

# HOW TO TALK TO MEDIA

## Tips and Points for Talking to Media & the World



*Created by Appalachians Against Pipelines  
for the fight against the Mountain Valley Pipeline*



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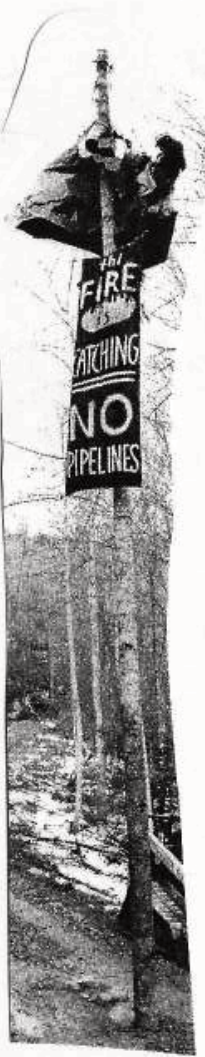
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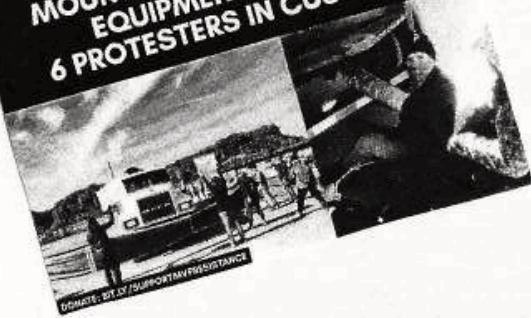


"LET'S PROVE THAT THEY ARE GRIEVOUSLY UNDERESTIMATING OUR STRENGTH AND OUR DETERMINATION TO KEEP ON FIGHTING."

~NUTTY, FROM HER MONOPOD PERCH WHICH BLOCKED AN MVP ACCESS ROAD FOR 57 DAYS IN 2018



PIPELINE FIGHTER LOCKS TO MOUNTAIN VALLEY PIPELINE EQUIPMENT TRUCK; 6 PROTESTERS IN CUSTODY



"WHEN I SAW THE TREE SITS ON PETERS MOUNTAIN, I KNEW WHAT WE HAD TO DO."  
~60-YEAR-OLD RED TERRY, FROM HER BENT MOUNTAIN TREE SIT IN THE PATH OF THE MOUNTAIN VALLEY PIPELINE

## **INTRO: Why Media Is A Great Thing!**

Campaign media is how we present our ideas to the world. It's how we tell people what we're doing, and why we're doing it. It's how we inspire and encourage others to change their minds and maybe even take action with us (or at least donate us some hammocks or energy bars). It's how we sway public opinion, and how we paint a picture of the world. It's also a tactic for putting pressure on our targets.

Are actions (both in the dictionary definition sense and the nonviolent direct action sense) inherently useful and worthwhile without media? Of course! If you lock yourself to an excavator and stop construction work for a day, that physical action has delayed the pipeline and cost the corporation a good chunk of money. High five! Media just amplifies the effect — if you're willing to tell folks what you did (and better yet, why you did it), maybe they'll talk to their friends about it. Maybe they'll visit the next action site. Maybe they'll be inspired to put up a tree sit blockade on the property they live on (true story).

If we're being effective in our actions, if we're doing remarkable things, if we're provoking public conversations, people are going to talk about us. It's up to us to use that wisely and tell them what to say.



## **PART 1: The Mountain Valley Pipeline — Talking Points About Our Campaign**

The Mountain Valley Pipeline (MVP) is a 303-mile pipeline that runs from northern West Virginia (Wetzel County) to southern Virginia (Pittsylvania County). A 70-mile extension into North Carolina was announced in 2018 but has not yet received permits. The MVP is a 42-inch-diameter fracked gas pipeline that (if built) will carry natural gas from the Marcellus and Utica shale region.<sup>1</sup> Although MVP and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) typically insist that the gas will be used domestically (“domestic need” is their justification for the pipeline and use of eminent domain), realistically at least some of the gas will be exported overseas (MVP has admitted this, and anyway, it’s hard to deny — the MVP will connect to the Transco Pipeline, which brings gas to existing and planned pre-export LNG terminals).<sup>2, 3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mountain Valley Pipeline Project. (n.d.). Overview. Retrieved from <https://www.mountainvalleypipeline.info/>

<sup>2</sup> Mall, A. (2018, March 13). Are Appalachian Pipelines Being Built to Increase Exports? Retrieved from <https://www.nrdc.org/experts/amy-mall/are-appalachian-pipelines-being-built-increase-exports>

<sup>3</sup> Adams, D. (2015, June 25). Pipeline turnabout: Gas could be sent India. Retrieved from [https://www.roanoke.com/news/local/pipeline-turnabout-gas-could-be-sent-india/article\\_27512cb7-f09a-56ea-8e3b-ca388a55df6d.html](https://www.roanoke.com/news/local/pipeline-turnabout-gas-could-be-sent-india/article_27512cb7-f09a-56ea-8e3b-ca388a55df6d.html)

The MVP is owned and overseen by EQT corporation.<sup>1</sup>

Here are some reasons why it's worth fighting the Mountain Valley Pipeline:

- **No public need.** *Although MVP and FERC allege that there is market demand for the gas, this is in large part based on contracts made between the pipeline's owners and its shippers (both entities being part of the same corporate structure). In other words, MVP is creating its own demand.<sup>4</sup> When pressed, FERC and MVP have cited that the proof of demand for the gas lies in the cost of the project: they say, of course there is demand because why would MVP spend \$4.6 billion on a project unless they were sure it would succeed?<sup>5</sup>*
- **Threatens clean water.** *The MVP's route crosses 1,108 water bodies, including three major aquifers, and crosses 20 surface/source drinking water protection areas (6 of which are Zones of Critical Concern). 136 of these water bodies are classified as fisheries of special concern. The MVP also crosses 32.1 acres of wetlands.<sup>6</sup> Also, the Greenbrier River is*

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<sup>4</sup> Surin, K. (2019, February 05). The Virginia Mountain Valley Pipeline Boondoggle. Retrieved from <https://www.counterpunch.org/2019/02/05/the-virginia-mountain-valley-pipeline-boondoggle/>

<sup>5</sup> Hammack, L. (2019, January 27). Appeals court set to review FERC's approval of the Mountain Valley Pipeline. Retrieved from [https://www.roanoke.com/news/local/appeals-court-set-to-review-ferc-s-approval-of-the/article\\_bbec3090-6d64-5ddf-995d-5f17172726c8.html](https://www.roanoke.com/news/local/appeals-court-set-to-review-ferc-s-approval-of-the/article_bbec3090-6d64-5ddf-995d-5f17172726c8.html)

<sup>6</sup> Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. (2017, June). Mountain Valley Project and Equitrans Final Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Retrieved from <https://www.ferc.gov/industries/gas/enviro/eis/2017/06-23-17-FEIS/Final-Environmental-Impact-Statement.pdf>





*the longest undammed river in the Eastern US<sup>7</sup> but it (and 3 other major rivers: Elk, Gauley, Meadow) would be dammed for multiple weeks during pipeline construction.<sup>8</sup>*

- **Threatens wildlife.** *There are 23 federally listed threatened, endangered, candidate, or special concern species potentially in vicinity of the MVP, and 20 state-listed or special concern species. Endangered species in the affected area include: Indiana bat, Virginia big-eared bat, Roanoke logperch (fish), Clubshell (mussel), Snuffbox (mussel), Mitchell satyr butterfly, Rusty patched bumble bee, Shale barren rock cress (plant), Running buffalo clover (plant), Smooth coneflower (plant), Virginia spiraea (plant), and many others. Also, the MVP impacts 2 Important Bird Areas. Also, the MVP may threaten a new species of crayfish that is found in high elevations of the Meadow and Greenbrier River basins. This species, the Meadow River mudbug, is designated as a Priority 1 Species of Greatest Conservation Need in West Virginia.<sup>6</sup> Its burrows provide refuge and safety for countless reptiles and amphibians that share its range.<sup>9</sup>*

<sup>7</sup> Wet and wonderful West Virginia spots to soak up the sun. (2018, May 01). Retrieved from <http://weheartwv.com/2017/07/10/wet-and-wonderful-west-virginia-spots-to-soak-up-the-sun/>

<sup>8</sup> Hammack, L. (2018, October 02). Court vacates pipeline stream-crossing permits in West Virginia. Retrieved from [https://www.roanoke.com/news/virginia/court-vacates-pipeline-stream-crossing-permits-in-west-virginia/article\\_2e1977a0-0e6e-5737-8b9b-d7307d24a924.html](https://www.roanoke.com/news/virginia/court-vacates-pipeline-stream-crossing-permits-in-west-virginia/article_2e1977a0-0e6e-5737-8b9b-d7307d24a924.html)

<sup>9</sup> Loughman, Z. J., Thoma, R. F., Fetzner, J. W., & Stocker, G. W. (2015). *Cambarus (Jugicambarus) pauleyi*, a new species of crayfish (Decapoda: Cambaridae) endemic to southcentral West Virginia, USA, with a re-description of *Cambarus (J.) dubius*. *Zootaxa*, 3980(4), 526. doi:10.11646/zootaxa.3980.4.4



- **Threatens air quality.** *The MVP poses serious risks to air quality. In particular, compressor stations that will be placed along the route are known to emit toxic air pollutants.*<sup>10</sup>
- **Destroys wild and public lands.** *76.6% of the MVP route is forested; the MVP crosses about 235 miles of forest total. Even FERC's Final Environmental Impact Statement says that the MVP would have "significant" impact on forests. The 50-foot wide operational easement would represent a permanent impact on forests. In Virginia, the MVP would impact about 547 acres of contiguous interior forest during construction classified as "high" to "outstanding" quality. In West Virginia, the pipeline would result in permanent impacts on about 892 acres of core forest areas (which are significant wildlife habitat). Removal of forest results in habitat loss and fragmentation. Also, MVP crosses the Appalachian Trail, the Weston and Gauley Bridge Turnpike Trail, the Blue Ridge Parkway, and the Jefferson National Forest.<sup>6</sup> Also, the Jefferson National Forest changed 11 of its management plan standards in order to approve the MVP, including: allowing the MVP to cross under the Appalachian Trail in a spot where there were no existing major impacts; allowing the MVP to construct a new utility corridor in an Old Growth Management Area; and literally writing "clear the trees within the [MVP] construction zone" as an actual part of the Old Growth Management Area maintenance plan (y'know, along with "maintain rare communities" and "improve threatened,*

<sup>10</sup> Mall, A. (2017, October 23). 10 Reasons to Stop Mtn. Valley & Atlantic Coast Pipelines. Retrieved from <https://www.nrdc.org/experts/amy-mall/top-ten-concerns-mountain-valley-atlantic-coast-pipelines>





endangered, sensitive, and locally rare species habitat" ... seriously, if you haven't ever looked at the Jefferson National Forest Plan Amendment check that out because it is bonkers!!).<sup>11</sup>

- **Crosses hazardous terrain including karst, seismic zones, and high hazard slopes.** Crosses about 67 miles of karst terrain. Karst terrain is formed from the dissolution of soluble rocks such as limestone, dolomite, and gypsum, and is characterized by underground drainage systems with sinkholes and caves.<sup>6</sup> Also, the MVP crosses the Giles County Seismic Zone.



<sup>11</sup> United States Department of Agriculture. (2017, December). Record of Decision: Mountain Valley Project Land and Resource Management Plan Amendment for the Jefferson National Forest. Retrieved from [https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE\\_DOCUMENTS/fseprd565459.pdf](https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fseprd565459.pdf)



- **Impacts soil erosion and risk of landslides.** *Construction would disturb about 5,053 acres of soils that are classified as potential for severe water erosion. About 67% of the route would cross areas susceptible to landslides.<sup>6</sup>*
- **Endangers human lives.** *There are 118 residences within 50 feet of MVP's proposed construction workspace, 35 of which are within 10 feet of pipeline construction (MVP purchased at least 7 of those). Also, 8 of the 17 counties in the MVP area have poverty rates that are higher than the respective statewide levels.<sup>6</sup> Also, see notes about air quality, water, landslides, seismic zones, leaks, explosions, and climate change.*
- **Contributes to greenhouse gas emissions.** *The MVP will be responsible for nearly 90 million metric tons of annual greenhouse gas emissions (equivalent to 26 coal plants or 19 million passenger vehicles). These emissions come from: the combustion of the gas carried by the pipeline; methane leaked across the gas supply chain; pipeline compression; gas extraction and processing. This number does not include construction emissions.<sup>12</sup>*
- **Increases demand for natural gas and therefore fracking.** *As mentioned above, MVP is creating its own demand via contracts with shippers. Therefore, the project itself increases demand for natural gas from the source region (Marcellus & Utica Shales). Fracking is itself horrific for a variety of reasons including water and air contamination, impacts on*

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<sup>12</sup> The Mountain Valley Pipeline: Greenhouse Gas Emissions Briefing. (2017, April 26). Retrieved from <http://priceofoil.org/2017/02/15/mountain-valley-pipeline-greenhouse-gas-emissions-briefing/>



*human health, earthquakes, etc. Bottom line: new pipelines trigger new gas production and trigger new demand which could otherwise be met with alternative, renewable energy sources.<sup>10</sup>*

- **Relies on eminent domain to steal land (that was already stolen).** *In Virginia, over 300 landowners refused to sell to MVP and have had their land stolen via eminent domain. MVP was allowed to start construction before these cases were settled.<sup>13</sup> (See also: no public need, which is supposedly necessary to use eminent domain.) Also, representatives of the Cheyenne River and Rosebud Sioux tribes have said that work on the pipeline in several areas would disturb their burial grounds and religious artifacts.<sup>14</sup> Also, no pipelines on stolen land!*



<sup>13</sup> Hammack, L. (2019, February 05). Appeals court allows quick-take of land for Mountain Valley Pipeline. Retrieved from [https://www.roanoke.com/business/news/appeals-court-allows-quick-take-of-land-for-mountain-valley/article\\_bf5acaa0-c20d-5eb4-976d-57bb4222ef4c.html](https://www.roanoke.com/business/news/appeals-court-allows-quick-take-of-land-for-mountain-valley/article_bf5acaa0-c20d-5eb4-976d-57bb4222ef4c.html)

<sup>14</sup> Hammack, L. (2019, January 27). Appeals court set to review FERC's approval of the Mountain Valley Pipeline. Retrieved from [https://www.roanoke.com/news/local/appeals-court-set-to-review-ferc-s-approval-of-the/article\\_bbec3090-6d64-5ddf-995d-5f17172726c8.html](https://www.roanoke.com/news/local/appeals-court-set-to-review-ferc-s-approval-of-the/article_bbec3090-6d64-5ddf-995d-5f17172726c8.html)



- **Entrenched in corrupt political processes.** *The MVP is operating without all of its required permits (as of March 2019 their permits to cross the National Forest and rivers have been revoked). Also, in December 2018 the Attorney General of VA (Mark Herring) filed a lawsuit against MVP during construction, but MVP continues construction. We know that FERC “rubber-stamped” the pipeline and continues to cover for MVP. We know that the Jefferson National Forest had to change its policies in order to approve the pipeline (again, check that document out, its failure to even pretend that it isn’t just greenlighting the MVP with no care for the forest is wild<sup>11</sup>). We know that politicians and regulatory agencies continue to push the pipeline through despite public opposition. We know that the WV DEP approved MVP’s plan for river crossings despite those plans violating the WV DEP’s own rules for river crossings. Etc. etc. etc. ...*
- **Violations galore!** *The lawsuit that the VA Attorney General filed against MVP in Dec ‘18 cites over 300 environmental violations, including: Unpermitted Discharge; Failure to Maintain and Repair Erosion and Sediment Control Structures; Failure to Construct Vehicular Stream Crossing; Failure to Maintain Access Roads; and more.<sup>15</sup> Separately, the WV DEP cited MVP for 19 violations between April - October 2018. The WV DEP violations don’t come with a*

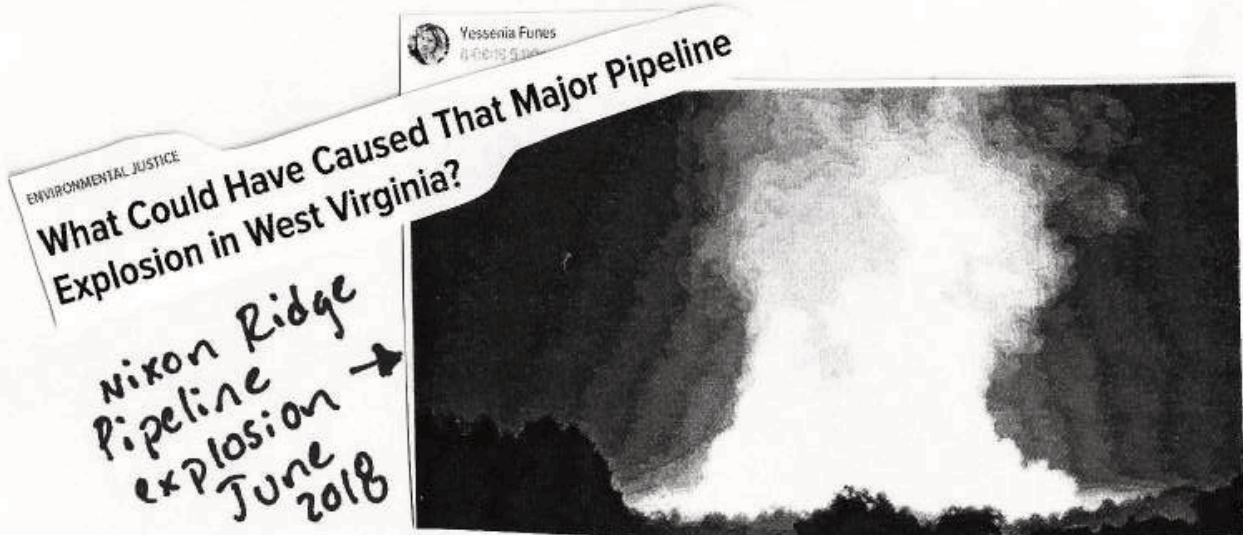
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<sup>15</sup> Attorney General of Virginia. (2018, December 07). Retrieved from <https://www.oag.state.va.us/media-center/news-releases/1341-december-7-2018-herring-and-deq-file-suit-over-environmental-violations-during-construction-of-mountain-valley-pipeline>



monetary penalties (see: corrupt political processes).<sup>16</sup> And these are only the documented violations ...

- **Pipelines leak; pipelines explode.** Between 2010-2018, 5,512 pipeline incidents were reported resulting in 596 injuries, 126 fatalities, 29,552 evacuees, 808 fires, 291 explosions, and over \$4 billion in property damage. Broken down to averages, that means that on average each day in the US, 1.7 pipeline incidents are reported, requiring 9 people to be evacuated, and causing almost \$1.3 million in property damage. A pipeline catches fire every 4 days and results in an explosion every 11 days. These incidents result in an injury every 5 days, on average, and a fatality every 26 days. Note that these incidents include natural gas transmission pipelines like the MVP, but also hazardous liquid pipelines, natural gas distribution pipelines, etc.<sup>17</sup>



<sup>16</sup> Mishkin, K. (2018, November 08). Pipelines repeatedly cited by state regulators for environmental issues. Retrieved from [https://www.wvgazette.com/news/pipelines-repeatedly-cited-by-state-regulators-for-environmental-issues/article\\_2894c047-7ac1-5ba4-bb8d-c41b556e210e.html](https://www.wvgazette.com/news/pipelines-repeatedly-cited-by-state-regulators-for-environmental-issues/article_2894c047-7ac1-5ba4-bb8d-c41b556e210e.html)

<sup>17</sup> Kelso, M. (2018, December 07). Pipeline Incidents Continue to Impact Residents. Retrieved from <https://www.fractracker.org/2018/12/pipeline-incidents-impact-residents/>



## **PART 2: Appalachians Against Pipelines — Some Things We Stand For & Hold With Us**

As a mish-mash, hodge-podge group of folks, Appalachians Against Pipelines does not have a formal list of talking points or beliefs. That being said, there are some things that we aspire to acknowledge and fight for. Here's an incomplete list.

### **WE ACKNOWLEDGE AND CELEBRATE THE HISTORY OF:**

- **This campaign.** *People in the area have been organizing against the Mountain Valley Pipeline since 2014. Years of fighting through the courts, regulatory processes, and on the ground in affected communities have led us to this moment. Appalachians Against Pipelines did not start this fight (we were not “formed” until 2018). Using a diversity of tactics, folks resisting the MVP have delayed its completion by at least 1 year.*
- **The tactics we are using.** *Direct action is ancient! Although we aspire to be creative, we did not invent these tactics, and we will always have much to learn from other folks engaging with these tactics. Tree sits in particular have been used for decades. More broadly, nonviolent direct action has been used for much longer than that. To quote Ye Olde Wikipedia, “Direct action tactics have been around for as long as conflicts have existed.”*

- **The tradition of resistance in Appalachia.** *Appalachian people have been fighting the government, corporations, bosses, and systems of oppression for centuries! There is a rich history of resistance ingrained in the culture of these mountains (which is well beyond the scope of this zine—but it is fascinating and definitely worth reading more about). Here are some amazing things that have happened:*
  - Battle of Blair Mountain, Southern WV: Over 10,000 coal miners fighting to unionize took up arms against strike breakers in a battle that lasted five days in 1921. The battle ended when federal troops threatened to drop bombs on striking workers.
  - Creation of the Highlander Center in Tennessee: Founded in 1932, the Highlander was first created for labor organizing, but would later become a key training and movement building space in the civil rights era.
  - The Coal Creek War in Tennessee: This armed labor uprising began when coal mine owners replaced company-employed miners with convicts leased out by the prison system who were forced to work for free. The former employees attacked and burned prison stockades and mining properties, freeing hundreds of convicts over the course of several years in the early 1890s.
  - Asheville Student Committee on Racial Equality: ASCORE was responsible for some of the first lunch counter sit ins in 1960 that sparked the civil rights movement.

News coverage  
of Battle of  
Blair Mtn →

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● **Resistance to extraction in Appalachia.** *Since colonization, corporations and the state have been profiting off of Appalachia. Extractive industries (including logging, mountaintop removal coal mining, and fracking for natural gas) have plagued this region. There has always been resistance to these exploitive projects, even when this was not the mainstream cultural narrative. Here are just a few interesting people and moments:*

- 61 year old Ollie Combs sat in front of a bulldozer to stop strip mining on her farm in Kentucky in 1964
- Citizens of Brumley Gap, VA successfully defeated a hydroelectric dam proposed by Appalachian Electric Power in 1982, which would have drowned their homes and community
- Larry Gibson and the Stanley family refused to sell their land to coal companies for strip mining despite decades of bribery and coercion. The land exists today as Stanley Heirs park on Kayford Mountain in Southern WV.
- Numerous grassroots groups have engaged in a campaigns against mountaintop removal across Appalachia for decades

LARRY GIBSON



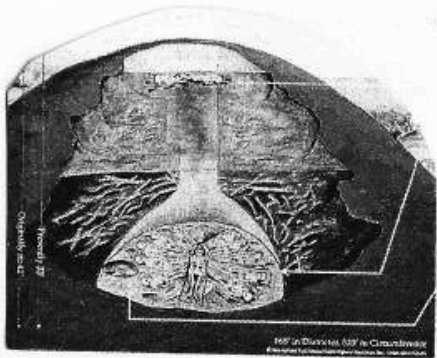
Indigenous  
history!



- **The land that we inhabit.** *West Virginia's official state position is that there were no Native people in the area when white settlers arrived. This is, of course, ridiculous. But there is still a lot of speculation about who exactly used and lived in the area. The fact that we don't know a complete, extensive history speaks to erasure, not only of Native peoples themselves but of their stories and histories. This erasure is part of an ongoing cultural genocide. That being said, here are some things we do know:*
  - ~14,000 years ago: humans first came to the region (think: woolly mammoths! sabertooth tigers!)
  - ~2,500 years ago: people living in the area had settlements, organized societies, etc. In some areas, burial sites in the form of large earthen mounds were used (some are still around today such as in South Charleston, WV).
  - Up to colonization: Many different groups lived in and used the area that is now affected by the MVP. The Shawnee lived along the Ohio River, and as far south as the Kanawha River. The Moneton tribe inhabited WV around the Kanawha Valley. The Lenape (sometimes called Delaware) tribe lived in the area, especially as white settlers began pushing them westward from the coast. Seneca and Mohawk tribes lived in north-central WV, near Morgantown. Southern WV and surrounding areas were tied to the Cherokee, who likely used the region as hunting grounds and lived there at times. Monocan people inhabited much of what is now western Virginia.



- 1600s: this is when WW officially says that all native peoples ~\*~simply left~\*~ the region for an unknown reason??? (Hmmm seems fishy aka it's a lie)
- Post-colonization: genocide and relocation. English and French explorers arrive in the late 1600s. European migration into Appalachia begins in the late 1700s; many early settlers were Ulster Scots. Between 1790 and 1840, a series of treaties are signed with Cherokee and other tribes, ceding much of the region to white settlers. (FYI, just because a treaty was signed doesn't mean it doesn't count as forced relocation and genocide.) In 1830, U.S. President Andrew Jackson passes the Indian Removal Act, forcing Cherokee peoples (and many others) to relocate west. Of the 16,500 Cherokee relocated via the Trail of Tears, approximately 2,000-8,000 died along the way (from exposure, disease, and starvation).



The Criel Mound  
in So Charleston, WV.  
Built ~2200 years  
ago.



native-land.ca  
is a decent site  
to START exploring  
the indigenous  
history of where  
you live.



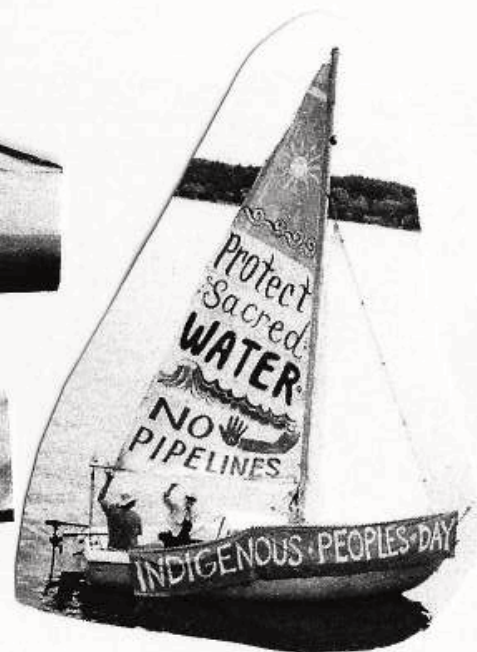
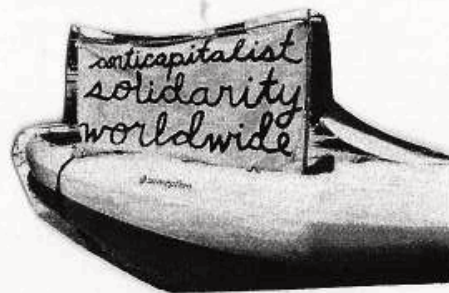


## WE STAND IN SOLIDARITY WITH MANY MODERN DAY STRUGGLES AGAINST OPPRESSION

Moving into the present day, we also recognize that we are part of a broader movement against all forms of oppression and injustice. The struggle against the Mountain Valley Pipeline is directly connected to other struggles we stand in solidarity with, and often talk about on social media and with mainstream media. Below are some of the movements, ongoing struggles, and issues that people connected to Appalachians Against Pipelines have publicly written about, talked about, painted on a banner, etc.

This is by no means a complete (or very well formatted) list; feel free to add more, and be encouraged to research these issues! If we went through them one by one, we wouldn't be able to staple this zine.

When you're writing a statement or talking to the media you can think: what other issues do I care about? Which movements do I want to amplify?





*An incomplete list of struggles we stand in solidarity with, banners we've made, issues we've discussed, etc ...*

- Other anti-pipeline and anti-extraction struggles: fracking, injection wells, mountaintop removal, mining for gold, copper, uranium
  - Especially indigenous-led anti-pipeline and anti-extraction movements: Line 3, KXL, No DAPL movement at Standing Rock
  - No Pipelines on Stolen Land
  - No Atlantic Coast Pipeline! Solidarity with Union Hill — Black communities are NOT sacrifice zones!
- No Prisons, No Pipelines!
- Anti-colonial struggles
- Movements against racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism
- Fuck capitalism
- No Borders! Solidarity with immigrants, migrants and refugees
- Fuck white nationalism
- FTP
- Palestinian liberation
- Anti-war movement



## **PART 3: “So Why Are You Here?” & How To Write A Statement**

**Ultimately, it’s up to you to decide why you’re taking action and what you want to say about it.** But having to answer this question is pretty common — whether you’re writing a statement for a press release or being interviewed by a journalist — so the key is to think about it in advance. Actually, even if you’re not in one of those scenarios and you’re just doing some introspective pondering, “why are you here?” can be a super helpful, grounding, and empowering question to think through.

If you know your answer already, great! But if you’re stuck, here are some questions to ask yourself that may help you towards the right direction.

### **Questions to ask yourself when you’re stuck on the “why”:**

- Is there a certain fact about the Mountain Valley Pipeline that gets you fired up?
- Is there a certain fact about the broader state of the world that gets you fired up?
- How long have you been involved in this campaign? What were you up to before that? Do you remember why you first decided to get involved? What specifically pushed you to make that choice?
- How did you feel when you decided to take this action?



- Is there anything in your personal life or history that is an important part of your story?
- Did you have to make any sacrifices to be here? What was your reasoning when you were thinking through that decision?
- How would you explain to your best friend why you're taking action? How would you explain to your fourth grade teacher why you're taking action? How would you explain to the pipeliners who most definitely want to yell at you why you're taking action?
- If you could say anything directly to the head of MVP, what would it be? Or fill in some other figure you want to talk to — the governor? FERC?
- Do you feel a sense of urgency? If so, why?
- If you were writing a letter to the world explaining your action or your involvement in this campaign, how would you sign it? "For the wild"? "Here's to a world without pipelines or prisons"? "Yours for the cause of Peace and Brotherhood"? (Snagged that last one from MLK ...) What does this sign-off tell you about your own intentions and aspirations?

**Are you still stuck? Try a different approach ...**

- Ask a friend to help you brainstorm or even to draft something for you. If you like what they come up with, great! If you don't, why not? Change it to suit you.
- Change from a "why" question to a "what" question. What are you doing? What is your plan for the day, the week, the month? What are you hoping to accomplish? If you can answer that one, then you've answered the "why"!



**Now use it in a statement.** A statement (think: for a press release) is simply a way to give traditional media outlets easy-to-grab nuggets to publish in their stories. Journalists love quotable statements because they can quote you without having to do an interview. This is your opportunity to explain what you're doing, why you're doing it, and who you are (if you're so inclined).

*If you don't answers these questions for them (what you're doing, why you're doing it, and who you are), they won't know the answers, and they might make up their own.*

#### Statements given by MVP protesters —

"I have talked to elected officials, signed petitions, written letters, submitted reports, and gone to court. I have exhausted the 'usual' methods of fighting injustice and have gotten no relief. Officials have failed us in this fight; we need to fight for ourselves and each other." — July 2018

"I do this for our futures. I am only one person, and this is only one action, but there are many more pipe layers, excavators, machines of exploitation. There are over 300 miles of pipe planned. EQT must face opposition at every mile." — November 2019

"I'm here to resist the Mountain Valley Pipeline because it represents some of the worst of what humanity can be—sacrificing the well being of communities and ecosystems for short-term corporate profit. The fire is catching, and as someone who is from the region, I want to help spread it however I can. If we stand together and take action, we will stop this pipeline." — June 2018

"I am compelled to fight back against this pipeline because I cannot sit back and ignore what is happening to my home and to the mountains that I have known and loved since I was a child. I cannot sit back and watch as an extractive industry threatens this region, my family, and my community." — September 2018

"Virginians have tried every way we know how to tell our elected representatives that these fracked gas pipelines are a mistake. MVP is bad for Virginia and bad for the planet. The State Water Control Board and DEQ can stop this pipeline. Governor Northam can stop this pipeline. Revoke water quality certification now and inspire a new generation of voters. Because if you don't act to protect our water and our mountains, we will." — June 2018



Yes, you can say whatever you want in a statement. But remember your audience...

- Are you writing a statement to be used in a press release to be sent to and quoted by traditional media outlets? Your audience is typically the general public, the people who aren't already fighting this pipeline. Consider saying something about the pipeline.
- Are you writing a statement to be posted on Appalachians Against Pipelines' Instagram page? Your audience is typically our existing followers, the people who are already convinced that the pipeline is bad. Feel free to let your inner wingnut shine.

Side note — while we're on the topic of thinking about things ahead of time, here's some other curveball personal questions that it may be worth pondering before you find yourself face to face with a journalist...

- Do you really think you can stop this pipeline?
- [If you're not local] What does this pipeline have to do with you? Aren't you just an "outside agitator"?
- Why don't you take this fight to the courts/legislatures where it belongs?
- Can't you see that these pipeline workers are just trying to make a living and support their families?
- Didn't you drive here today? Isn't that paint made of petroleum? Isn't that bucket plastic?
- Where do you poop? (or, other questions about bodily functions when you're in a blockade or lock down)

→ for tips on maintaining control of an interview, see PAGE 31!

## PART 4: Tips, Dos & Don'ts for Interviews — How To Avoid Putting Your Foot In Your Mouth/How To Keep Your Cool When You Inevitably Do

### HOW TO PREPARE FOR AN INTERVIEW

- Ask the reporter for questions in advance. At the very least, ask what the piece is about or what kind of story they're trying to tell.
- Pick 1-3 points you want to make. What's the one thing you want readers/viewers to know? Write them down if you want to!
- Are there any questions you *don't* want to answer or topics you *don't* want to speak to? Don't let those questions take you by surprise; decide what you'll say (or won't say) when these come up.
- Clarify with the journalist the terms for the interview (see below).



Hi! I'm Joe Dashiell from WDBJ in Roanoke. Can I ask you a few questions?



## TYPES OF CONVERSATIONS WITH MEDIA

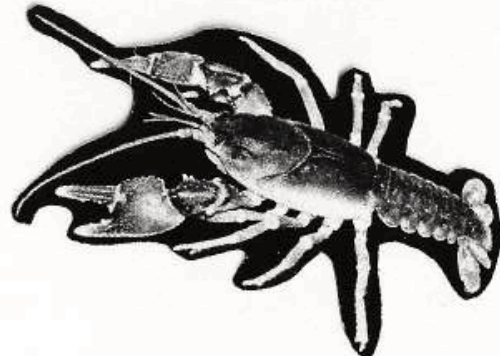
**The golden rule:** BEFORE you talk to a journalist, you must mutually agree to terms for the conversation.

Clarify these questions:

- Can the journalist use your name? First/last name?
- Can the journalist use what you tell them, but not name you?
- Can the journalist use other information to identify you ("teacher," "member of the tree sit support camp," etc.)?
- Are there any other criteria you have for the journalist that need to be discussed before your interview? (Clarifying your pronouns? Clarifying any questions that are off limits?)

**The other golden rule:** If you do not clarify and agree to terms, everything is assumed to be ON THE RECORD. And even if you say something is OFF THE RECORD you are never *guaranteed* anonymity.

Nice to meet you, Joe!  
I'm happy to chat  
on the record. My  
name is Mary and  
I'm a Meadow River  
mudbug.



## TYPES OF CONVERSATIONS WITH MEDIA (CONT'D)

**“On the record”** — whatever you say can be used and directly attributed to you. If you do not clarify in advance, *it is assumed that everything is on the record!* Anything you say or do (well thought out responses, quips, eye rolls, whatever) can be quoted and attributed to you. Unless otherwise agreed upon, small talk is most definitely on the record.

- Did a journalist do a “formal interview” and now they’re lurking around listening to your convos? This is ON THE RECORD. If you’re not cool with that, interrupt it! Try saying *“Now that you’re done with your interview with Joe, what other information can we get you?”* or *“We’d rather you not use our casual conversations for your piece because we want to keep it about the pipeline. Would you mind leaving this common space, or will you agree to not use the information you overhear here?”*

**“Off the record”** — usually means that the reporter can’t use the info for publication. They’ll often try to find another source to corroborate it so they can use it. Just because you say something is “off the record” doesn’t mean it won’t end up in the news.

**“On background” / “deep background” / “not for attribution”** — definitions vary, so it’s important to clarify. Typically, the journalist can use what you tell them but cannot attribute it to you (maybe they can use identifying info but not your name, maybe they can’t use anything — clarify with them!)



## **THROWING A WRENCH IN YOUR MEDIA STRATEGY: TAKING PUBLIC ACTION & GETTING ARRESTED**

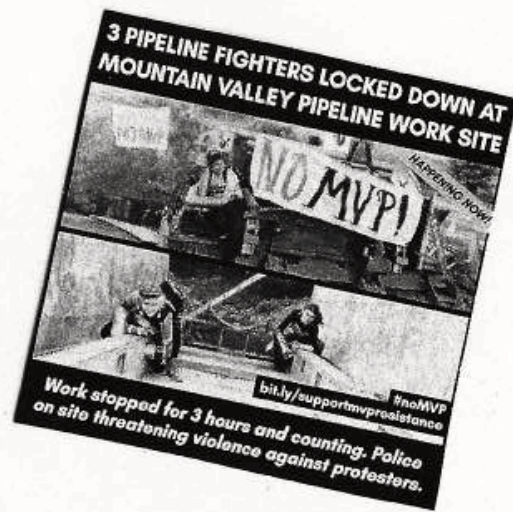
If you are taking a public action — you're blockading a worksite, you're disrupting a public hearing — you won't have a chance to get a journalist to agree to terms before writing an article about you. Your actions are inherently "on the record," and so is everything you choose to say. The media will make assumptions about you, especially if they are on site at the action where we have less control (as opposed to if the journalist is solely working off of pictures and statements that we sent them). In these cases it's particularly important that we use statements, press releases, banners, etc, to frame the narrative and tell our side of the story.

*A note on being trans & taking public action ...* Journalists will almost always assume your gender and pronouns based on their physical perception of you. You and your media team for the action can try and inform journalists of your identity and pronouns if you wish, but they will not always be receptive of such requests. When interacting with media while trans, always work under the assumption that you might be misgendered or deadnamed in a published work. In situations where you are arrestable, keep in mind that if the media is receptive to your request to use your proper pronouns, or if you give them a name other than your legal name, this can clue the pigs in to the fact you are trans, if they haven't already realized. It's important to consider how this can affect your safety and comfort while in custody of the state. The takeaway here is primarily that it's important to think through



these things before your action. There are no "right" answers, but be sure to let any action media folks know any pronoun and name-related instructions/requests *before* your action.

*A note on getting arrested & your legal name ...* Once you're arrested, your legal name is part of the public record. Often, journalists are just giddy to learn your legal name and publish it. If they're writing an actual story about you, they may be willing to use an alternate name you give them, it just depends on the journalist and the reasoning you give them. We can talk to journalists about it, we can try to negotiate with them about it, but most importantly you should think about this in advance and let offsite media know if this is going to be an issue (and what you want to do about it). Note that in cases where a journalist is being stubborn and using your legal name, it may not be wise to give them your nickname as well (thus publicly connecting your nickname and legal name). It depends on how public your nickname is. Ultimately, it's up to you.





## HOW TO MAINTAIN CONTROL OF AN INTERVIEW

So you've agreed to do an interview. Great! If you're nervous, if you're not sure what to say, if you're regretting having ever agreed to this, here are some phrases to keep in your back pocket:

When you don't know the answer:

- "I'm not sure of the answer to that, but I'd be happy to look into it and get back to you."
- "I don't know the answer to that, sorry."
- "I can't answer that, but what I do know ..."

When you don't want to answer (or don't want to be interviewed):

- "I'd have to think about that one. Can we come back to it?"
- "I'm not interested in doing an interview/commenting on that right now. Can I check in with some other folks who might be up for it and send them your way?"
- *Just talk about something else! Do not answer the question, you don't need to acknowledge that you're not answering the question, just say something else.*
- *Avoid saying "NO COMMENT." It's tacky, it's weird, and there are plenty of alternatives.*

When you just need a minute to think:

- "Can you give me a minute to think about that?" **REMEMBER — AS LONG AS YOUR CONVERSATION IS NOT BEING RECORDED LIVE FOR TV OR RADIO, YOU ARE IN CONTROL OF THE TIMING.**

When you feel like you messed up:

- "I'm sorry, I misspoke. Let me rephrase that."
- "One moment. Let me start over."
- "I want to make sure I'm answering this correctly. Can you please repeat your question?"

When you want to steer the conversation in another direction or bring it back to your main point (this is called "bridging"):

- "Before we get too off topic, I'd like to add that ..."
- "What's most important here is ..."
- "What people should be more concerned with is ..."
- "I understand that you're curious, but I'm not here to talk about *[my shit buckets]*. What I'd really like to talk about is *[why we need more people to resist this pipeline]*."



**PART 5: Know Your Rights & Media  
Intersect! Most Importantly, Don't  
Incriminate Yourself Or Your Comrades!**

The golden rule: Don't say anything to media (even off the record) that you don't want the cops and/or the pipeliners to know.

Talk to plants, not cops!

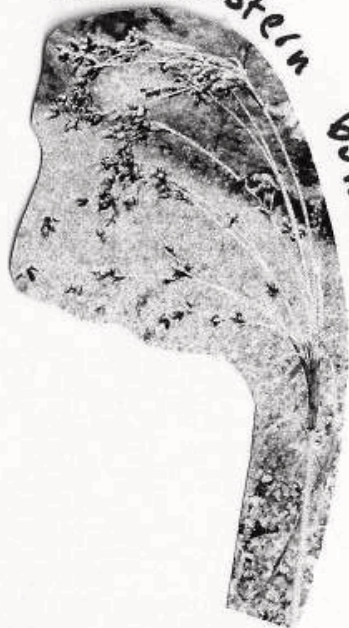
running buffalo clover



shake barren rock cress



northeastern bulrush



virginia spiraea



small whorled Pogonia



## **WHEN TO USE "I" AND WHEN TO USE "WE"**

In general, you speak for yourself and should be using "I" statements almost exclusively. YOU are taking action for these reasons, YOU have these demands, YOU feel a certain way about something.

Any time you use a "we" statement, think carefully about who you're referring to, and about who the journalist will assume you're referring to (often it will read as if you're talking about the entire campaign against the MVP). If you're using "we" to mean "Appalachians Against Pipelines," think about whether everyone in AAP would support your statement, and whether your statement applies to everyone in AAP (it's tricky because AAP has no formal membership, but use your common sense). If you're using "we" to mean another group, be sure to carefully clarify with the interviewer.

### **Examples:**

- YES: *We are still here!*
- NO: *We don't have jobs.*
- YES: *We believe in taking direct action to physically halt construction of this pipeline.*
- NO: *We don't vote; we think voting is stupid.*

*When in doubt, use "I" statements!*



### **Green Light: Feel free to talk about these things freely!**

- Your reasons for taking action, your reasons for supporting an action.
- Your identity and background, to the extent that you want it known publicly. *Things like "My name is Joe, I'm a grandfather, I was born and raised here in Monroe County."*
- Your demands, your conditions for doing a thing. *Things like "I won't leave until FERC permanently revokes MVP's permit to construct on National Forest lands."*
- Anything that is already public knowledge. *Things like "There are a few dozen people protesting here today." or "My friend who was here to support me was arrested an hour ago."*
- Tactical action specifics that you DO want cops/pipeliners to know.
  - *"Do NOT touch my support lines! Touching these lines puts my life in danger!"*
  - *"There is peanut butter inside my lock box! If you are allergic to peanut butter, stay away!"*



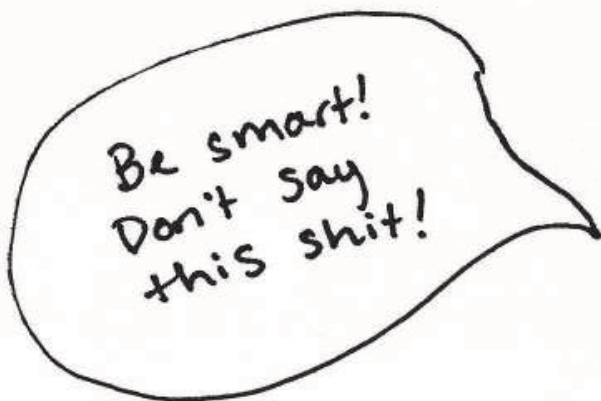
**Yellow Light: Use caution on these topics.**

- Action deployment details. *Things like "I've been here since 6am" may be fine, but "6 hippies helped get me up here and then peaced out" is a no go.*
- Advance knowledge of an action. *This is a gray area; use your judgement. As a rule of thumb, it's generally fine to say an action began when someone was locked in. Example: Is a journalist asking you how you knew to show up at this site today? Don't admit to hearing about it yesterday or being a part of deployment.*
- Drawing connections between different actions. *Things like "Appalachians Against Pipelines has erected numerous aerial blockades in the path of the Mountain Valley Pipeline" may be fine, but "a lot of the people and gear here today were also at the high-risk action last week" is a less okay.*
- Reasons for anonymity. *Try to stay vague and say things like "To protect my safety and security, I'd rather not use my name." Avoid things that are an admission of guilt like "I want to stay anonymous because what I am doing is illegal."*
- Technical action specifics that you want to say to inspire others (for example), and don't mind cops/pipeliners knowing.
  - *"Anyone can take action like this, all you need is a bike lock." (In this case, the assumption is that you're using a U-lock that is clearly seen, it's obvious and straightforward, there's no reason not to state it.)*
  - *"I use ropes to secure all my personal items so they don't fall off my platform." (In this case, you're making your action relatable, demystifying it for the public, but there's not much risk of this info being used against you.)*



**Red Light: Stop! Don't answer! Be rude if you have to! Get outta that conversation!**

- Anything about anyone who is not you doing something that may have legal consequences.
  - DO NOT NAME YOUR COMRADES. DO NOT IMPLY THAT YOUR COMRADES DID A THING OR HELPED YOU DO A THING. DO NOT SUGGEST THAT YOUR COMRADES CONDONE YOU DOING A THING OR EVEN KNEW ABOUT YOU DOING A THING.
  - Do not talk about landowners and allies. Do not imply that a landowner is "looking the other way." If a person is not PUBLICLY supporting you, their business is NOT for you to discuss with ANYONE.
- Anything about pre-planning actions. *Could it land you with a "Conspiracy to ..." charge tacked on? Don't say it.*
  - *"My friend rutabaga has been teaching me to climb for months on their property."*
- Technical action specifics that you DO NOT want cops/pipeliners to know.
  - *"The exact description of the platform rigging that I'm using here is [whatever]."*
  - *"The key to this lock I'm using is actually just in my friend's pocket."*



## **SOCIAL MEDIA & INCRIMINATION**

These days, anyone with a camera or cell phone can functionally be the media. While some folks may be well intentioned ("The world *NEEDS* to know what's happening here!!"), the cops do, in fact, know about facebook, twitter, etc. and they use social media in investigations. Independent live streamers and photographers wanting to reach the social media world may actually be doing the disservice of publicly incriminating people. Lots of people (connected and unconnected to our movements) are spending years in prison in part because the cops obtained incriminating evidence from facebook and other social media platforms. If you're one of these zealous live streamers, tweeters, or posters, please be aware of this! Otherwise, in action spaces be cautious and conscious of anyone filming or snapping photos. And if it seems totally inappropriate for someone to be documenting what's happening- tell them to turn that shit off!



This is the end of the zine.

It's incomplete! Particularly PART 2 (history & solidarity), which deserves so much more space and time in this zine and our lives.

But also, we barely even touched on social media, didn't say anything about the components of an action media team, and could've given written an entire zine on the "no snitching" section.

Anyway, the point is ...

media is a tool in our metaphorical direct action toolbox.

Let's use it.

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[instagram.com/appalachiansagainstpipelines](https://instagram.com/appalachiansagainstpipelines)

[twitter.com/stopthemvp](https://twitter.com/stopthemvp)