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I am writing this letter in regards to an article published in the Mountain Statesman on March 5, 2010, "WVDEP Seeks Input on Narrative Criteria Protocol".

Our state is rich in mineral deposits and the removal of these deposits has to be treated with reference to future life in our state. In the early 50's and 60's, Strip Mining was a large resource in our state, but because of inadequate laws and enforcement many of our streams today are destroyed from abandoned mine drainage. We now fight for money and Legislation to try to clean up waters that once sustained life. Mountain top removal creates many problems in our stream beds with sedimentation and mineral sources being drained into our streams. Underground mining can be done with respect and protection for the environment, but the cost per ton of coal would be more. Long-wall mining and pillaring would need to be prohibited leaving support blocks of coal to support the Strata above. This would eliminate ground faults protecting our water sources above the mining operation and would prevent surface damage to the property owners.

The water being discharged from mining operations should be directed into a storage area where it is monitored and treated before being discharged into any other water source. During and after mining operations water should not be allowed to remain in the worked out operations of the mine. It should have to be removed by gravity or mechanical means to prevent a mineral buildup in the water and a pressure head from forming uncontrolled leaking through ground faults and discharge of untreated water. The Clean Water Act should protect our water to the quality of its original creation, not to man's water quality standards. All permitting should be done to the guide lines that they only pertain to the mineral source permitted for extraction or removal and provisions need to be in place both above and below such mineral to protect the property owner's resources in regards to STRATA to preserve all ground sources such as water, etc.

Fracturing of gas wells should only be done with water acceptable for human consumption and without additives. This uncontrolled process contaminates under-ground water services. The fractured water from the well has been found in our rivers – streams wells, etc.

Here are some questions to consider:

Am I limited on the depth I own as a Property Owner?

Should the permitting agency be held jointly liable for damages incurred to the environment and property owners?

Should total and immediate restoration be done for any and all violations developing from permitted resources secured through State, Federal and Private Bonding?

I will be looking for this submission on your agency's website.

Thank You,

Thomas Greathouse