and the natural resources we all rely on at even greater risk. We refuse to waver from the pursuit of our positive vision.

Skills Appalachian Voices has developed over our 20-year history—from grassroots organizing to our advocacy on complex policy and regulatory issues—have prepared us for the many challenges we face today. Most importantly, the trust we've earned in the communities where we work has helped us build a reputation that reflects our love for Appalachia's past, present, and future.

Over the past year, our staff worked alongside impacted community members fighting mountaintop removal coal mines, toxic coal ash pollution, and fracked natural gas pipelines, and together we put pressure on regulators and elected officials tasked with protecting our health and environment. Through our innovative New Economy and Energy Savings for Appalachia programs, we also demonstrated that energy and economic solutions to many problems plaguing our region are within reach.

Let's be clear: the Trump administration's destructive, fossil-fueled agenda and its ill-fated attempts to prop up the coal industry jeopardize the future we envision. But it's becoming increasingly evident that the president's promises were hollow from the very beginning.

Your support has helped Appalachian Voices become the force for change that we are today, and it will no doubt bolster our mission in the years ahead. We're ready to defend our region against industries built on exploitation while advancing a more positive vision of shared prosperity.

Together, we will fight for our future.



Tom Cormons  
*Executive Director*



Kate Boyle  
*Deputy Executive Director*

## Advancing Energy Democracy in Rural Places

Across our region, powerful industries are using their political clout to keep a stranglehold on our energy policies. Electric utilities and fossil fuel companies are attempting to build dangerous pipelines through our forests and farmland, burden families with rising costs, and restrict access to customer-owned clean energy. But these desperate efforts to hang onto yesterday's business model are being met with widespread resistance that's giving communities on the front lines an even more powerful voice.

### Fighting Fracked Gas Pipelines

Faced with the growing threats that fracking and gas infrastructure pose to our region, Appalachian Voices, along with countless citizens and local allies, has fought the Mountain Valley and Atlantic Coast pipelines at every phase of the state and federal permitting process. We've built grassroots power in communities along the pipeline routes and amplified the voices of landowners fighting the use of eminent domain by pipeline developers such as Dominion Energy for private gain. When regulators failed to evaluate the risks, we built a solid scientific record, and we are now establishing citizen monitoring efforts to defend our communities from the inevitable harm the pipelines—if built—will cause.



*At a press conference in Richmond, Va., Appalachian Voices Virginia Field Coordinator Lara Mack calls on Gov. Ralph Northam to protect Virginia's waters from the proposed pipelines.*



*Appalachian Voices New Economy Program Manager Adam Wells presents Eastside High School students with a check for their winning entry to the “Solar In Your School” competition at the 2017 Southwest Virginia Solar Fair.*

## Developing Solar in Virginia’s Coal Counties

In partnership with local stakeholders, Appalachian Voices is generating demand for solar energy and recognition of the role it can play as a cornerstone in the coalfields’ economic transition. Last year, we released a technical roadmap showcasing solar’s potential to increase local prosperity and generate millions of dollars in wages and energy savings—building local wealth that would remain local. To help the industry take root, the roadmap recommends state-level policy reforms, including expanding third-party ownership of solar projects and remedying outdated rules that put communities at a disadvantage. We’re now partnering with community leaders to jumpstart the local solar industry by developing sites profiled in the roadmap.



As technological and market forces disrupt the electric sector, monopoly utilities are attempting to rebrand as leaders of the clean energy revolution and rig the system to ensure their business model remains intact. This trend spells disaster for families who struggle to pay their bills while utilities rake in billions and routinely raise rates. Appalachian Voices is responding to this pivotal moment, educating policymakers about the energy burden placed on rural communities when profit-driven companies get their wish list. Over the past year, we’ve opposed harmful rate reforms backed by Dominion, Duke Energy, and the Tennessee Valley Authority. At the same time, we’re leading a movement to make rural electric cooperatives in our region more democratic and responsive to their members.

## Advocating for the Energy Consumer



Photo: Kent Mason

## Combating a Toxic Legacy

Decades of resource extraction have scarred the Appalachian landscape, and communities across our region continue to suffer the consequences of an overreliance on burning coal for electricity. Now, as coal declines, the enormous costs to reclaim the land and clean up the toxic waste it has left behind are becoming clear. The White House may want to take us backward, but coal-impacted communities are looking ahead and asking for help to address the threats in their backyards.

### Restoring Post-Mine Lands

Appalachian Voices is working locally and in Washington, D.C., to build the movement for a land restoration economy in Central Appalachia. Last summer, our efforts on Capitol Hill helped lead a U.S. House of Representatives committee to pass the RECLAIM Act, a bipartisan bill that would direct \$1 billion to support ecological restoration and economic rejuvenation in communities where new investments are most needed. As we called on Congress to pass the RECLAIM Act, Appalachian Voices also helped to expand a pilot program modeled after the bill, securing \$10 million for innovative mine land reclamation projects in Southwest Virginia.



*Appalachian Voices Senior Legislative Representative Thom Kay testifies before Congress about the reclamation of abandoned mine lands.*



Our work to fight mountaintop removal coal mining has been concentrated at the community level as the White House and Congress block paths to create positive change. Throughout 2017, we raised awareness, generated public comments, and drove turnout to hearings related to mine permits in Virginia, Tennessee, and West Virginia. We secured court victories affirming the rights of citizens and groups like Appalachian Voices to actively police our waterways, and we trained citizens to monitor mining near their communities and submit complaints to state agencies. We have been a constant critical voice, calling out the Trump administration's giveaways to its friends in the coal industry.

## Protecting Our Mountains



*"It is time for our state's elected leaders and public servants to tell Duke once and for all to clean out all its leaky coal ash basins. It is time to tell Duke and its pipeline partners that the Atlantic Coast Pipeline is much too great a risk to our waters, health, and the future of North Carolina."*

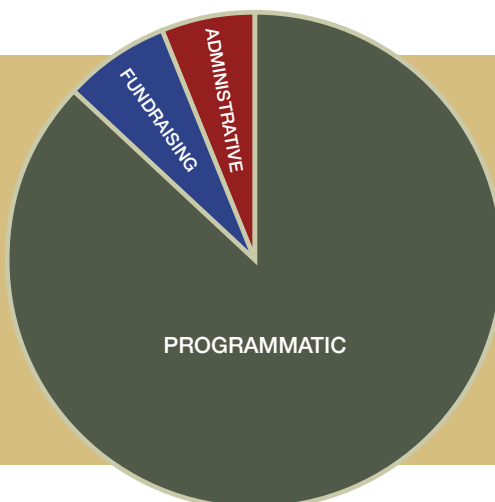
—Amy Adams, Appalachian Voices N.C. Program Manager, in the News & Observer

## Cleaning Up Coal Ash

Appalachian Voices is keeping up a fight for clean water and environmental justice that began years before a massive coal ash spill drew national attention to North Carolina's Dan River. In 2017, we continued to support a coalition of citizens who live near some of the state's largest coal plants and implored Gov. Roy Cooper, state lawmakers, and regulators to act. Our partnerships with community members allowed us to defeat an attempt by policymakers to roll back a state law that requires Duke Energy to recycle coal ash. And, even as we built productive relationships with North Carolina's environmental and public health officials, we drew attention in state newspapers and national magazines to the state's counterproductive deference to Duke.

# Financials

<b>Programmatic:</b>	\$1,953,988.16	87%
<b>Fundraising:</b>	\$160,371.74	7%
<b>Administrative:</b>	\$123,416.49	6%
<b>Total:</b>	\$2,237,776.39	



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Kim Maguire	Adam Nemett	Lee Rhodes	Craig and Barbara Siegel	Suzanne Van Loon	Darlene Wolf
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Charlene V. Maker	Aaron Newlander	Michael Richards	Jane Simpson	Suzanne VanLoon	Ellis Woodward
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Louise and Mark Milford		Donald Saunders	Kenneth Strickland		
Josh Miller					

**In Honor of:**  
 Kate and Dan Boyle  
 Sam and Caroline Haubold  
 Steven and Ruth Martin  
 Tim Lawson

**In Memory of:**  
 Larry Gibson

# Raising Our Voice



*“A Sweet Maple Harvest: Maple Syrup in Central and Southern Appalachia”*

*“Resistance to Pipelines Across the East”*



*“Hidden Treasures: Fishing and Swimming Spots”*

*“A Burning Issue: Health Costs of Coal Ash”*



*“Harnessing Solar in Appalachia”*



*“The Rising Menace of the Fracked Gas Industry”*



*The Appalachian Voice* is our free bimonthly newspaper that covers outdoor, environmental, and cultural news in Central and Southern Appalachia. With an estimated readership of 150,000 and a team of 180 dedicated volunteer distributors across the region, *The Appalachian Voice* allows us to share the beauty and value of our mountains and inform our audience about the environmental and energy issues that affect communities.



## AppalachianVoices

**BOONE**  
589 West King Street  
Boone, NC 28607  
828.262.1500

**CHARLOTTESVILLE**  
812 East High Street  
Charlottesville, VA 22902  
434.293.6373

**KNOXVILLE**  
2507 Mineral Springs  
Ave. Suite D  
Knoxville, TN 37917  
865.291.0083 ext. 700

**NORTON**  
816 Park Avenue NW  
Norton, VA 24273  
276.679.1691

[AppalachianVoices.org](http://AppalachianVoices.org)