



AppalachianVoices

Celebrating 25 years

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Twenty-five years ago — in July, 1997 — a group of forward-thinking individuals turned the budding *The Appalachian Voice* newspaper into an organization dedicated to protecting our region’s communities and natural heritage from extractive industry. Their initiative and the hard work they set in motion would lead to the formidable force for change that Appalachian Voices is today.

In 1997, the points of conflict were more specific and local. Today, the threat of climate change looms above all: a worldwide threat. But even in a global context, Appalachia remains a fulcrum in the larger movement to restore and defend our natural world. Few biomes in North America rival Appalachia for biodiversity, but the region has too often been ravaged and plundered for the extraction and transport of the mineral wealth that lies beneath it.

As the world confronts the end of oil and natural gas as mainstays fueling its electrical grids, Appalachian Voices leads the fight in our region for a just and equitable transition to renewable energy. This fight demands our highest and best efforts, for nothing less will move our broken energy systems and the special interests they serve. Ours is a moment that demands every community, including those who have been overlooked and underrepresented, be the authors of the new, generative economic future that Appalachia deserves.

At a pivotal time for the nation and the world, we are pleased to provide this report to show you what you have helped to achieve over that 25-year history, and in particular the last year when the scale of our collective impact has reached new heights. On the local, regional, state, and federal levels, Appalachian Voices continues to make extraordinary progress bringing commonsense, grassroots perspectives to the attention of policymakers and legislators who need to hear them. The result is cleaner air and water, protection of our mountains, creeks, and forests, and more thriving communities. And at “25 years young,” we know there’s a lot more where that came from.

Thank you for your commitment, your membership, and your investment in our shared work.



Tom

Tom Cormons
Executive Director



Kate

Kate Boyle
Deputy Executive Director



Our immense traction in 2021 and early 2022 builds on decades of success together as we celebrate our 25th anniversary.

Turn the page to see 25 years of impact...

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25 years of Impact

● 1997 - Appalachian Voices is chartered as a nonprofit one year after the first issue of *The Appalachian Voice* newspaper is published

● 1998 - Begin organizing in West Virginia to end mountaintop removal

● 2002 - Pass the N.C. Clean Smokestacks Act, one of the strongest air pollution laws in the country at the time

● 2003 - Launch national campaign to end mountaintop removal mining

● 2006 - Co-found The Alliance for Appalachia and launch iLoveMountains.org

● 2008 - Expose TVA's misinformation with our on-the-ground response to the Kingston, Tenn., coal ash disaster

● 2009 - Win major commitment from the Obama Administration to reduce the permitting of mountaintop removal coal mines

● 2010 - Win an unprecedented legal case against Kentucky coal mines, documenting 30,000 violations of the Clean Water Act

● 2012 - Defeat proposal for the largest coal-fired power plant in Virginia

● 2013 - Launch program to encourage energy efficiency programs at rural electric cooperatives

● 2014 - Help bring national spotlight to three coal-related disasters: N.C.'s Dan River coal ash spill, W.Va.'s Elk River chemical spill and coal slurry spill

● 2015 - Launch campaign to fight the fracked-gas Atlantic Coast and Mountain Valley pipelines

● 2018 - Release report detailing innovative cleanup options for 20 abandoned mines in Central Appalachia

● 2019 - After a five-year effort by AV and partners, an N.C. state agency orders Duke Energy to excavate coal ash stored at six sites

● 2020 • Defeat Atlantic Coast Pipeline as part of a six-year, multi-organization grassroots effort
• Successfully stop utility shut-offs for struggling families in N.C. and Va. during the Covid-19 pandemic
• Co-launch the National Economic Transition Platform outlining federal priorities for coal-impacted communities, many of which were adopted by the Biden transition team

● 2021 • President Biden appoints Executive Director Tom Cormons to the White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council
• Help secure \$11.3 billion to clean up Abandoned Mine Lands
• Receive award of \$1.5 million for the Appalachian Solar Finance Fund to support solar projects for coal-impacted communities in Appalachia



This year, Appalachian Voices celebrates 25 years of bringing people together to defend the region's communities and rich biodiversity by shepherding a clean energy future for all.

Building a new Appalachian economy

Renewable energy and economic development in historic coal communities

Appalachian Voices was thrilled to receive an Appalachian Regional Commission award and co-launch the **Appalachian Solar Finance Fund** in the fall of 2021. This fund is financing the **installation of solar panels across six states in Central Appalachia**. With our partners at the Central Appalachian Network, we are bringing millions of dollars in much-needed investments in clean energy. The fund is eliminating barriers to low energy costs by providing grants and technical assistance to local non-profit organizations, schools, and small businesses.

Over the coming years the Appalachian Solar Finance Fund will support over 60 projects that will:

- **create over 280 jobs**
- **generate 5 megawatts of clean energy**
- **save \$5.4 million in energy costs**

As part of the Solar Finance Fund, we've partnered with local community colleges to launch **the Solar Accelerator to provide on-the-job training for new solar industry workers in coal-impacted counties**. Additionally, our Energy Storage and Electrification Manufacturing Jobs project continues to help legacy coal manufacturers in Southwest Virginia expand and evolve their businesses to meet the demand for a clean energy economy. **Appalachian Voices is working with four companies to retain and create 200 jobs supporting solar and electrification where coal is in decline.**

In addition to our strides on commercial and public buildings, we relaunched our Residential Solarize program in Southwest Virginia, providing over 100 assessments to interested homeowners about how solar can work for them. **Fifteen residential systems have already been installed from the program.**

Advancing environmental justice

We're lifting the voices and issues of Appalachians to the highest power in the land.

Appalachian Voices' Executive Director Tom Cormons was appointed to the White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council in early 2021.

His service on the council is helping America realize the Biden Administration's Justice40 pledge — **ensuring that 40% of benefits from climate and clean energy investments are made in places that need them most, including those heavily impacted by fossil fuel extraction and use in Appalachia.**

This profound engagement at the federal level is informed by our work locally and regionally to advance inclusive, equitable solutions to the climate and energy crisis. Tom's service is not only advancing our policy recommendations with Congress and the White House, but is also bringing the voices of Appalachians to the forefront.

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A mountaintop removal mining site in Wise County, Virginia. Mountaintop removal mining and its ecological destruction continues today, remaining a serious threat to the health and safety of Appalachians.

Addressing the devastating impacts of coal

Coal's costly legacy and today's opportunity

We've had wins and sobering realizations this year when it comes to addressing coal's legacy in our region. **Our team worked with legislators and partners to ensure that Abandoned Mine Lands were a priority** in the bipartisan infrastructure bill — ultimately **securing the largest investment in this work in history with \$11.3 billion for cleaning up and restoring abandoned mines.** This is a huge win for Appalachia and other coal-impacted lands around the country.

There are over 633,000 acres of unreclaimed contemporary mines (almost equal to the land area of the entire state of Rhode Island)

Our Central Appalachian Senior Program Manager Erin Savage wrote a report, "Repairing the Damage," uncovering the catastrophic failures of the modern mining industry to protect the land, air, water, and people around modern coal mining facilities. **There are over 633,000 acres of land that require reclamation that will cost upwards of \$9 billion** — and that's just in the East. The decline in the coal industry has led to more bankruptcies, which means more coal companies abandoning their responsibility to clean up their mess. We're positioned at the cutting edge of this issue — working with both state and federal agencies to address the precarious cliff that the coal industry sits on as it inches closer to its inevitable failure.

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To address these issues of coal company bankruptcies, idled mines, and insufficient bonds, **we're taking action at the federal level and supporting the RENEW Act.** We were the driving force behind this new bill, introduced in June, which would tackle the crisis by making cleanup funds available to states once the agencies have exhausted all avenues to get the coal company responsible for the mess to clean it up. This would keep the burden of unreclaimed mines from falling on nearby communities. We're also demanding that the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement bring on leadership that prioritizes proper mine reclamation, which could lead to the creation of tens of thousands of jobs and large-scale environmental restoration.

We continue to fight for miners' rights and ensure that coal miners who are disabled from black lung disease receive the medical benefits entitled to them by law. **The inclusion of a permanent extension of the excise tax on coal to fund the Black Lung Disability Trust Fund in the recent Inflation Reduction Act is an important and historic victory** in our work to represent those most acutely affected by the health impacts of the mining industry.



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Putting power in the hands of the people

Fighting for clean energy and energy justice for all

Moving TVA from laggard to leader in the clean energy transition

The Tennessee Valley Authority, the nation's largest federally owned utility, is falling behind in the clean energy transition, replacing coal-burning plants with other dirty fossil fuels and constructing more unnecessary pipelines. Appalachian Voices is organizing with local community members to advocate for clean and just renewable energy investments at two old coal-burning plants that TVA wants to convert to burn methane gas. We released an innovative report showing that renewable energy alternatives would create 20 to 30 times more long-term jobs than TVA's gas plan. We also joined partners to create the Clean Up TVA Coalition and held the well-attended People's TVA hearing and Take Back TVA rally, building power to reform this powerful public utility.

Democratizing electric co-ops

We are advocating for transparent, democratic management and clean energy growth in rural electric cooperatives. We don't want to see co-ops left behind in the transition to renewable power and denied the benefits of the clean energy economy. As a founding member of the Rural Power Coalition, we have successfully advanced legislation in Congress to help co-ops retire coal plants and invest in renewable energy. In Virginia, we're working with partners to support member-owners of local rural electric cooperatives across the state to ensure their cooperatives operate in a transparent and democratic manner.

Building off the success of our Tennessee Co-op Scorecard, which ranks state co-ops to help member-owners hold them accountable, we've worked with partners this year to release co-op scorecards in Virginia and Alabama. We're also currently building a scorecard of the 26 electric co-ops across the state of North Carolina.



We're holding monopoly utilities accountable and creating an equitable clean-energy future

Appalachian Voices' intervention with the State Corporation Commission led Virginia's monopoly utility, Dominion Energy, to return \$330 million to the hands of ratepayers in 2022 alongside a \$50 million rate reduction for customers. This was a huge public interest victory over this influential corporation, though it would have gone farther had Virginia law not limited it. We continue to advance policies that would ensure utilities like Dominion can't continue to rig the system for their own corporate gain.

In North Carolina, we're working to counter monopoly power. Alongside environmental, racial and social justice advocates and impacted community members, we're creating a movement to transform our inequitable energy system into one that prioritizes the health and welfare of communities over profit. Appalachian Voices is embarking on the creation of a "People's Energy Plan" that we are collaboratively developing with communities across the state to bring an equitable and community-based vision to our energy system.



Stopping Fracked Gas Expansion

Appalachian Voices continues to fight unnecessary pipelines

2022 began with a major victory for our partners in **Charles City County with the cancellation of a new gas-fired plant and natural gas pipeline across central Virginia**. Appalachian Voices worked with our friends at Concerned Citizens of Charles City County (C5) to mobilize and resist more investments in fossil fuels in Virginia.

Mountain Valley Pipeline

The last year has proved to be pivotal for **the Mountain Valley Pipeline**, a project that is **now four years behind schedule and more than double its projected cost at \$6.6 billion**. Appalachian Voices and partners recently prevailed in several legal challenges to the project. Earlier this year, the court vacated Trump administration permitting decisions in both the Endangered Species Act and national forest cases, protecting two endangered fish species (including the candy darter, pictured opposite) and denying the pipeline approval to cross through the Jefferson National Forest. There remain several legal battles for the pipeline on the horizon, including our challenge of West Virginia and Virginia's Clean Water Act permit, and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's certificate extension decision is looming as we fight a radical federal legislative proposal that would shred environmental protections and attempt to pave the way for the Mountain Valley Pipeline.

Appalachian Voices helped lead the multi-state "Violation Vigil" solidarity event featuring Rev. William Barber leading up to the Virginia 401 Water Quality Certification board hearing in December 2021. The event highlighted MVP's 300 water violations and lack of compliance with environmental safeguards.

The MVP Southgate extension into North Carolina is facing steep challenges with the NC Department of Environmental Quality denying the MVP's Clean Water Act 401 permit for a second time. The Virginia Air Pollution Control board denied a necessary permit for the MVP Southgate compressor station, citing the Environmental Justice Act, which Appalachian Voices was integrally involved in during the 2020 Virginia General Assembly.

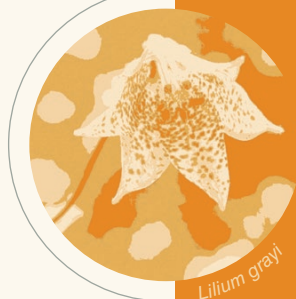
"As an impacted resident fighting to keep my home and community safe from the now-canceled Chickahominy Pipeline, I was able to count on Appalachian Voices as an invaluable partner and effective ally. From subject and regulatory process expertise, to direct support of those threatened by unnecessary fossil fuel projects, Appalachian Voices is a trusted, unyielding community-minded organization."

— Lynn P. Wilson
Sandston, Virginia



Photo: T. Travis Brown/U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The endangered candy darter, a native fish species whose existence is threatened by the destruction of its natural habitat due to the Mountain Valley Pipeline.



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2021 FINANCIAL IMPACT

Thanks to your hard work and generosity, 2021 was our most impactful year yet.

Total 2021 revenue:
\$3,758,486



Major donors:
\$1,968,311



Grants:
\$1,593,289



Government Grants:
\$131,813*

*Includes Paycheck Protection Program loan

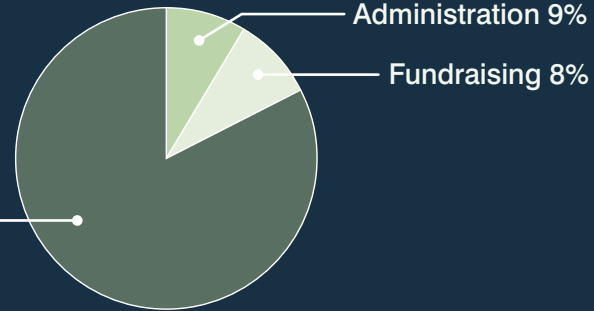


Memberships:
\$55,520



Other Sources:
\$9,553

Expenses:
\$2,800,539



Programs 83%

Administration 9%

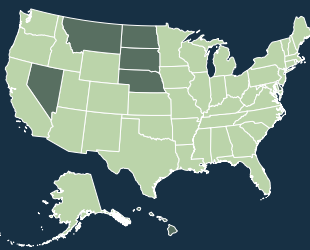
Fundraising 8%

Individual Donors:

1,198

Foundation Partners:

25



Members in

44

states
and Washington, D.C.

Mountain Protectors:

64



Appalachian Voices is rated a four-star charity by Charity Navigator. We put every dollar you invest to good use by keeping our administrative and fundraising costs low in order to maximize our impact.



Appalachian Voices staff in action



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