



## Effects

The spill contained arsenic and mercury, which killed everything in the water. It was over five feet deep in places and covered nearby residents' yards. The spill polluted hundreds of miles (200–300 mi) of the Big Sandy River and its tributaries and the Ohio River. The water supply for over 27,000 residents was contaminated, and all aquatic life in Coldwater Fork and Wolf Creek was killed. It was one of the worst environmental disasters ever in the southeastern United States, according to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The water is still effective as of today and residents report tap water being brown, smelly, and unusable.



## Solutions

For nearly two decades, little has been done to resolve the issue with a permanent effect. For short-term solutions, residents have purchased bottled water and resort to tap only when necessary (e.g. showers). A lack of funding and the low economic status of the county has stalled efforts to remedy the situation. What must be done is 1) Temporarily rerouting clean water from nearby areas, 2) Obtaining funds to filter the water and fix the water infrastructure. Popular media attention could garner the widespread support of the people to put pressure on the federal and state government to help, as well as the former Massey Energy.

# Martin County, Ky Coal Slurry Spill

Presented by Shajeda Uddin, Seton Hall University

**On October 11, 2000, the bottom of a coal slurry impoundment owned by Massey Energy broke into an abandoned mine underground. 306 million gallons spilled into the two Tug Fork tributaries of Wolf Creek and Coldwater Fork. By morning, Wolf Creek was oozing with the black waste; on Coldwater Fork, a 10-foot-wide stream became a 100-yard expanse of thick slurry.**

# credits

- Martin County Coal Corp Coal Slurry Release, Section 1: Introduction. (2018, February 12).
- Retrieved from <https://www.epa.gov/foia/martin-county-coal-corp-coal-slurry-release-section-1-introduction>.
- Martin County Coal Corp Coal Slurry Release, Section 2: Site Description. (2018, February 12).
- Retrieved from <https://www.epa.gov/foia/martin-county-coal-corp-coal-slurry-release-section-2-site-description>.
- United States. Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement. (2002). *Report on October 2000 ... identification number 1211-ky6-0035-01*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of the Interior, Office of Surface Mining. (2002). Retrieved November 12, 2019.
- Blanford, S. J., & Moore, A. K. (n.d.). PDF. Retrieved from [https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE MANUSCRIPTS/kentucky/lawrence\\_martinKY2005/lawrence\\_martinKY2005.pdf](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_MANUSCRIPTS/kentucky/lawrence_martinKY2005/lawrence_martinKY2005.pdf)
- Image: Martin County Kentucky Coal Ash Spill. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.lieffcabraser.com/environment/kentucky-coal-ash-spill/>.