

ASH POND NEWSLETTER



February 2019

The following is a collection of ash pond news from the month of February. The intent of the newsletter is to summarize news regarding ash pond closure activities, lawsuits filed against utilities relating to their ash ponds, as well as regulatory changes impacting ash pond operations or closures. This newsletter is distributed on a monthly basis.

ANOTHER ANNIVERSARY

December 2018 was the ten-year anniversary of the coal ash spill at **Tennessee Valley Authority's** Kingston Fossil Fuel Plant. In December's Newsletter, we looked back and reflected on how that incident set today's rules and regulations. This month, we celebrate another anniversary of an important spill: the **Duke Energy** coal ash spill of more than 39,000 tons of coal ash into the Dan River, a devastating release which occurred in February 2014.



Pipe Outflow at the Dan River

<https://content.sierraclub.org/coal/posts/ash-and-clean-water-dan-river-spill-five-years-later>

If you missed the December 2018 newsletter, or want to read more about the spill that started it all, the below National Geographic article provides a great summary with some amazing photographs:

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/2019/02/coal-other-dark-side-toxic-ash/>

COAL POWER PLANT ASH POND CLOSURES AND MODIFICATIONS

Alabama Power announced that it plans to close the William C. Gorgas Electric Generating Plant near Parrish, Alabama on April 15, 2019.

<https://www.powermag.com/alabama-power-will-close-century-old-coal-plant/>

Georgia Power continues to make progress in cleaning up ash ponds at all of their plants. They are closing all 29 of their coal ash ponds throughout the state. Georgia Power says they are a few months away from never putting coal ash into an ash pond ever again. Going forward, all coal ash produced will either be reused or put into dry storage in a lined landfill.

<https://www.wabe.org/georgia-power-continues-work-on-coal-ash-pond-closures/>

Georgia Power announced that dewatering activities of the ash pond at their Plant Branch will begin March 4, 2019.

<https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/georgia-power-to-begin-dewatering-at-plant-branch-300801584.html>

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) has announced a public comment period and a public hearing on a proposal by **Dynegy Midwest Generation, LLC** to stabilize the Middle Fork River at the retired Vermilion Power Station near Oakwood. The IEPA will accept public comments by mail or email through April 25, 2018. Dynegy has applied for a permit to construct a 1,900-foot-long wall of rock on the Vermilion River. Construction would require excavating sections of the river bottom to a depth of up to seven feet and replacing river sediments with 20,240 cubic yards of rock materials. Another 2,130 cubic yards of boulders would be placed above the water line.



Banks of the Middle Fork of the Vermilion River

<https://will.illinois.edu/news/story/illinois-epa-seeks-public-input-on-dynegy-plan-to-stabilize-the-middle-fork>

Duke Energy plans to build a plant in Moncure, NC to process coal ash. This new plant will burn the coal ash again so it can be recycled into cement and concrete. Duke Energy expects to process about 400,000 tons of coal ash a year. The company is still seeking the required state air quality permits from the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality.

<https://www.courier-tribune.com/news/20190202/duke-energy-wants-to-burn-coal-ash-in-chatham-county>

Tennessee Valley Authority's board voted to close the Bull Run Fossil Plant in Anderson County, Tennessee. The plant is planned to be closed by December 2023; however, closure could happen before that.

<https://www.oakridger.com/news/20190215/bull-run-to-close-in-2023-tva-says>

LEGAL AND REGULATORY

The U.S. Supreme Court will review differing lower court rulings on whether a permit is required under the federal Clean Water Act when pollutants originate from a point source but are carried to navigable waters by a non-point source such as groundwater could set some new parameters for compliance. Justices will decide whether the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program's reach is limited, covering only direct discharges or if it is expansive, regulating discharges conveyed through non-point sources.

<https://www.enr.com/articles/46403-high-court-could-alter-point-source-discharge-definition-in-taking-clean-water-case>

A Georgia State Representative proposes a resolution for **Georgia Power** to remove the 6.3 million tons of coal ash from the ash ponds at Plant McDonough-Atkinson in Cobb County, Georgia.

https://www.mdjonline.com/news/lawmakers-call-for-georgia-power-to-clean-south-cobb-plant/article_75004754-361e-11e9-8ce4-bf68c4f4fc73.html

Missouri will start regulating coal ash ponds for the first time, according to a plan released this month by the state Department of Natural Resources.

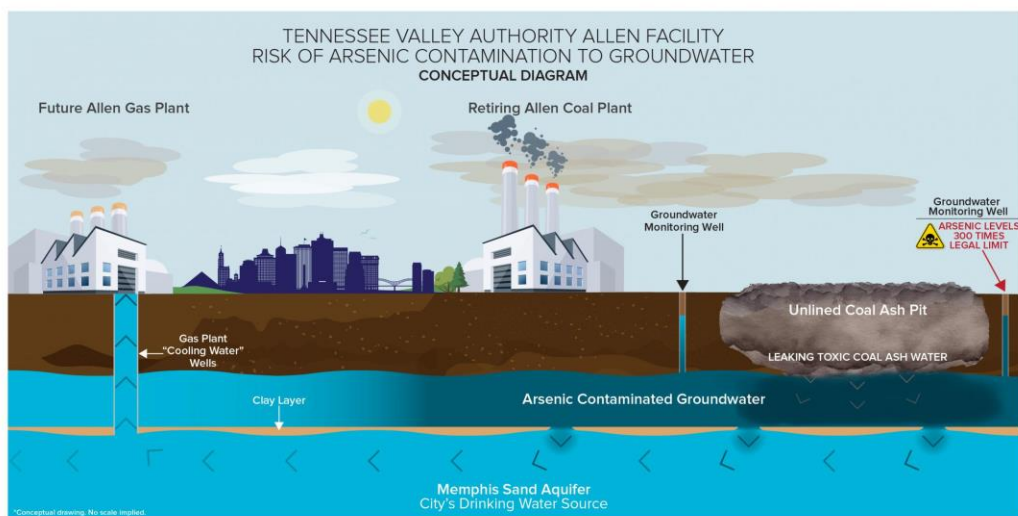
<https://news.stlpublicradio.org/post/missouri-regulate-coal-ash-ponds-first-time>

Approximately 27 million cubic yards of coal ash will be removed from four different **Dominion Energy**-owned ash ponds in Virginia. A quarter of the ash will be recycled while the remaining three quarters will be disposed of in a lined landfill. The cleanup is estimated to cost between \$3 billion and \$4 billion.

<https://wamu.org/story/19/02/22/virginias-general-assembly-governed-this-year-amid-scandal-heres-what-passed-and-didnt/>

Tennessee Valley Authority's

Allen Natural Gas Plant has been denied a permit that would have allowed them to use local groundwater for cooling water for the plant. Studies showed that the increased pumping of the groundwater could cause contamination in the aquifer. This aquifer is the principle source of drinking water for the Memphis area.



Operation of a TVA Cooling Water Supply Well Could Contaminate Area Aquifer

<https://www.southernenvironment.org/news-and-press/news-feed/shelby-county-puts-strict-limits-on-tvas-wells>

CONTAMINATION

Ameren Missouri has contamination in groundwater wherever they have looked and collected groundwater data. Many ash ponds in Missouri, including all of **Ameren Missouri's**, have failed a key requirement in the federal rule. The ash ponds must be built at least five feet above the top of the aquifer that is closest to ground surface. **Ameren Missouri** is closing all of its coal ash ponds by 2023.

<https://news.stlpublicradio.org/post/data-shows-massive-pits-coal-waste-missouri-utilities-polluted-groundwater#stream/0>

State-owned utility **Santee Cooper** says that approximately 7.5 cubic yards of coal ash sludge was accidentally released from the ash pond at the old Grainger Generating Station in Horry County, South Carolina into the nearby Waccamaw River.

<https://www.wbtw.com/news/grand-strand/santee-cooper-says-it-accidentally-dumped-sludge-from-coal-ash-pond-into-waccamaw-river/1796643730>



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