



In The News

Current Events in Earth & Space Science

Summaries for the Classroom

Little Blue Run Coal Ash Pond

Southwest Pennsylvania is home to one of the largest U.S. impoundments for waste ash from coal power plants. But has the damage from Little Blue Run coal ash pond already been done to the land, air, water, and humans?

Articles to Share with Students

National Geographic News – Largest U.S. Coal Ash Pond Little Blue to Close, But Future Rules Still Undecided

<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/energy/2012/08/120809-little-blue-run-coal-ash-pond-to-close/>

NPR StateImpact PA – DEP Orders Shut Down of Country's Largest Coal Ash Pond

<http://stateimpact.npr.org/pennsylvania/2012/07/30/dep-orders-shut-down-of-countrys-largest-coal-ash-pond/>

Huffington Post Green – Coal Ash Fight Targets Little Blue Run Slurry Pond

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/06/01/coal-ash-little-blue-run_n_1554332.html

YOUTUBE VIDEO: From Huffington Post Investigative Fund – Coal Ash: One Valley's Tale

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6E7h-DNvwx4>

General Information

FirstEnergy Generation Corp. – Little Blue Run

<https://www.firstenergycorp.com/content/LittleBlueRunInfo.html>

EPA Radiation Protection – Coal Ash

<http://www.epa.gov/rpdweb00/tenorm/coalandcoalash.html>

American Coal Ash Association Educational Foundation – Coal Ash Facts

<http://www.coalashfacts.org/>

Questions for Classroom Discussion

- Where is Little Blue Run Pond located? Find the location on a map, and make note of the surrounding landscape and population.
- What is a coal ash pond? How does one form? How did Little Blue Run develop?
- Why does Little Blue Run have to shut down by 2016? What would happen if it did not?
- What are some of the concerns expressed by the citizens living near Little Blue Run?
- What are additional environmental impacts that could happen to this region?
- What do you think will be the impacts on the hydrosphere in this region?
- If a leak/contamination were to occur from Little Blue Run, could the contamination be contained? Who should be responsible to do the clean up and pay for it?
- Based on what you have learned about energy production with coal, do you think we should continue this process as a source of energy or explore other sources (wind, solar, etc.)? Why/why not?

Tags

Coal Ash, Pennsylvania

Big Ideas

From the Earth Science Literacy Principles

- Big Idea 1. Earth scientists use repeatable observations and testable ideas to understand and explain our planet. (1.3)
- Big Idea 3. Earth is a complex system of interacting rock, water, air, and life. (3.6)
- Big Idea 6. Life evolves on a dynamic Earth and continuously modifies Earth. (6.2, 6.6, 6.7)
- Big Idea 7. Humans depend on Earth for resources (7.5, 7.7, 7.9)
- Big Idea 9. Humans significantly alter the Earth. (9.1, 9.4, 9.5, 9.7, 9.9)

From The Big Ideas in Earth and Space Science (ESBD)

- The Earth System (1)
- The Nature of Science (22, 24, 25)

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