



Coal Ash Ponds

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Coal ash is a byproduct of coal combustion. The toxic waste is gathered in a pond to help reduce harmful emissions, such as sulfur, from entering the atmosphere. With fluidized bed combustors located on the bottom of these ponds, ranging from 27 to 512 acres long, the ash material is collected and effectually evaporates over time.

Issue at hand

Coal ash ponds are not only found in North Carolina's mountains but can also be found from the piedmont down to the coast of North Carolina. In mid December of 2008, a major Tennessee coal power plant (not far from the North Carolina border) released 1.1 billion gallons of coal ash due to a malfunction of its coal ash pond buffer. This covered over 300 acres damaging land, wildlife, and property. As recent as October 2009 an independent report shows all of North Carolina coal burning plants are leaking harmful pollutants, from coal ash reservoirs, into lakes, rivers, and streams ranging in access of 1.1 to 380 times higher than North Carolina's groundwater standard.

Unfortunately there's little to no regulation on Coal Ash disposal. Coal combustion and the waste it develops pose major health concerns from birth defects, cancer, liver damage, neurological disorders, and even death. Having strict regulations on the disposal and clean up on coal combustion and its waste is needed to prevent future damage.

Alternatives...

There are obvious health hazards these toxic landfills have and the risk of spillage or leakage from these ponds seems to be fairly common, no matter where the storage site is located.

The EPA is currently working on the reclassification of both dry and wet coal ash waste.

While the EPA is working hard on reclassifying the status of coal ash waste utilities, such as the Tennessee Valley Authorities (TVA), are working hard to provide alternatives to safely dispose of the coal ash waste.

While we can use coal ash in products such as carpeting, golf course fillers, and kitchen countertops many still believe that its not a safe product to use as an ingredient with the many things we come in contact with.



Learn more

APPALACHIAN VOICES

<http://www.appvoices.org/index.php?/site/>

60 MINUTES REPORT

<http://earth911.com/blog/2009/10/12/the-coal-ash-debate/>

2009 NC STUDIES

http://appvoices.org/resources/Final_Duke_Progress_Coal_Ash_Pond_Ground_Water_Violations_Maximum_October_2009.pdf

EPA UPDATES

http://www.environmentalintegrity.org/news_reports.php