

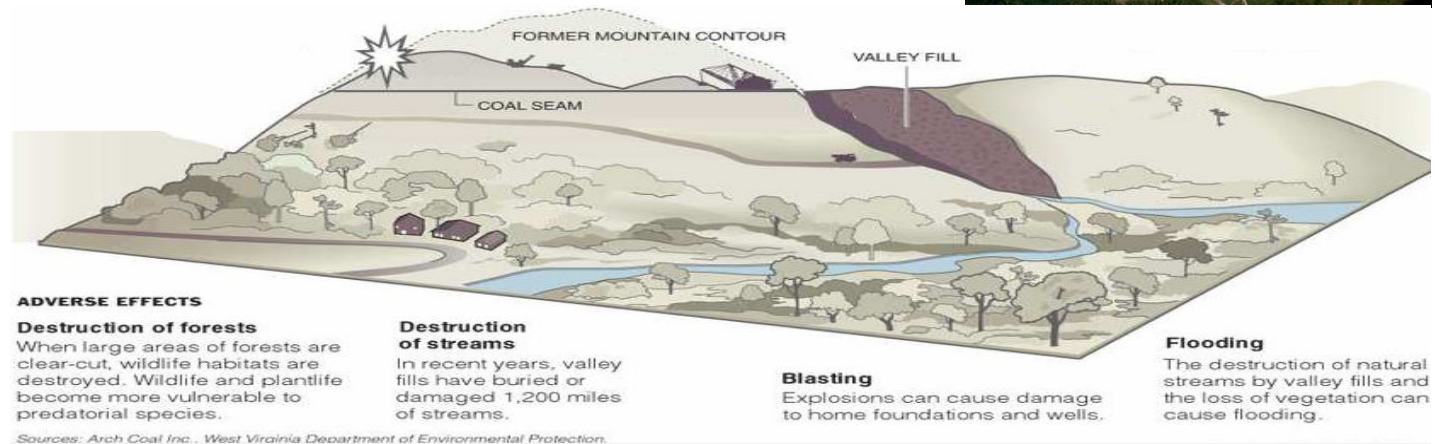
## Mountaintop Removal

### Mountaintop Removal

Our attempt to become energy independent requires us to find resources in our own backyard. Mountaintop removal is a form of mining coal which is more economical and safer from traditional underground mining. Commonly used in the Appalachian Mountains, mountaintop removal involves using explosives at the peak of a mountain exposing coal seams used to burn as energy used for local communities.

The EPA estimates that over 2,000 square miles of Appalachian forest will be cleared by 2012 from Mountaintop practices. By first deforesting land lumber is either sold or burnt. Once land is cleared miners use explosives to blow away overburden (rock and topsoil) to get to the coal seams. The overburden is then removed and transported to an area left for a valley fill.

The practice of mountaintop removal leaves lands devastated. Pollution from the many vehicles transporting the material back and fourth, the burning of coal, explosive dust leaving hazardous materials along property and habitat, and then the damage done with the relocation of overburden. Studies from the EPA, going back to 1985, show that streams near valley fills show higher levels of minerals with decrease aquatic diversity. That same study also shows over 700 miles of streams between 1985 to 2001 buried by valley fills.



## What's been done...

Our state legislators are in the process of passing a bill 2009 making it illegal for electric public utilities in North Carolina to purchase or use coal from dynamiting mountains along the Appalachian mountain range after recent, December 2008, federal law made it easier for mining companies to dump mountaintop materials into valleys and streams.

### Learn More

WIKIPEDIA MOUNTAINTOP REMOVAL

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountaintop\\_removal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountaintop_removal)

MOUNTAINTOP REMOVAL MODEL

<http://www.mountainjusticesummer.org/facts/steps.php>

NC HOUSE BILL

<http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/gascripts/BillLookUp/BillLookUp.pl?Session=2009&BillID=H340>