



ABRA Update #54 – November 11, 2015

Forest Service Blasts ACP About Soils Survey Work

The U.S. Forest Service (NFS) has sharply criticized the failure of the Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP) to follow appropriate procedures in soil testing in the Monongahela and George Washington National Forests. In a November 5 letter filed with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, Clyde Thompson, Forest Supervisor for the Monongahela National Forest and speaking on behalf of the entire agency, said that the results of soils surveys conducted by the ACP cannot be used to evaluate the project.

Thompson said that communications with ACP on appropriate protocols to be used in soils testing began in February 2015. “ACP was undiligent in following the Forest Service’s protocols and responding to the Forest Service’s requests to review qualifications of field personnel.” Continuing, he said:

“Furthermore, the Forest Service recommends the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) not utilize data from soils surveys conducted to date on NFS lands in the preparation of the environmental impact statement. We remain concerned that ACP identified its preferred route and filed an application with the FERC without first completing the soils and geology surveys. Results of soils and geology surveys should be considered in the process of route selection.”

A copy of the NFS filing is at http://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/USFS_Urges_FERC_To_Reject_ACP_Soil_Surveys_20151105-5194-31009040.pdf.

President Issues Mitigation Guidance on Natural Resources Impacts

President Obama issued on November 3 a Presidential Memorandum encouraging certain Federal agencies “to share and adopt a common set of their best practices to mitigate for harmful impacts to natural resources.” The affected agencies are the Departments of Defense, Agriculture and Interior, the Environmental Protection Agency and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, as an independent agency, is not subject to most Presidential directives.

The Memorandum defines “mitigation” as “avoiding, minimizing, rectifying, reducing over time, and compensating for impacts on natural resources.” The document goes on to say that when a resource’s value is determined to be irreplaceable, the preferred means of achieving goals “is through avoidance, consistent with applicable legal authorities.”

A copy of the Presidential Memorandum is at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/11/03/mitigating-impacts-natural-resources-development-and-encouraging-related>.

Senator Deeds Calls for a PEIS

Virginia State Senator Creigh Deeds has urged the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to conduct a programmatic environmental impact statement (PEIS) on all the pending natural gas pipelines that are pending or expected to be pending before the agency. Sen. Deeds’ letter is at: http://elibrary.ferc.gov/idmws/file_list.asp?accession_num=20151106-5155.

ABRA Committee Appointments Announced

Members of the new committees of the Allegheny-Blue Ridge Alliance have been appointed. The committees, created by the ABRA Steering Committee and announced in the October 14 Update, will take the lead in developing programs and strategies to expand ABRA's efforts. The committees and their members are:

1. Legal Committee – responsible for providing legal analysis and developing legal strategies when circumstances warrant.

Greg Buppert, Southern Environmental Law Center, Chair
Tammy Belinsky, Dominion Pipeline Monitoring Coalition
Rick Cornelius, All Pain No Gain
Anne Havemann, Chesapeake Climate Action Network
Joe Lovett, Appalachian Mountain Advocates
David Sligh, Wild Virginia.

2. Outreach and Advocacy Committee – responsible for overseeing the development of messages and/or strategies for: 1) communications to the media and the general public; 2) advocacy initiatives directed at regulatory and legislative bodies at the local, state and federal levels; and 3) developing grass roots initiatives.

Nancy Sorrells, Augusta County Alliance, Chair
Joe Jeeva Abbate, Yogaville
Misty Boos, Wild Virginia
Faye Cooper, Cooper Conservation Advisors LLC
Drew Gallagher, Chesapeake Climate Action Network
Charlotte Rea, Dominion Pipeline Monitoring Coalition
Angie Rosser, West Virginia Rivers Coalition
Joanna Salidis, Friends of Nelson County
Kate Wofford, Shenandoah Valley Network

3. Environmental Resources Committee – responsible for monitoring all aspects of the development and (should it occur) construction of the Atlantic Coast Pipeline, and developing appropriate response strategies. The Dominion Pipeline Monitoring Coalition will serve as the Environmental Resources Committee (see <http://pipelineupdate.org/about/> for members). Leadership will be:

Rick Webb, Dominion Pipeline Monitoring Coalition, General Coordinator
Misty Boos, Wild Virginia, Coordinator
Dan Shaffer, ABRA, Coordinator

4. Finance Committee – oversees the finances of ABRA, including securing funding sources.

Kate Wofford, Shenandoah Valley Network, Chair
Faye Cooper, Cooper Conservation Advisors LLC
Bruce Rinker, Valley Conservation Council
Larry Thomas, West Virginia Highlands Conservancy

As the committees begin to function additional members will be added. Also, in coming weeks some special task forces to deal with specific areas of concern will be announced.

Fundraising Campaign Approved by ABRA Steering Committee

The ABRA Steering Committee has approved a new fundraising effort to acquire needed support for the expanded coalition activity recommended by those attending the October 24 ABFA planning meeting. A concerted effort is underway to apply for foundation grants. In addition, contributions from ABRA member organizations and individuals are to be solicited.

A fundraising letter from Finance Committee Chair Kate Wofford will be sent this week to ABRA voting representatives.. It is hoped that all ABRA members can make a contribution in some amount. Full participation will enhance the ability of the organization to attract greater attention from the foundations to which it applies.

In the News:

Local/Atlantic Coast Pipeline

Forest Service accuses Atlantic Coast Pipeline of misrepresentation in soil surveys

- Richmond Times Dispatch – 11/6/15

http://www.richmond.com/news/virginia/article_4e8d5d3c-3220-5c0d-b72a-8af655aa3ff6.html

US Forest Service urges FERC to reject the results of ACP's soil surveys

Opinion/Editorial: Surveys for pipeline are crucial step

- The Daily Progress – 11/9/15

http://www.dailyprogress.com/opinion/opinion-editorial-surveys-for-pipeline-are-crucial-step/article_a38ab6b6-872d-11e5-8d47-0bd458051554.html

We are forced to wonder what other shoddy or *shady* work Dominion has been doing

Commissioners Hear Concerns About Atlantic Coast Pipeline

- The Johnston County Report – 11/6/15

<http://www.jocoreport.com/commissioners-hear-concerns-about-atlantic-coast-pipeline/>

It turns out not ALL is quiet on the Eastern Front! ACP finds restless natives all along its route...

Regional/Mountain Valley Pipeline, other

Keystone off the table, but back East, a growing web of pipelines spawns resistance

- New York Times – 11/9/15

http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2015/11/09/us/ap-us-pipeline-to-protests.html?_r=0

Virginia has become an epicenter of the anti-pipeline movement

Roanoke Co. BOS approves intervenor in fight against Mountain Valley Pipeline

- WSLs10.com – 11/10/15

<http://wsls.com/2015/11/10/roanoke-co-bos-approves-intervenor-in-fight-against-mountain-valley-pipeline/>

Roanoke BOS furthers its involvement

PennEast foes say pipeline jobs numbers are bloated

- NJ.com – 11/4/15

http://www.nj.com/mercerc/index.ssf/2015/11/penneast_foes_say_pipeline_jobs_numbers_are_bloate.html

ACP not the only one touting questionable economic benefits

Big Picture:

Congressional Energy Chairs Form Fundraising Committee, Rake In Oil, Gas Cash As They Push Bills For Fossil Fuel Industry

- International Business Times – 11/5/2015

<http://www.ibtimes.com/congressional-energy-chairs-form-fundraising-committee-rake-oil-gas-cash-they-push-2170149>

Wait, government officials are profiting and fundraising while passing legislation favoring industries that their committees are supposed to regulate? Really?! Wow!

Advocates Eye New Push To Force FERC Review Of Pipelines' GHG Effects

- Climate Daily News – 11/6/15

http://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Advocates_Eye_New_Push_To_Force_FERC_Review_Of_Pipelines_GHG_Effects_InsideEPAclimate_2015-11-09.pdf

FERC has been fighting dirty...opponents eye new strategies

California ballot initiative would eliminate IOUs, establish statewide public utility

- Utility Dive – 11/3/15

<http://www.utilitydive.com/news/california-ballot-initiative-would-eliminate-ioues-establish-statewide-publ/408452/>

What if we *didn't* have Dominion?

Proposed natural gas pipeline raises major social justice concerns

- Grist – 11/4/2015

<http://grist.org/climate-energy/proposed-natural-gas-pipeline-raises-major-social-justice-concerns/>

Under the local radar until recently, Sabal Trail getting hit from all sides...

EPA letter could change course of gas pipeline

- Suwannee Democrat – 11/9/2015

http://www.suwanneedemocrat.com/news/epa-letter-could-change-course-of-gas-pipeline/article_254a3878-86e5-11e5-85c5-43c7adae651e.html

More on the Sabal Trail pipeline proposal

Utica Shale: the best and the worst of shale plays?

- Pittsburg Post-Gazette – 11/9/15

<http://powersource.post-gazette.com/powersource/companies/2015/11/09/If-the-Utica-Shale-is-the-next-big-play-it-could-be-bad-news-for-the-natural-gas-market-Marcellus-Pennsylvania-fracking/stories/201511080098>

Word is out about the *next* big boondoggle for the gas industry