

controlling for age, smoking, and other factors. Toxic chemicals such as manganese, arsenic, iron, barium, lead, selenium and other contaminants related to mining often exceed US EPA standards in wells and streams near mountaintop removal sites-making it difficult for coalfield residents to find clean drinking water, bathe, and wash clothes.

Threatening a culture- Youth disparity is common in Appalachia. Pamela Meade Sargent, U.S. Magistrate Judge emphasized, "To a child of Appalachia, to see the mountains laid waste, whether by clear-cutting or strip mining, is to witness a dagger plunged into the very bosom from which you sprang and which has sustained you." In addition, long-time residents, many of whose family roots in Appalachia go back for generations and generations, suffer immensely as the streams and mountains they hold dear disappear.

Devastating the economy- Poverty is persistent in the Appalachian region. The Appalachian Regional Ministry calls the area one of America's poverty pockets, boasting 37% of America's most impoverished counties. Heavy blasting, land degradation and other effects of mountaintop removal devalue land and property for residents and crush the possibility of moving. Local residents are left in hopeless situations- caught in a cycle of loss and inopportunity. Surface mining provides only 1.2% of jobs in WV and generates just 2.6% of WV's revenue and counties predominated by surface mining are some of the poorest in the country. Furthermore, less than 7% of mountaintop removal sites studied had quality economic development after mining. Numerous studies show that communities with single source economies such as mining are especially sensitive to

economic decline and turbulence, as has certainly been the case with coalfield communities in Appalachia.

Why should Christians care?

In Gen 1:31, God saw ALL that he had made, called it VERY good. God lovingly and thoughtfully created this earth- including the Appalachian Mountains- and instructs us to care for it (Gen 2:15).

Do we really need any other reason to protect the streams and mountains of Appalachia?

What's more, Luke 10:27 states "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind; and love your neighbor as yourself." Mountaintop removal is causing suffering to our neighbors in central Appalachia. As Christians, we are called to speak out against this kind of injustice.

What can you do?

In our efforts to protect God's creation and care for our neighbors in Appalachia, Christians from across the country are working together to end the tragedy of mountaintop removal. We hope you will join us!

•**Learn more** . . . Visit www.restoringeden.org

and sign up for our newsletter!

•**Get active** . . . Contact annajane@restoringeden.org to find out how to get involved in Restoring Eden's efforts to end mountaintop removal!

•**Serve** . . . For more information on Restoring Eden's service-learning trips to the coalfields of Appalachia please email annajane@restoringeden.org

•**Host**... A viewing of Coal Country or Deep Down, two great documentaries that explore the struggles of coalfield residents in Appalachia <http://www.coalcountrythemovie.com/> and <http://www.deepdownfilm.org/>

•**Change your daily life** . . . make changes to conserve energy in your daily life. Contact us for ideas!

•**Support** . . . give to Restoring Eden to support our work to end the tragedy of mountaintop removal

•**Share** . . . Tell your friends and leaders about mountaintop removal! Share these stories with friends, explore ways to engage your local community in this critical issue, reach out to church and governmental leaders and ask them to stand up for the people and mountains of Appalachia by working to end this American tragedy (for more information and ideas email: annajane@restoringeden.org)



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