



What is the true cost of coal?

FROM THE ASHES



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NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTARY FILMS PRESENTS A RADICALMEDIA PRODUCTION IN PARTNERSHIP WITH BLOOMBERG PHILANTHROPIES
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: ROWAN KILLEEN EDITOR: DAVE MARCUS MUSIC BY: MARK ORTON
CO-PRODUCERS: RACHEL KOTTEEN, LINDSAY FIRESTONE CONSULTING PRODUCER: ANTHA WILLIAMS ARCHIVAL PRODUCER: HILARY MCHONE
SEGMENT DIRECTOR: SIDNEY BEAUMONT CREDITS PRODUCERS: JON KAMEN, JOE BERLINGER, KATHERINE OLIVER, JUSTIN WILKES
PRODUCED BY: SIDNEY BEAUMONT DIRECTED BY: MICHAEL BONFIGLIO
"DARK AS A DUNGEON" PERFORMED BY JOHN MELLENCAMP COURTESY OF REPUBLIC RECORDS

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A Statement From Director Michael Bonfiglio



From the Ashes is one of the most complex projects I've ever been involved in, and it was a real team effort to bring it to life. From the very beginning, in the spring of 2016 when we started pre-production, we wanted to make something that put a human face on the complicated issues tied to coal production, such as the

future of the energy sector, the risks to people's health and livelihood, and the environment. These are challenges that should not be reduced to one-note sound bites as they often are in today's hyper-political climate.

We wanted to make something that addressed the intense emotions and competing motivations on multiple sides. It was important to us that our film could inform people about the real issues and spark a fact-based dialogue about an industry at a major crossroads. Essentially the question now is this: Do we continue to invest in a 19th century form of energy production that has clear and present risks—or do we move forward and, if so, what are the options in our energy future?

The 2016 election served as a backdrop to our production, and during that time coal country was brought to the forefront of the national discourse again and again. Many promises and accusations were made in the hope of winning votes from people on the front lines of the so-called "War on Coal." Because coal powers so much of the national discourse, from jobs to public health, it deserves a close examination from multiple perspectives.

On a personal level, as we worked on the film I continually thought about my father, someone I love but with whom I share essentially zero political beliefs. And coal, for better or worse, is and always has been highly politicized. I wanted this film to speak to people on all sides of the political spectrum.

We're living in a truly contentious time right now, but I do believe we have the capacity to find common ground if we have the right information. After making this film, I've concluded that the idea that we must poison our air and water and render our planet uninhabitable to have jobs in this country is a falsehood. Hopefully this film will be part of a sane and rational dialogue about how to move forward as a nation in the 21st century.

A History of Coal

What Is Coal?

Coal is a fossil fuel formed from the decomposition and compaction of prehistoric vegetation over millions of years in places on Earth once covered by vast swamps. Coal joins oil and natural gas as a nonrenewable source of fossil fuel energy, meaning that there is a limited supply.

What Is Coal Used for?

Coal has been used as an energy source since the beginning of human time on Earth. The first documented use of the

material in America was as fuel for pottery-baking by Native American communities. It was discovered by European settlers in the mid-1600s and had become a primary source of energy by the 1800s, finding its way into manufacturing, steamship, and railroad industries. By the end of the 1800s, coal had become the primary source of electricity, residentially and commercially. Fossil fuels currently provide 65 percent of U.S. energy needs, with several hundred coal-powered electric plants generating 30 percent of the nation's electricity reported in 2016.¹ While the development of the renewable energy market has expanded, coal is still mined in 26 U.S. states and accounts for at least half of the energy produced in 25 states.^{2,3}



How Is Coal Mined?

Coal is removed from the Earth using a variety of methods. Surface mining, responsible for the majority of coal extracted by the U.S. industry, exists in several forms and involves the aggressive removal of topsoil and underlying layers of rock to expose shallow coal deposits.

Coal mining is devastating to the local environment, but in some cases the mined area can be reclaimed for use in agriculture, recreation, habitat restoration, or development. Other coal deposits are retrieved from deep below the Earth's surface by way of

¹ <https://www.eia.gov/tools/faqs/faq.php?id=427&t=3>

² https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/national/power-plants/?utm_term=.83aacd7d2e17

³ <https://www.eia.gov/coal/index.php>



underground (or “deep”) mining, a process by which the stores are extracted and moved to the surface using complex technology and human power.⁴

Every person in the United States is connected with coal production in some way, whether through the energy we use in our homes, the companies we work for, or the policies our elected officials implement. While the coal industry may still play a vital role in today’s world markets, the techniques used to mine it and convert it to electricity pose significant threats to local communities, global economies, public health, and the health of the planet.

The opening lines of the film From the Ashes are “coal is civilization and power,” a quote from Ralph Waldo Emerson. What do you think this quote means? How do you think

Emerson intended to use the word “power” in this case? How is this theme represented throughout the film?

The first portion of the film, highlighting the emergence of coal energy during the Industrial Revolution, refers to coal as “indispensable.” What does “indispensable” mean in this context? What examples are discussed in the film of how coal was indispensable during the Industrial Revolution? What other resources might be considered indispensable today? Would you agree or disagree that coal should still be considered indispensable? Please explain.

In the film From the Ashes, coal is described as a 19th century source of fuel being used in the 21st century. What do you think is meant by this statement? If coal isn’t a 21st century fuel, then what is?

⁴ https://www.eia.gov/energyexplained/index.cfm?page=coal_mining

Shifting Energy Trends

According to *USA Today*, the coal industry, at its peak in 1985, employed more than 178,300 workers in the United States. Today, there are fewer than 56,700 jobs in coal mining.⁵ A recent analysis of changes in the industry⁶ stated that coal mining jobs had declined by 53 percent in the last decade and a half of the 20th century. The report cited numerous factors in addition to government environmental regulations that have contributed to the waning popularity of coal as a fuel:

- declining coal-mining productivity
- declining global demand for U.S. coal exports
- increased competition from natural gas as a result of the shale-gas revolution
- the ever-increasing efficiency with which consumers use electricity
- the recent cost reductions in renewable energy technology
- poor investment decisions by a number of large coal companies



Coal is used primarily for generating electricity, and energy companies are increasingly switching to natural gas. The application of horizontal hydraulic fracturing (fracking) that taps into abundant supplies of natural gas means that gas can be supplied at a much lower cost. The relatively low price for natural gas is leading to the closing of coal-fired electrical generation plants nationwide, with a concomitant loss of jobs in coal mining. Advances in technology have also meant that far fewer workers are needed to mine coal, a trend that is also occurring in many other industries. In contrast, solar energy is rapidly growing, and now employs more than twice as many U.S. workers as coal mining.⁷

Is it possible to revitalize the coal industry, bringing employment back to previous levels? If so, what steps would have to be taken to begin the process? If not, why not?

In From the Ashes, it is clear that the decline in coal jobs has dramatically affected individuals and towns in Appalachia. Why have the jobs of other people who live in coal areas but who are not directly employed by the coal industry been affected as well?

Advancing technology has displaced jobs in many industries, not only coal. Have you seen this happen in your community? If so, which industries have been affected?

What could be done to revitalize towns that were dependent on coal mines? What could be done to help individuals who lost their jobs because of the decline in coal production?

⁵ <https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/2016/04/19/coal-industry-energy-fallout/82972958/>

⁶ Susan F. Tierney, Ph.D. "The U.S. Coal Industry: Challenging Transitions in the 21st Century," <http://www.analysisgroup.com/news-and-events/news/analysis-group-senior-advisor-susan-tierney-issues-report-on-the-u-s-coal-industry-in-the-21st-century/#sthash.7t7Wndyb.dpuf>. (2016)

⁷ <http://fortune.com/2015/01/16/solar-jobs-report-2014/>

Coal and Public Health



The byproducts of coal mining and coal burning create serious public health hazards. Lead, arsenic, mercury, uranium, and other heavy metals are among the toxic byproducts of coal use, as are pollutants such as coal ash, slurry, and sludge. Air pollution caused by coal-burning power plants can lead to heart disease, asthma, cancer, and other serious health problems. Pollution from coal plants causes 7,500 deaths in the United States each year.⁸ Some pollutants from coal plants that are toxic to human health, including mercury, also contaminate lakes, rivers, and streams. Debris and other byproducts from mining pollute rivers, streams, and underground aquifers that people use for drinking water.

These impacts disproportionately affect lower-income communities. While approximately 6.5 million U.S. residents live within three miles of a coal plant, the facilities are unevenly distributed throughout the population. In 2016, the USDA reported that more than 80 percent of the largest coal power plants in the United States were located in counties where per capita income was beneath the national average.⁹

Communities in close proximity to coal-powered plants experience higher-than-normal rates of asthma and other respiratory conditions from poor air quality. Severe cardiopulmonary conditions, neurological symptoms, birth defects, and premature deaths are prevalent in low-income and minority communities close to coal mining operations,

⁸ http://www.catf.us/fossil/problems/power_plants/

⁹ <http://data.ers.usda.gov/reports.aspx?ID=17826>



where contaminated drinking water, mercury poisoning, and ozone pollution occur.¹⁰ Research also suggests that waste landfills and coal storage prior to export are located in proximity to lower-income and minority communities.¹¹ Threats to mine workers also include conditions associated with coal dust inhalation, pneumoconiosis (black lung disease), and mine collapse.¹²

Mining has been called “the most dangerous job in the world.” While mining deaths in the United States have declined in number because of increased safety equipment, deaths and injuries still occur. What kinds of mining accidents can endanger those who work in the mines? What kinds of “invisible” hazards do they face in the mines?

In the film From the Ashes, what evidence do you see of health hazards to people who live near coal mines? What hazards do you see in the film for people who live in towns through which coal trains pass? What can be done to improve health and safety in these issues?

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, environmental justice is the “fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national

origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.”

¹³ *After watching the film From the Ashes, to what degree would you describe the U.S. coal industry as “environmentally just”? What examples from the film help support your position?*

The film From the Ashes details the impact of the coal industry on individuals and communities, recording the hazardous conditions and practices associated with mining practices. Do you think the societal gain from the industry in any way offsets the risk to human life? Please explain.

¹⁰ <https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/LatinoAirReport.pdf>

¹¹ Norton, JM, Wing S, Lipscomb HJ, Kaufman JS, Marshall SW, and Cravey AJ. *Race, Wealth, and Solid Waste Facilities in North Carolina. Environmental Health Perspectives.* 2007 September; 115(9): 1344-1350.

¹² <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2011-172/pdfs/2011-172.pdf>

¹³ <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice>

Coal and the Environment

The preparation, storage, combustion, and export of coal have devastating impacts on the environment, the consequences of which could take thousands of years to resolve.

Surface mining, in addition to damaging the soil and displacing native plants and animals, often makes land unusable for agriculture or residential development. Impaired air quality from the coal retrieval process is also linked to the production of such greenhouse gases as methane, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, and carbon dioxide. The burning of coal itself generates these gases, heavy metals, and particulate matter that can lead to acid rain, smog, and other environmental toxins.

The burning of coal is the single largest contributor to the greenhouse gases that fuel global warming. Coal plant emissions are directly responsible for about one-third of U.S. carbon emissions. Climate change poses many risks, including more severe and frequent heat waves and droughts as well as increased flooding from sea level rise, heavy rains, and coastal storms. These impacts are already being felt in communities around the United States and around the world—including billions of dollars in damages to homes and businesses. In the film, the UN's former climate chief Christiana Figueres says that

increasing impacts of climate change will threaten the ability of insurance companies to cover these losses in the future.

Who owns the Earth's resources? Do you think governments and corporations have the right to use the Earth's resources as they wish? If not, what institutions should govern the decisions relating to extracting natural resources (such as fossil fuels)?

What are some of the ways in which coal mining can harm the surrounding environment? How might these disturbances affect the quality of life for nearby human communities? What examples from the film From the Ashes support your response?

According to the film From the Ashes, coal is the biggest source of atmospheric carbon and water pollution, and the biggest contributor to climate change. Given the impact to the environment caused by the industry, how can you explain that the use of coal is still a conventional practice? What examples of cleaner energy alternatives are given in the film, and how might these options compare with coal?

What is your position on the continued use of coal as an energy source? Do you think the environmental impact of the industry transcends its advantages in any way? Please explain.



Environmental Law and the ‘War on Coal’

Starting in the early 1970s, the bipartisan Clean Air Act and regulations generated by the newly created Environmental Protection Agency required much greater investment by the coal industry to restrict pollutants from both the burning of coal and coal mining.

Major pieces of legislation affecting the coal industry include:

- The Clean Water Act regulating discharges of pollutants into U.S. waters and regulating quality standards for surface water.
- The Clean Air Act requiring the Environmental Protection Agency to set national standards for six categories of pollutants: particulate matter (also known as particle pollution), ozone, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide, and lead.
- The Clean Power Plan establishing the first-ever national standards to limit carbon pollution from power plants, passed by the Obama Administration but cancelled by the Trump Administration before it could go into effect.

In addition, the United States, alongside more than 190 nations, signed the Paris Climate agreement to help in its place help protect the planet from the effects of climate change. Accelerating the transition away from coal was a key aspect of the U.S. strategy for reaching its goal.

These steps have helped to improve the environment and protect people’s health, but the coal industry and its political allies have argued that they have had a significant effect in limiting coal production and thus eliminating jobs. Many have called this a “war on coal”—a term that has played a key role in recent political developments. In the 2016 presidential campaign, the coal industry was a recurring

theme. Republican candidate Donald Trump charged that the administration of Barack Obama had waged a “war on coal” through regulation of the coal industry.

Now, many of the regulations that have limited the effects of coal use are being eliminated or threatened through President Trump’s executive orders, the appointment of officials who have denied climate change and opposed regulations to deal with it, and restrictions imposed through the budget process.

In his campaign for the presidency in 2016, Donald Trump endorsed the concept of “clean coal” and promised to bring back the coal industry and coal mining jobs. His first steps as president to limit regulations have included signing executive orders that eliminated the Office of Surface Mining’s Stream Protection Rule, a regulation to protect waterways from coal mining waste, and directing the EPA to withdraw and rewrite the Clean Power Plan.

To what extent do you believe there was a “war on coal” by political forces, and particularly by the federal government? If you think there has been such a war, what do you think are the reasons why the federal government would undermine a major industry?

In your opinion, should the federal government act to regulate environmental pollution even if such regulations cost jobs? Would it be possible for individual states to protect the environment without help or oversight from the federal government?

Should the United States remain a member of the Paris Climate Agreement?

What stance does the film From the Ashes take on the issue of political action with respect to climate change?



From what you have learned from the film and other sources, do you believe that overturning regulations on the coal industry will bring back jobs in the coal industry? What will ultimately be the cost of relaxing enforcement or overturning these regulations?

What is your own stand on climate control and on the role of the EPA in protecting the environment?

What position do your representative and senators take on the issue of climate change? How have they voted on this issue when opportunities arose?

What grassroots environmental organizations exist in your area? What kinds of legislation are they endorsing? Have you joined them? Why, or why not?

The legal term “federal preemption” recognizes that certain matters affect national interests and thus should be regulated under federal rather than state or local law. How do the federal government’s actions affect what individual states can do in terms of energy? Do you think that individual states could effectively control emissions from coal burning if their neighboring states did not also employ the strategies to limit toxic emissions?

What arguments have been made with respect to the campaign for “clean coal”? Can coal ever be truly a clean-burning fuel? Has “clean coal” production been shown to be cost-effective? Is “clean coal” a myth?

Energy Alternatives and Future Considerations

As public awareness of the environmental effects of burning coal increases, so has increased interest in the development of alternative forms of energy. At the same time, new technologies have made alternative sources of energy more and more reliable and also cheaper than they were at first.

As we learn more about the devastating impact of the coal industry on communities, human health, and the environment, the need for improved communication, education, and policy reform continues to expand. With technology available to

support the rapid development of wind, solar, and geothermal markets, the United States could be poised to have 80 percent of its electricity and heating needs met by renewable energy sources in the future.¹⁴ The U.S. solar industry, according to the U.S. Department of Energy's second annual U.S. Energy and Employment report, now employs more people than does the coal industry. As many as 300,000 new jobs were added in 2016, representing 14 percent of employment growth nationwide. In addition, solar and wind energy are now cheaper than coal in many U.S. states.¹⁵



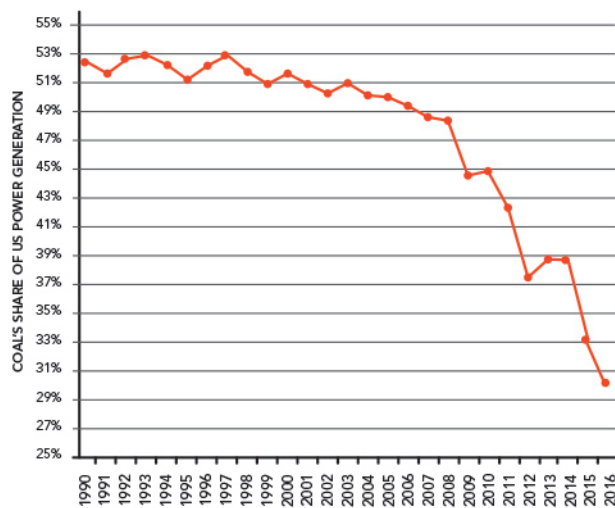
¹⁴ http://www.nrel.gov/analysis/re_futures/

¹⁵ <https://www.energy.gov/downloads/2017-us-energy-and-employment-report>

The graphs below show the impact of these competing technologies on the coal industry.

Coal's Declining Market Share

Share of Coal Generated US Electricity: ● Coal Share %

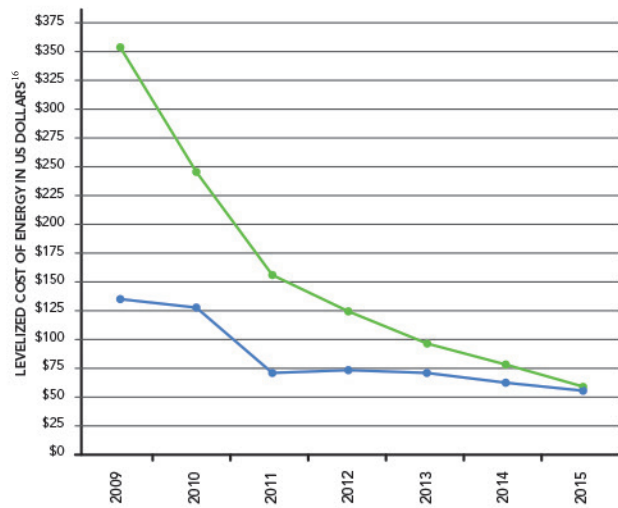


Data Source: Energy Information Agency

- Nuclear power is the use of sustained nuclear fission to generate heat and electricity.
- Natural gas technology for shale fracturing (fracking) is a process in which natural gas is released and captured by forcing water through perforations in a well into rock fissures.
- Wind power, in use since the Middle Ages, today uses wind turbines clustered in wind farms on land and also offshore.
- Solar power uses photovoltaic cells to convert light into electric current.
- Water (hydroelectric) power uses the energy from running or falling water or waves to generate power.

Wind and Solar's Price Decline

Cost of Electricity Generated By: ● Wind ● Solar



Data Source: Lazard¹⁷

What is a “green” source of energy? Why is the adjective “green” used, and how are green sources of energy important?

What advantages and disadvantages do you see in each of these technologies? Do you think one will eventually become dominant?

Research the source(s) of power that provide electricity to your home, school, or workplace. Is there any movement in your area to convert to a different technology?

The film From the Ashes discusses the “clean coal” initiative. What is your conclusion after viewing the film—should “clean coal” be included in the list of likely alternative energy sources outlined above? Why, or why not?

¹⁶ Levelized cost is the net cost of installing a renewable energy system divided by the expected energy output over its lifetime.

¹⁷ <https://www.lazard.com/media/438038/levelized-cost-of-energy-v100.pdf>

The Public's Role

While national policies around coal are being debated, a number of groups are working on their own to reduce coal use and its impacts. One featured in the film is the Sierra Club's Beyond Coal campaign, the aim of which is to close coal-burning power plants or transition them to cleaner fuel sources. The campaign helps local communities organize in opposition to the negative impacts of coal and advocate for cleaner power. The campaign also works to ensure that coal and power companies follow laws protecting public health and the environment. Since 2011, the Beyond Coal campaign has helped to close more than 250 coal plants, around half of the total coal-burning capacity in the U.S.

The film recounts the debate over Arch Coal's proposed coal mine in Otter Creek, Montana, which would have been the largest new coal mine in the nation. Ultimately, local community opposition to the plan resulted in its suspension, highlighting the ability of citizens to help determine the future of energy in America.



At the same time, mayors and other local leaders are taking action to reduce dependence on coal because of the economic and public health benefits. Many of the world's largest cities lie on coasts and face risks from climate change, and they are working to reduce carbon emissions by increasing energy efficiency and getting power from cleaner sources. An increasing number of

cities have plans to go 100 percent clean power. One example from the film is Georgetown, Texas, whose mayor determined that solar and wind power would be cheaper than coal and save city residents money on their electricity bills.

What is an activist? What experience, if any, do you have with environmental activism? What are some examples of environmental activism in the film From the Ashes? What do you think the consequence to communities affected by the coal industry might be if these activists had chosen not to use their voice?

What are some ways in which community stakeholders and concerned citizens in the film From the Ashes expressed their concerns and shared values relating to the impact of coal on the environment? Please describe how effective each example you listed may have been. For those that you feel were not so effective, what strategies could you suggest to improve the efficacy of the method?

How effective do you think citizen and community engagement is in inspiring change to local, state, and/or national environmental policy? Please explain.

What is the role of science and community education in environmental activism? What examples from the film From the Ashes come to mind regarding poor communication of scientific data and inadequate education in underserved communities affected by the coal industry?

The film From the Ashes claims that it takes courage to think about doing something different, and that new and better will otherwise never come. What environmental issues are a concern for the community in which you live? After watching this film, how are you inspired to think creatively about getting involved? Describe what your first step in getting involved might look like.

A Call to Action: The *From the Ashes* CrowdRise Initiative

As you watched *From the Ashes*, you encountered individuals and families whose lives have been profoundly changed by the decline of the coal industry. Towns that were founded or that prospered because of the location of nearby mines have suffered job losses, not only in mining jobs, but also in all the other types of jobs that supported the miners; groceries, garages, stores, restaurants, and more have lost their customer base as mining salaries declined and disappeared. The results are depression, despair, bitterness, and above all, fear for the future.

From The Ashes not only tries to raise awareness by telling the powerful and influential real-life stories of coal in America, but also works to support and strengthen these coal-affected communities. Bloomberg Philanthropies is taking action to help coal communities create diverse, resilient, and sustainable economies by establishing a \$3 million initiative to support on-the-job training, economic development, and new career opportunities in communities left behind by the declining coal industry.

Bloomberg Philanthropies currently helps to fund such organizations as the Coal-Field Development Corporation, which hires workers for what's called a 33-6-3 week. This entails 33 hours of work in sustainable construction, solar



installation, mine-land reclamation, sustainable agriculture, and artisanship; six hours of higher education; and three hours of mentorship. You can read more about these partnerships at <https://www.crowdrise.com/fromtheashesfilm>.

It's important for all living in the United States across the political and geographic spectrum to get behind this transition to clean energy. We can all play a part in helping former coal-dependent communities by joining Bloomberg Philanthropies' national CrowdRise fundraising campaign to assist local groups supporting these communities. You can join these efforts by contributing through our film website at www.fromtheashesfilm.com or by going to the CrowdRise Web page at <https://www.crowdrise.com/fromtheashesfilm>. Bloomberg Philanthropies will match all contributions dollar for dollar.

A Call to Action: The Sierra Club

The Sierra Club, founded in 1892 by naturalist and conservationist John Muir, has long been known for its efforts to preserve wilderness areas, protect wildlife, and pass legislation for clean air and clean water. Now the Sierra Club, supported by more than three million members, has undertaken a major campaign to end pollution caused by coal mining and to promote alternative energy technologies. Its stated goals for its Beyond Coal campaign:

- Transition the American energy economy to a hundred percent clean energy.
- Build on the success already achieved in terms of retiring nearly half of the U.S. coal fleet of power plants by replacing coal with solutions such as wind, solar, and geothermal energy.
- Keeping remaining coal in the ground in places like Appalachia and Wyoming's Powder River Basin.



As of May 2017, the Sierra Club counts 253 dirty power plants that have been closed, with 270 more to go. Learn more about the Beyond Coal Campaign at www.beyondcoal.org.

The importance of local leadership in this effort cannot be overstated, and the Sierra Club has also begun the campaign called Mayors for 100% Clean Energy. This nonpartisan initiative asks local leaders to commit to leading their communities forward toward one hundred percent clean renewable energy sources. You can read about it at <http://www.sierraclub.org/ready-for-100/mayors-for-clean-energy>.

Think about ways you yourself can support this movement:

- *Learn* as much as you can about clean energy, about the environmental policies of the current administration in Washington, and about the organizations that are fighting to protect the environment.
- *Call and write* your local, state, and national politicians.
- *Join* a local chapter of an environmental organization such as the Sierra Club.
- *Donate* to organizations that work to protect the environment.
- *Talk* to friends, neighbors, community groups, church groups, and others about the importance of clean energy.



Additional Resources

<http://www.politico.com/agenda/story/2015/05/inside-war-on-coal-000002>

A report on how political action and environmental groups have shifted the energy landscape

http://unfccc.int/paris_agreement/items/9485.php

Information from the United Nations about the Paris Climate Agreement

<http://www.economist.com/news/united-states/21602238-dirty-fuel-unites-right-and-splits-left-politics-coal>

A quick look at coal politics at a local level

<http://content.sierraclub.org/coal/>

Articles about the impact of coal-fired plants on local communities and latest actions of government officials

<http://www.sierraclub.org/ready-for-100>

<http://content.sierraclub.org/coal/>

Sierra Club pages about their campaigns to protect the environment

<http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2014/04/coal/nijhuis-text>

A *National Geographic* article about whether coal can ever be clean

Natgeoed.org/from-the-ashes

Free classroom resources from National Geographic Education to help your students learn about coal and other energy sources that power our world today.

<https://youtu.be/hG51AlSSLM>

Video on Bloomberg Philanthropies Environment program



Film credits:

DIRECTED BY Michael Bonfiglio

PRODUCED BY Sidney Beaumont

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: Jon Kamen, Joe Berlinger,
Katherine Oliver, Justin Wilkes

CO-PRODUCERS: Rachel Koteen, Lindsay Firestone

CONSULTING PRODUCER: Antha Williams

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Ronan Killeen

EDITED BY Dave Marcus

MUSIC BY Mark Orton

For National Geographic Channel:

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER: Courteney Monroe

PRESIDENT, ORIGINAL PROGRAMMING AND PRODUCTION:
Tim Pastore

Image credits:

Image on page 16: Sierra Club

Other images courtesy of RadicalMedia

Twitter: @fromtheashesdoc

Instagram: @fromtheashesfilm

Facebook: www.facebook.com/fromtheashesfilm

Website: www.fromtheashesfilm.com



This discussion guide for *From the Ashes* was written by Lara Tukarski and Eileen Mattingly of Journeys in Film. For additional free materials to bring the world to your classroom and to explore significant issues through film, see the website <http://journeysinfilm.org>.

From the Ashes is presented by National Geographic Documentary Films, produced by RadicalMedia in partnership with Bloomberg Philanthropies.

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Hosting Guide for Film Screening



Dear Screening Host,

Thank you for hosting a screening of *From the Ashes*. Below you will find helpful tips for planning, promoting, and facilitating a successful screening and discussion of the film. Please email screenings@fromtheashesfilm.com if you have any questions.

Planning for the Screening

- ☐ Reach out to local on-campus student organizations and community groups in your area to find co-hosts and potential panelists.
- ☐ Secure an accessible venue — think about the location, public transportation options, and disability access. Also make sure the venue can provide any equipment you might need to screen the film and facilitate a panel discussion, such as a projector and DVD player, microphones, lighting, table, chairs, and water for the panelists.
- ☐ Choose an appropriate date and time, and check out what else is happening in the community to avoid clashing with other events.
- ☐ Consider hosting a post-screening discussion or panel at the event, and identify a moderator and panelists who can speak to the issue in a way that relates to your audience.



Promotion

- ☐ Download and customize the **Digital Invitation Template** with your event details to invite members of your community to your event. Be sure to include the following in the invitation:
 - ☐ Event Date and Start and End Times
 - ☐ Venue Name and Address
 - ☐ Host Organization(s) and how to RSVP
- ☐ Create a Facebook page / Campfire Page (for Sierra Club *only*) for your event and share it with members of your community to invite them to attend your event.
- ☐ Join online conversations about the film using #FromTheAshes, and follow *From the Ashes* on Facebook (@FromTheAshesFilm), Twitter (@fromtheashesdoc), and Instagram (@fromtheashesfilm). Post about your event to your organization's social media pages regularly in the weeks and days leading up to your event, and encourage attendees to spread the word to their own networks as well.
- ☐ Identify influential, high-profile members of your community to invite, such as the mayor, local politicians, local foundation personnel, and business leaders, to help build buzz for your event and awareness about the issue in your community.
- ☐ Ask your event co-sponsors and supportive local organizations for help promoting your event to reach new potential attendees in the community — they'll have different networks.

A Week or More Before the Event

- ☐ Make sure that you have sent the correct shipping details for RadicalMedia to send you the DVD.
- ☐ If you are planning for a panel discussion following the screening, make sure that the panelists and moderator have been introduced to each other prior to the event.
- ☐ If you are planning a group conversation, ensure the facilitator has reviewed the discussion guide for the film and chosen a few questions to start the conversation.
- ☐ Test your DVD as soon as you receive it.

The Day of the Event

- ☐ Perform a technical test run one more time to make sure the copy of the film you received is playing well, and double check that the projector and sound are working properly. If you have any issues, email screenings@fromtheashesfilm.com immediately.
- ☐ Test any equipment needed to facilitate your post-screening discussion to ensure that it is available and functioning properly. This might include the following: microphones, lighting, table, and chairs. Also be sure to provide water for your panelists.
- ☐ When introducing the film, please mention that this is an Advance Preview Screening and that the film will be available on National Geographic Channel on June 25.
- ☐ Identify a person on your team who can take pictures at the event and post to social media using #FromTheAshes and email them to Picture Motion after your event at screenings@fromtheashesfilm.com.
- ☐ Please review this discussion guide for tips, discussion questions, background, resources and more to guide your post-viewing conversation.

After the Event

- ☐ Send an email to thank all who attended, reminding them to spread the word about the upcoming *From the Ashes* premiere on National Geographic Channel this June 25.
- ☐ Please post your photos on your website, social media, Facebook event page, and Twitter page, and tag us and use #FromTheAshes. Also, please email your photos to screenings@fromtheashesfilm.com so we can share on our social media channels.
- ☐ Help spread the word about the broadcast premiere online using the suggested social media posts on our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/FromTheAshesFilm/>



National Geographic Channel
1145 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20036
<http://channel.nationalgeographic.com>



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Journeys in Film
50 Sandia Lane
Placitas, NM 87043
505.867.4666
www.journeysinfilm.org