

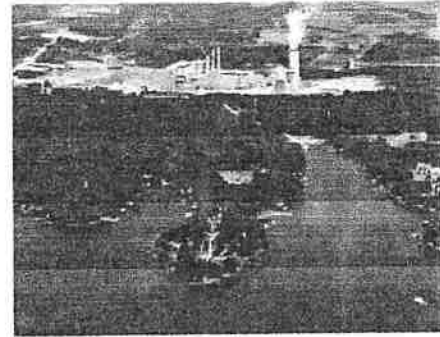
Catawba River Among America's Most Endangered Rivers



Coal Ash Pollution Threatens Water Quality

Contacts:

Peter Raabe, American Rivers, 919-682-3500
Sam Perkins, Catawba Riverkeeper Foundation, 704-679-9494
Dr. Avner Vengosh, Duke University, 919-681-8050
www.AmericanRivers.org/CatawbaRiver
April 17, 2013



Washington, D.C.- American Rivers named the Carolinas' Catawba River among *America's Most Endangered Rivers*® of 2013 today, shining a national spotlight on the riverside coal ash ponds currently leaking pollution and threatening water quality, human health, and local fish populations.

American Rivers and its partners are calling on the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources to require Duke Energy to ensure the Riverbend coal ash ponds are sufficiently maintained in perpetuity to safeguard the river and water supply for future generations.

"The *America's Most Endangered Rivers* report is a call to action to save rivers that are facing a critical tipping point," said Peter Raabe of American Rivers. "We all need healthy rivers. They provide our drinking water, support the economies of our communities, and promote public health and quality of life. We hope citizens will take action to ensure a healthy Catawba River for generations to come."

Coal ash is formed at coal-fired power plants when coal is burned in boilers that generate steam for power generation. In the Catawba watershed, coal ash and scrubber residue has been dumped into 551 acres of ponds— all lacking liners to prevent groundwater contamination. These ponds are permitted to discharge — even into drinking water reservoirs — arsenic, selenium, and other carcinogens at concentrations that far exceed the EPA Maximum Contaminant Levels for drinking water. Recently at Duke Energy's Riverbend Steam Station, a coal-fired power plant that sits adjacent to the drinking water source for 860,000 people, problems have appeared at the dam holding back the coal ash pond. Seeps are now coming out of the dam on all sides and into the reservoir, calling into question the dam's structural integrity.

"Our testing around the coal ash ponds indicates high levels of pollutants at multiple sites. The problem is not just impending, it is already here. If left in place, these ponds will continue to threaten the drinking water supply for almost one million people for years to come," said Sam Perkins, Catawba Riverkeeper Foundation."

The Catawba River originates in the mountains of North Carolina, where it cascades through a series of waterfalls. It flows 300 miles to a spectacular coastal wetland, providing water for two million people and the world's largest population of rocky shoal spider lilies along the way. The river's free flowing sections provide excellent canoeing and kayaking opportunities.

The annual *America's Most Endangered Rivers*® report is a list of rivers at a crossroads, where key decisions in the coming months will determine the rivers' fates. Over the years, the report has helped spur many successes including the removal of outdated dams, the protection of rivers with Wild and Scenic designations, and the prevention of harmful development and pollution.

###

American Rivers is the leading organization working to protect and restore the nation's rivers and streams. Rivers connect us to each other, nature, and future generations. Since 1973, American Rivers has fought to preserve these connections, helping protect and restore more than 150,000 miles of rivers through advocacy efforts, on-the-ground projects, and the annual release of America's Most Endangered Rivers®.

Headquartered in Washington, DC, American Rivers has offices across the country and more than 100,000 supporters, members, and volunteers nationwide. Visit www.americanrivers.org, www.facebook.com/americanrivers and www.twitter.com/americanrivers.

<http://www.americanrivers.org/newsroom/press-releases/2013/mer2013-catawba-river-among-americas-most-endangered-rivers.html>

QUESTIONS:

1. What company is responsible for polluting the Catawba River?
2. Describe what coal ash ponds are and how they can pollute a river.
3. How many people get their drinking water from the reservoir (artificial lake behind a dam) near the Riverbend Steam Station?
4. How many miles long is the Catawba River?
5. What is the purpose of the America Rivers organization?
6. Who should hold companies accountable for maintaining good water quality?
7. What actions can be put into place to guarantee the future health of our rivers?