

Mountain Justice Spring Break Campus Coordinator Toolkit 2010

"I can't understand why there aren't rings of young people blocking bulldozers, and preventing them from constructing coal-fired power plants."

-Al Gore August 2007

"We are here because now is the time to take greater action as individuals, as communities, and as a country to create a sustainable future and stop the destruction of our homes."

**-Wise County Virginia resident Hannah Morgan ,
while locked to a steel barrel blocking the entrance
to a coal plant construction site. September 2008**

Mountain Justice Spring Break 2010 (MJSB) will bring you face to face with the devastating effects of mountain top removal and coal industry abuse – and give you the skills and knowledge you need to *fight back!* Through education, community service, speakers, hiking, music, poetry, direct action and more, you will join local communities in the struggle to maintain their land and culture.

The only way to create a just society is to bring people together for that common cause. This toolkit will give you the background information and techniques to organize your campus and peers, and will help you to help us build the movement. We need people like YOU to help bring people to MJSB, to be part of the revolution. Ready to be a campus coordinator?

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The Details about Mountaintop Removal in Appalachia

Coal has been mined in present-day United States since the early 1700s, and has since become the economic mainstay in parts of the Appalachian mountains, specifically West Virginia, Kentucky, Ohio, Virginia and Tennessee. Entire communities were built around coal mining and a unique Appalachian culture was born, all its own. Generations of mining men and women have extracted the coal which has allowed our modern cities and technology to grow. However, this progress has come with a price.

The Appalachian region has become essentially an energy colony, with coal extracted, and little given back to communities in return. Mining jobs have been lost since the mechanization of coal mining, from deep mining to mountain top removal. In addition, the water has become poisoned to the point where folks have to buy water in order to cook and bathe. The coal companies are after coal and profits, with no regard to the health or sustainability of the communities they work within. While coal mining provides some jobs, it also creates ecological devastation and dramatic health problems for numerous communities in Appalachia. Black lung, asthma, cancers, flood risks, unstable foundations and loss of wildlife habitat are some of the hazards the Appalachians face everyday. With little power to stand up to the oppressive coal companies, Appalachia has become a sacrifice zone for our wasteful and gluttonous energy demands in the US.



The burning of coal is responsible for 40% (2 billion tons/year) of US greenhouse gas emissions (RAN, 2008). With overwhelming evidence from scientists around the globe that climate change is a crisis we need to address immediately, continuing to burn coal at current rates is irresponsible and short-sighted. The United States is one of the richest and most privileged countries in the world's largest (per-capita) emitter of carbon dioxide on the planet. We are killing ourselves and the Earth by flirting with tipping points that are too close to call. Once surpassed these planetary feedback loops may be irreversible and the results tremendous. Rising sea levels, more frequent and powerful storms, desertification, coral bleaching, loss of biodiversity and droughts will alter life as we know it forever.

The current energy rhetoric in the United States has coal pinned as a necessity for continued power and electricity generation. The externalities of mountain top removal mining, buried headwater streams, poisoned groundwater, rising cancer rates and other negative health effects are ignored by the oppressive coal companies. With over 100 new coal plants on the drawing board, in various stages of development, national action must be taken to stop these energy monsters in their tracks. Lawsuits, civil disobedience, petitions, letter writing campaigns, phone banking, banner drops, film showings and numerous other tactics have been employed over the last few years to ramp up the pressure on the coal companies to stop the mindless destruction of Appalachia and our climate.

With such deep seeded roots in Appalachia, the coal companies hold a lot of clout. However, the Appalachian peoples' roots run much deeper and their history of resistance is evident in the growing movement to stop any new coal plants from being built and to end all forms of surface mining. The transition will take work, but it is necessary to sustain life in the Appalachian bioregion and the rest of the world. Climate change must be addressed now and coal is a major contributing factor.

The future we envision for Appalachia is one of health, community and sustainability. Before the grip of the coal companies, many Appalachians made their living in small businesses making and selling crafts, practicing herbalism, gardening, and raising livestock. While many still practice these trades, the majority of Appalachia has been taken over by the cloud of coal mining. One offshoot of Mountain Justice has been the formation of the Appalachian Community Economics forum, a place where alternative economic models can be shared and implemented. Better, healthier jobs are possible and are necessary to retain life in Appalachia. A just transition to clean energies, like solar, wind and geothermal power, are just around the bend. Local, community based solutions to the climate crisis will be what ultimately pulls Appalachia out from the oppressive thumb of King Coal. Join us as we create the world we wish to see!

MJSB's...

History

Mountain Justice (MJ) is a pan-Appalachian movement and campaign to stop mountain top removal through grassroots organizing, community empowerment and public education. MJ was framed after Mississippi



Freedom Summer in the Civil Rights Era to bring equal voting rights to African-Americans in the South. For five years, Mountain Justice has worked in the coalfields of TN, KY, WV, VA and OH to stop mountain top removal (MTR) mining and restore the health of the people and ecosystems therein.

Mountain Justice Spring break began after the success of Mountain Justice Summer. MJSB primarily focused its outreach to those of college age and brought them to the coalfields to learn about the culture of Appalachia, build relationships with the communities there and learn the skills they need to further the campaign to stop MTR.

In 2007, MJSB was held in the Coal River Valley of West Virginia. Just up the holler (valley), Marsh Fork Elementary sits 150 feet away from a coal processing plant and just downhill from a pond filled with 2.8 billion gallons of toxic coal sludge. The teachers and students are in danger of flooding and often sick as a result of the coal dust. Many community members have cried out to Gov. Joe Manchin for a new school, to no avail. At the end of the week, MJSBers sat in at the Governor's office to demand a new elementary school. In addition to direct action, youth and students at MJSB learned basic organizing skills, the role of anti-oppression in working for justice and change, and how to write effective letters to the editor and press releases to tell their stories.

In 2008, MJSB expanded to two weeks of organizing and action with two camps: one in Virginia, near Wise County, and one in Meigs County, Ohio. In Wise County, Dominion Resources has proposed a new 585MW [verified] coal plant. In Meigs County, American Municipal Power has four new coal plants on the table as well as mining and waste pond permits. Additionally, Bank of America and Citibank, the two largest financiers of coal and MTR mining were targeted. Out of the two weeks, there were seven direct actions and media hits all over the Southeast letting everyone know that the climate justice movement had spoken and would stand in solidarity with these communities to stop the destruction of their homes.

In 2009, MJSB was held in Tennessee, an hour away from Knoxville. It was an inspiring and productive week which ended with a rally at the TVA headquarters in downtown Knoxville calling attention to the dirty lifecycle of coal. The week also included water testing, service projects with local grassroots group United Mountain Defense, anti-oppression trainings, and lots of fun! Thanks to United Mountain Defense for working with us and working tirelessly on disaster relief of the TVA fly ash spill.



Goals

The goals of Mountain Justice Spring Break are the same goals held by the Mountain Justice movement. They are to:

1. Raise world-wide awareness of mountain top removal mining and its effects
2. Escalate resistance to MTR from a regional to a national level.
3. Build our support base for the campaign
4. Unify and strengthen regional groups fighting MTR.
5. Mobilize coordinated days of action using tactics ranging from public outreach to civil disobedience.
6. Maintain safety as a high priority
7. Debunk the myth of “clean” coal and “jobs versus the environment”.
8. Encourage conservation, efficiency, solar and wind power as alternatives to MTR and all forms of surface mining.

Our goal for MJSB is to educate, empower and activate students and youth to take action year round to stop mountain top removal mining and create the space to build sustainable and vibrant economies in its place.

Plans

Mountain Justice Spring Break is an alternative spring break with elements of *education, service, action* and of course, fun! From workshops on the history of coal and MTR, power dynamics, creating sustainable systems, and techniques in non-violent direct action, there is something for everyone! Wake up and stretch each morning with yoga and feast on three solid meals a day, with vegetarian and vegan options. The days consists of workshops, hiking, and service field trips, and the evenings wind down with entertainment and campfires. Students will have a chance to strengthen relationships and build networks with others in the Appalachian bioregion and beyond. Those who would like to also have the opportunity to train in non-violent direct action skills and put them into practice at the end of the week! The hope is that once MJSB is over, the momentum will continue and more and more people will become aware of the destruction happening to our precious land in

Appalachia. The aim is empowerment, both for the coalfield communities affected and for the students who join them. This is a chance to become inspired to organize and create something better for future generations.

This year, we will be in Southwest Virginia, March 12-21. We will have a multitude of workshops available to educate on multiple topics ranging from campus organizing, to environmental justice, to sustainable living methods to take home. Service work will be done with local grassroots organizations and we'll have the opportunity to learn directly from local activists and coal field residents about the role King Coal plays in the region. We'll also be performing direct actions to bring this issue of coal back to the big businesses that are creating this destruction as well as to bring this issue to the greater population in the region and the nation. Our desire, once again, is to educate, serve, and activate this spring break.

Significance of YOU

Many of those working in the Mountain Justice movement live in the coal fields, with family roots reaching back decades, even centuries in Appalachia. Others come from outside the coal fields and outside of Appalachia. All have a passion and relentless spirit to stop the destruction and to build vibrant and sustainable economies in its place. Many remember the first time they witnessed the effects of MTR, and the profound personal effect it had on them. The strength of Mountain Justice lies with each and every person who chooses to participate. Mountain Justice attempts to organize without hierarchy and our progress comes from each individual person and the synergy they create with each other. Monthly meetings occur regularly and an annual strategy meeting keeps the focus on our goals. Many working groups meet both online and offline to plan seasonal camps, educational opportunities, and actions. If you would like join the movement, there are email lists to receive more information and monthly meetings to attend. We hope as a first step you will attend Mountain Justice Spring Break!



How to use this Toolkit

One of the main ideas behind Mountain Justice Spring Break is that America's dirty coal secrets have remained hidden too long. Coming to MJSB allows you to see the injustices of coal first hand and then join the fight against them. Like all struggles, they are more fun when more fun people are there.

This toolkit will help you recruit a group of good folks, raise money, raise some awareness, and raise some eyebrows. Even if folks can't come to MJSB, you can use this as a chance to talk to your community about the impending Just Energy Revolution.

Getting the Word Out

Talk to Student Organizations

Recruiting from among student organizations allows you to target students based on their interests, recruit from a pool of already active students, and harness the groups' resources to further recruitment and fund your trip (see funding section for more details). Here are some things student groups can do:

- Host an MTR and Lifecycle of Coal Awareness week or day, including showing films, raising money, and hosting speakers and discussion about coal industry abuse.
- Invite their members to MJSB
- Provide funds to their members who attend
- Get the word out to their listserv and Facebook sites, and at their group meetings.

Here's how to do it:

1. Build a list of all student groups on campus. Make sure to identify environmental groups, but be creative and broaden your search to include other groups that have large networks (i.e. the ski club, greek system, religious groups, cultural groups, etc). Include contact info for group presidents (email, phone, office address). Feel free to use the outreach letter or create your own.
2. Follow up with a phone call, or just stop by the next meeting. This is essential. Most people don't respond just to an email.

Talk to Faculty, Staff and Administration

Reaching out to the faculty and staff at your school is crucial due to their access to students and funding mechanisms. Faculty and staff are powerful allies. They have a real stake in students' development and may see MJSB as an exciting opportunity for students. They also help you gain credibility and insight talking about energy injustice on your campus and in your community. Professors and staff can:

- Help you find speakers for discussions/presentations and informational days
- Help you find funding for your trip and raise funds for grass roots struggles
- Give recommendations of students to help you recruit for the conference
- Identify students who want to attend
- Use of class / department listserves (preferably an email written by the faculty member encouraging students to attend)
- Make announcement in their class (aka class rap)

Here's how to do it:

1. Make a big list of professors and staff to go to. This would include the professors you know, of course. But also other prominent professors or staff, especially those from biology, environmental studies, history. It could include the directors of community service programs and any sustainability programs. It would also include the Dean, the Vice Chancellor for student affairs, and even the campus president.
2. Send each person an email.
3. Follow up by phone or in person. Schedule a meeting to make a pitch for help.
4. Be persistent and watch the magic happen!

Facebook & Other Social Networking Websites

You know how these utilities are used to get the word out for just about anything days (whether it is an individual or a global commitment)! Feel free to use these tools as well.

Here's how to do it:

1. Create a MJSB 2010 Facebook group for your network. Use information and graphics from www.mjsb.org to stock your group page.
2. Search 'Mountain Justice Spring Break' to find MJSB's official Facebook to catch announcements.
3. Provide on-going updates about the conference to keep the group page fresh and dynamic.
4. Use the MJSB website badge (available on mjsb.org) to provide a flashy link to the MJSB website from your website or Facebook/Myspace page.
5. Post information about MJSB and links to the website on other groups' pages.
6. Use search function to invite students based on their interests

Fliers, Posters, and Handbills

On the MJSB website (www.mjsb.org) you will find some pre made Fliers, Posters and Handbills. Quick tips:

- Print them using old paper – collect old fliers (bright colors are better) and print MJSB fliers and handbills on the back side of them.
- Be sure to add the name of your club, when you meet, and a local contact for someone in your community if people want to go.
- Post fliers/posters early in the semester so people find out as soon as possible.
- Have MJSB handbills at all your events. These save paper and give people something to hold onto.

Fundraising and fun-raising

Grants

A great way to get the money to come to MJSB is to use the funds your school already has. A lot of times they have a sum of money that is specifically meant for students with great ideas and plans like attending educational events (just like this one!). You just need to find out where these funds are and convince them you are a worthy cause. No problem. However, when there is a limited pool of money for great opportunities like these you need to be sure to get working on it fast. So the sooner you get started getting grants *the better*. Start this part of the organizing early and BE PERSISTENT.

Here's how to do it:

1. Determine your funding need so that you can ask for a specific number of students to be funded. Funding should be lined up as early as possible, therefore, plan on acquiring enough funding to transport 55 students.
2. Build a list of all possible sources of funding with contact info. This should be very similar to the list you used for your recruitment drive. Potential contacts on your campus include:
 - Advisors and chairs in the academic departments,
 - Any alumni or faculty members active in mentoring or other student development programs,
 - Student Groups,
 - Student Government Association,
 - Office of Student Affairs,
 - Office of Student Activities,
 - Office of Community Service,
 - Office of Student Life,
 - Office of Career Services,
 - Office of Religious Life and
 - Residence Life Office
3. Email the appropriate officer in each organization you contact. Sample email included in the back.
4. Call to follow up and schedule a meeting time if necessary.
5. Prepare your pitch and appropriate materials. Make sure to package the ask appropriately depending on who you are asking for money. Power Shift is focused on fighting global warming, but you could emphasize the leadership training element, P.R. value for the school, etc.
6. Follow up until you get an answer.

Host an event/fundraiser

A central goal of MJSB is to raise awareness around environmental injustice. Hosting educational events can be a great way to recruit for your group, raise funds for grassroots organizing, and get people excited about being part of a clean, just energy revolution. Hosting parties can be a great way to relax and raise money at the same time.

By holding simple and fun campus events, you can get the attention of a lot of people and sign them up for MJSB that way. Check out the [Campus Climate Challenge Toolkit](#) for great event ideas. At all these events, be sure to:

- Pick a high traffic area, or place where people congregate.
- Have big signs and information about Mountain Justice, Coal Industry Injustice, Global Warming, etc. to hand out.
- Have laptops connected to the internet at the table so students can register right there.
- Have sign up sheets and follow up with people the next day.

Rad Event Ideas

- Make/sell rad buttons and stickers
- Make a stencil and spray paint or silk screen tote bags and t-shirts
- Show a movie like Kilowatt Ours, Black Diamonds, or Burning the Future
- Street skits – act out King Coal meeting his match! Have a tug of war between clean energy and dirty energy!
- Have a sled-riding contest
- Get a pile of coal to represent how much your school burns
- Sell crafts
- Silent auction
- Shovel driveways
- Bake sales
- Yard Sales
- Sell jell-o shots
- Kissing booth
- Invite professors to a panel discussion on energy issues
- Book-drive on campus after buy-back period
- Sell hot chocolate during morning classes or after a religious service
- Benefit w/ all types of music for all types of people
- Ask folks in a letter pitch for funds
- Have a book club and read *Coal River* by Michael Shnayerson, *Lost Mountain* by Erik Reece, or *Big Coal* by Jeff Goodell
- Wine Tasting
- Organizing bike races w/ sponsors or fee
- Sell stuff on E-Bay
- Throw a party with a tiered donation price
- Raffles w/ educational materials
- Ask small business owners to place small donation jar by the register
- Poetry slam
- Masquerade Ball
- Dinner party
- Co-Host an event off-campus

Another great resource to check out for further in-depth fundraising tools is the Student Environmental Action Coalition's (SEAC's) Fundraising Toolkit. It can be found on their website www.seac.org.

Travel Help

Getting to MJSB can be easy or difficult depending on where you are coming from and how many you are bringing. There are many ways to work out how to get here. You can utilize the fundraising money that you hopefully have plenty of to get yourselves rent-a-cars, a bus or van, tickets on greyhound, etc. Here are ways on how to get to MJSB:

- Check out our ridepool board on the MJSB website
- Set up a carpool system with help from your students that are going that have cars
- Your school has tons of vehicles! Ask to borrow one or some! Get in contact with your transportation office.
- Can't go wrong with public transportation. Greyhound, other buses, or train.

For more details on how to organize travel, be sure to check out the MJSB website (www.mjsb.org). You can also find tons of other resources for your general FAQs, for outreach materials, MTR brochure, and plenty more!

Final Words

A big thanks to organizers of www.powershift07.org and the SSC Power Shift Media tool kit as this kit borrows from their ideas a lot! If you have questions, concerns, thoughts, or ideas feel free to hop on Outreach conference call to collaborate with the MJSB outreach team and other campus coordinators. Send an email to info@mjsb.org to get in on the conference calls!

For more info on how to use this kit, contact Jessie at jessiedodson@gmail.org or 571-274-1115.

Resources and Links:

- For organizing on campus:
Campus Climate Challenge Toolkit - http://ran.org/fileadmin/materials/grassroots/ryse/CCC_Toolkit_2.0.pdf
SEAC resources - <http://seac.org/resources/online>
Get Some Action (RAN) - http://seac.org/uploads/get_some_action.pdf
- For more info about the region we will be in and how to plug into the movement locally:

RRENEW Collective: <http://rrenewcollective.org>

Southern Appalachian Mountain Stewards: <http://samsva.org>

Southern Energy Network - <http://climateaction.net/>

United Mountain Defense - <http://www.unitedmountaindefense.org/>

UMD internships - http://docs.google.com/View?docid=ddtgk4hx_8hnc3hmcv

http://docs.google.com/View?docid=ddtgk4hx_6cg5tvmdx

Save Our Cumberland Mountains – www.socm.org