

MOUNTAINTOP REMOVAL & ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE



In Appalachia, mining companies blow the tops off mountains to reach a thin seam of coal and then, to minimize waste disposal costs, dump millions of tons of waste rock into the valleys below. This destructive practice has damaged or destroyed approximately 1,200 miles of streams, destroyed forests on some 300 square miles of land, disrupted drinking water supplies, flooded communities, and destroyed wildlife habitat.

Mountain top removal is a strong example of procedural injustice involving uneven enforcement of existing laws, rules, and regulations to the benefit of powerful groups and institutions and the detriment of non-powerful communities.

The interests of the coal companies to use the cheapest and easiest mining process has detrimental impacts to anyone who lives in the surrounding area. Laws governing water quality and toxic waste are ignored or unenforced, and the definitions of what constitutes negative impacts are changed without consultation with those who are impacted. Reasonable use of private property belonging to affected local residents is trumped by the power of the coal companies.

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