

NC State Legislature, Duke Energy flub Dan River coal ash recovery

By SIERRA DUNNE
Editor-in-Chief

Duke Energy came under fire for a coal ash spill that occurred earlier in February of this year. A broken stormwater pipe under a coal ash pond emptied over 39,000 tons of the hazardous waste into the Dan River in Eden, NC.

Duke Energy claims the ruptured pipes have been permanently sealed but the consequences of the spill are far deeper.

The ash came from a pond at a retired Duke Energy coal plant. Between the six other retired plants across NC and seven others which remain operational, there are over 50 coal ash impoundments which can hold up to 19 billion gallons of waste, according to the EPA.

Environmental organizations have spoken out against the way Duke Energy manages their impoundments. Over half of them were built before 1994 and are not required to have

caps, pollution liners, or conduct groundwater monitoring.

These practices are hazardous to local communities, as the ponds often leak toxins which can find their way into drinking water.

The Dan River spill sparked new legislation concerning these ash ponds, which led a coal ash management law to come into effect in September.

This law states that Duke Energy is required to clean up their unprotected ponds at four priority sites, including the one which contaminated the Dan River.

However, environmentalists believe this law is not enough to protect local communities from the hazardous waste these impoundments are producing.

There are still 10 other sites

with coal ash ponds and the new law gives Duke a timeline of 15 years to get rid of these, even though a Wake County Superior Court Judge ordered

we know that every single one of these unlined coal ash ponds in the state is leaking and has contaminated groundwater," stated Rick Gaskins, executive

both in and out of operation, have coal ash ponds that leak carcinogens such as arsenic into water reservoirs.

Since the law allows for cleanup to extend over a period of several years, these toxins would still be a risk to water quality for years to come.

The Dan River spill serves as an example of just how much work Duke Energy is putting into cleaning up the ash, as only 10% of the leak has been removed over the past eight months.

Without proper legislature to keep companies like

Duke responsible for their actions, environmentalists believe there is no hope to keep NC's water clean.



Duke Power engineers survey the site of the Feb. 2 coal ash spill, where an estimated 140,000 tons of toxic waste is still unaccounted for. Environmental groups and Duke Power have differing claims on affected groundwater.

the company to clean up their ponds immediately in March.

"One of the biggest concerns we have with the law is

director of the Catawba Riverkeeper Foundation.

All 14 coal plants owned by Duke Energy in NC, those

Nobel Peace Prize awarded to Malala Yousafzai, Kailish Satyarthi

By JOE WISWELL
Staff Writer

From the Taliban controlled schools of Pakistan to the rug weavers of India, the latest Nobel Peace Prize sends a message of freedom to all corners of the world. This year the Nobel Committee awarded the prize to a Pakistani, Malala Yousafzai, and an Indian, Kailish Satyarthi, "for their struggle against the suppression of children and young people and for the right of all children to education."

This comes at a significant time given the recent fighting on the Pakistani-Indian border. India and Pakistan have been longstanding rivals, but a 2003 cease-fire ended most armed struggles in the disputed region of Kashmir.

With this violence flaring up again in August, this year's Peace Prize comes with an emphasis on the universality of slavery and education.

The prize is deeply reminiscent of Mahatma Gandhi, who supported the idea of a unified Pakistan and India and the abolition of the Hindu Caste system. Satyarthi cites Gandhi as inspiration for his campaign to free slaves, most of whom are members of the untouchable caste.

Satyarthi's campaign began in 1980 when he left his job as an electrical engineer. Since then, through a mixture of grassroots and top-down approaches, he has rescued tens of thousands of children from slavery.

One of his foremost achievements is the Global

March Against Child Poverty which unites non-governmental organizations, trade unions, teachers and students from all over the world to fight child labor.

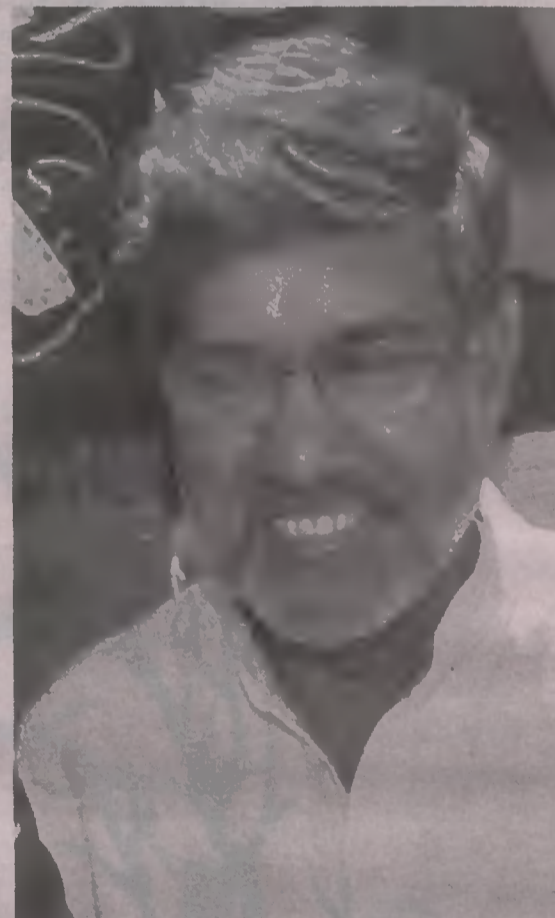
He also founded Goodweave, an organization that inspects Indian rug factories to ensure no child labor was used in the production of their carpets. All vetted products are given a seal to remind consumers to be conscious of injustice while they shop.

He is also on UNESCO's board for Education for All, co-founder of The Global Campaign for Education, and leads

raids on slave holding factories, often at great personal risk.

Satyarthi is at the head of revolution to create a kinder India and is doing this through youth, going after those who have the imagination and time to transform a society.

While Satyarthi has had no direct contact with Malala Yousafzai, she is an excellent example of what he hopes to achieve. The youngest Nobel



Yousafzai (left) and Satyarthi (right) have both contributed to fostering peace in Pakistan and India and according to the Nobel Peace Prize committee, "for their struggle against the suppression of children and young people and for the right of all children to education."

Peace Prize winner ever, 17-year-old Malala has already dramatically altered the way people think about education in developing nations.

It started in 2009 when Yousafzai began writing an anonymous diary about the Taliban's takeover of her town. In it, she recounts the suppression of women and education. It was published by the BBC and widely received in Pakistan.

However, it also attracted threats from the Taliban and in 2011 Yousafzai was shot on her way home from school. She was treated in a hospital in London and survived but has not been able to return home because of further threats.

Since then she has continued her education in London. Often citing her father as motivation for her campaign, she was one of Time Magazine's Most Influential People, she

has appeared in Vanity Fair and has written an autobiography, *I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban*.

This year's Nobel Peace Prize and the work it recognizes mean more than just a struggle for education or the relationship between Pakistan and India. It represents progress of developing nations and their positive look into the future.

Photo courtesy of CNN

Photo courtesy of USA Today