

The last mountain movie (mountain top removal)

[Science](#), [Biology](#)



20 April Mountain Top Removal Describe the process of mountain top removal in a general way.

Mountain top removal is the process of exploding the top of a mountain using explosives in order to access the coal within. A majority of the electricity produced in the US comes from coal, a significant portion of which is mined from the Appalachian Mountains. Mountain top removal is considered as not only the fastest, but also the cheapest way to extract coal profitably, and so, big coal companies are indiscriminately pursuing it in spite of the serious environmental damage and other concerns caused by the process.

2- How has the local environment been affected by this form of mining?

Firstly, mountain top removal for coal mining results in the destruction of the mountains themselves. The process results in both air and water pollution, which is not just local but also has the potential to spread across states.

Huge amounts of coal sludge is generated, which when spilled, pollute local rivers. Local wells and springs are contaminated with heavy metals.

Moreover, freshwater fish from water bodies around such locations are unsafe for consumption due to the risk of mercury poisoning. The process also damages the homes of local residents by causing floods as the natural drains such as waterways and streams have been buried in the process. The process also results in the depletion of forest cover, which would have otherwise existed on the mountains. The use of explosives for blasting the mountain tops leaves behind vast amounts of toxic wastes, and the resultant rubble along with silica dust or fly ash often finds its way into people's homes as the wastes are dumped down the valley. Thus, the ecological

balance and safety of the local environment is affected in a very adverse way.

3- How have the local people been affected?

The local people have been affected in terms of both health and economy. The pollution caused during the process of mountain top removal and coal mining results in innumerable adverse effects on human health. Common health complications include brain damage, breathing disorders and cancers. As pointed out in Bill Haney's *The Last Mountain*, every year in the US, emissions from the coal plants result in more than 10 million cases of asthma, 600,000 cases of brain damage in newborn children, apart from 43,000 premature deaths. Brain tumors and autism are common in such localities. The homes of the local residents undergo destruction because of flooding and rubble dumped into the valley. A large number of people lose their jobs due to increasing mechanization of coal mining.

4- What has been the impact on the local jobs, the local economy?

As big coal companies have replaced manual labor and jobs with machines, the number of local jobs has been brought down significantly. For instance, as shown in Bill Haney's *The Last Mountain*, in West Virginia's coal industry, about 40,000 jobs have been cut down in the past 30 years. However, the productivity of this industry has increased by 140% owing to increasing mechanization, which replaced manual labor.

5- What steps has the community taken to change the situation?

The local community is fighting against coal companies who practice mountain top removal in order to preserve the mountain ranges, the local environment and the heritage. People from all walks of life have been

brought together by a common ambition - to stop indiscriminate coal mining by big coal companies and to save the environment. The community has taken up non-violent measures and civil disobedience movements for the cause. People are raising awareness and gathering forces to fight the vested interests of coal companies with the help of established environmentalists who can help their voice reach significant people in the government.

6- What solutions has the community offered to replace coal as an energy source?

The community proposes the construction of wind farms on the mountain's ridges rather than exploding it for mining coal. This would result in the production of renewable of clean energy that would have no adverse environmental effects and would do away with the need to destroy mountain ranges.

Works Cited

The Last Mountain. Dir. Bill Haney. Solid Ground Films, 2011. Film.