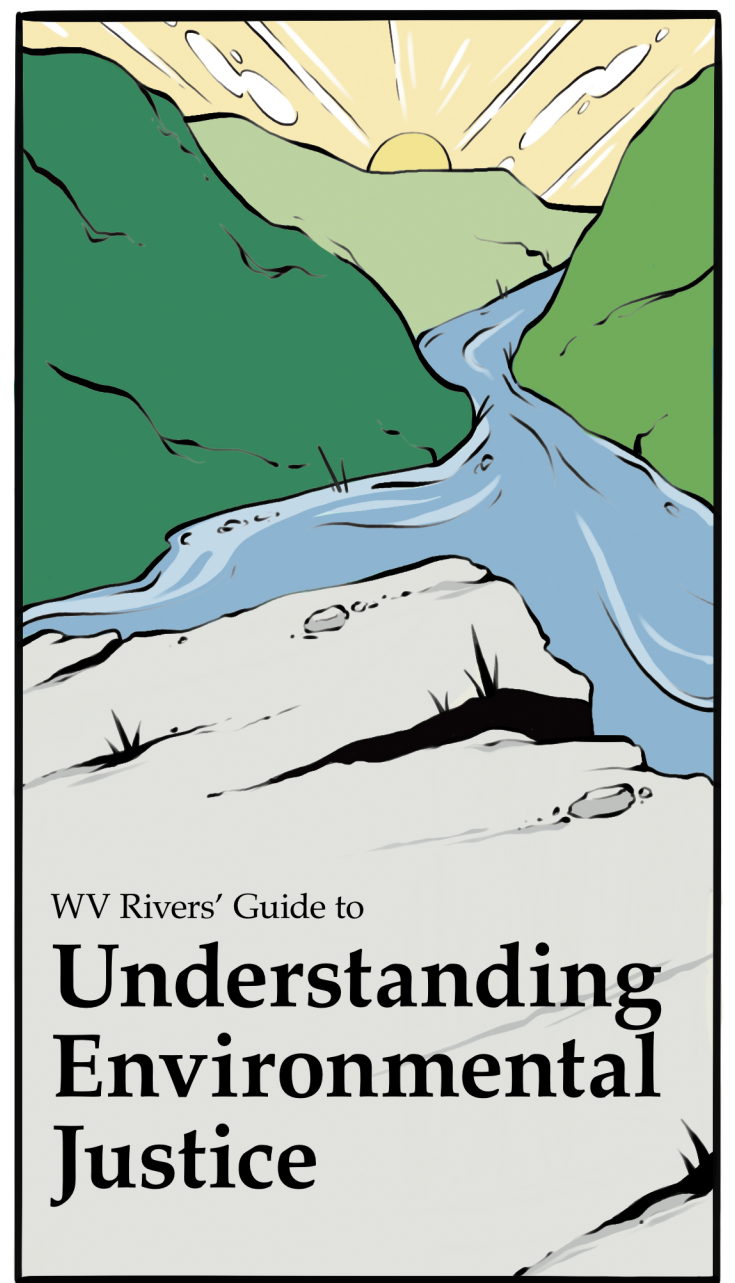


What is Environmental Justice?

Environmental justice means everyone is treated fairly and has a say in decisions about our health and environment, no matter their race, color, and nationality. Tribal affiliation, income, education level, or disability. This practice ensures no group faces more environmental health problems than others, providing everyone with a healthy, sustainable, and safe environment.



WV Rivers' Guide to
Understanding Environmental Justice



Questions? Contact us:
 304-637-7201
 wvrivers@wvrivers.org
 WVRivers.org


What's a Cumulative Impact?

Cumulative impacts are the total effects of harmful things, like chemicals, on a community's health and well-being over time.

In West Virginia, low-income households and communities of color often face the worst impacts, dealing with pollution from chemical plants, landfills, and coal mines.

Let's take a closer look at Institute, WV and indicators of Environmental Injustice in this WV community.

Open this pamphlet to see how you can take action with West Virginia Rivers Coalition to protect our land, water, air, and communities.



West Virginia Rivers Coalition's Approach to Environmental Justice:

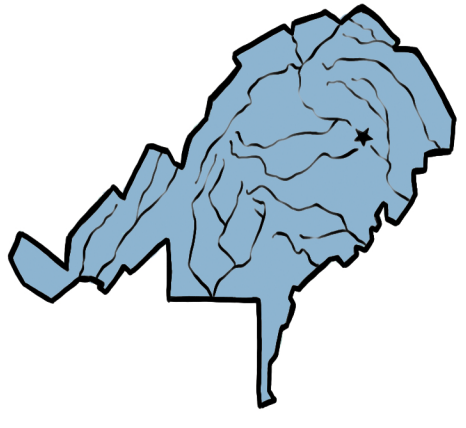
WV Rivers works to keep our rivers and streams clean and healthy for all. We believe that clean water is the foundation of life and everyone should have access to fresh water, healthy air, and the great outdoors.

We welcome all identities into our work and aim to weave the guiding principles of EJ into everything we do. In our work, we:

- **Show respect** for the history, culture, traditions, capacities, and identities represented in the places we work.
- **Stand with communities** who have been overburdened by pollution, and are facing consequences of cumulative impacts.
- **Work in partnerships** with communities to develop solutions to environmental injustices.
- **Follow the lead** of communities, joining them in the work to protect and restore their environment and public health.

- Institute is located along the industrial corridor of the Kanawha River
- This is home to more people of color than 98% of the rest of WV (and 65% of the US)
- There are more drinking water violations here than in 99% of the rest of WV
- There are more toxic air releases here than in 99% of the rest of WV (and 89% of the US)
- More hazardous waste facilities are located here than in 98% of WV (and 78% of the US)

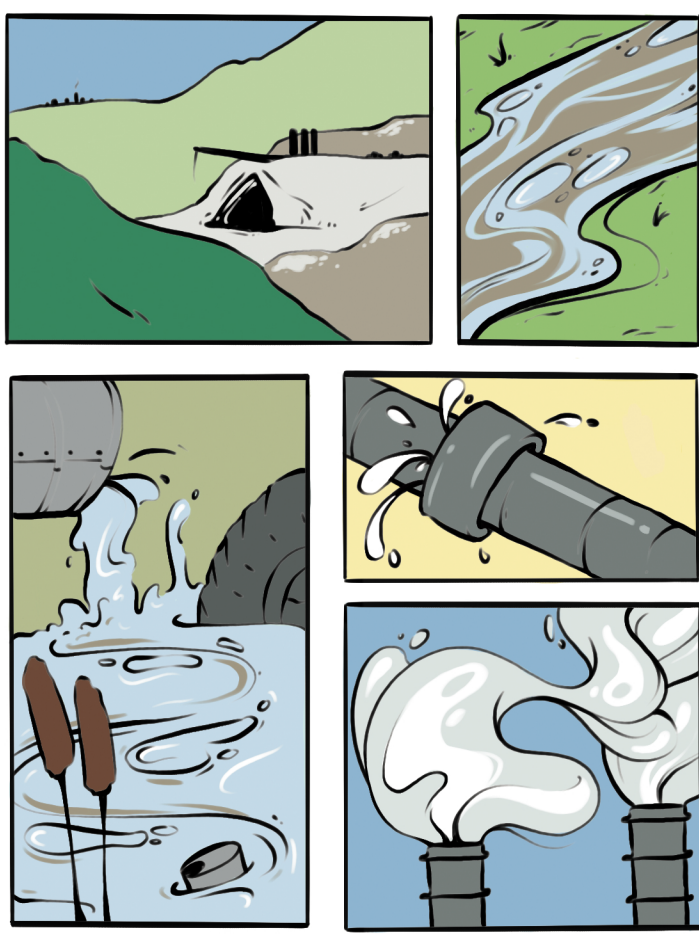
A Closer Look: The Need for Environmental Justice in Institute, WV*



What Does Environmental Injustice Look Like in West Virginia?

Some communities in WV are chosen as sites for waste storage, industrial facilities, and natural resource extraction.

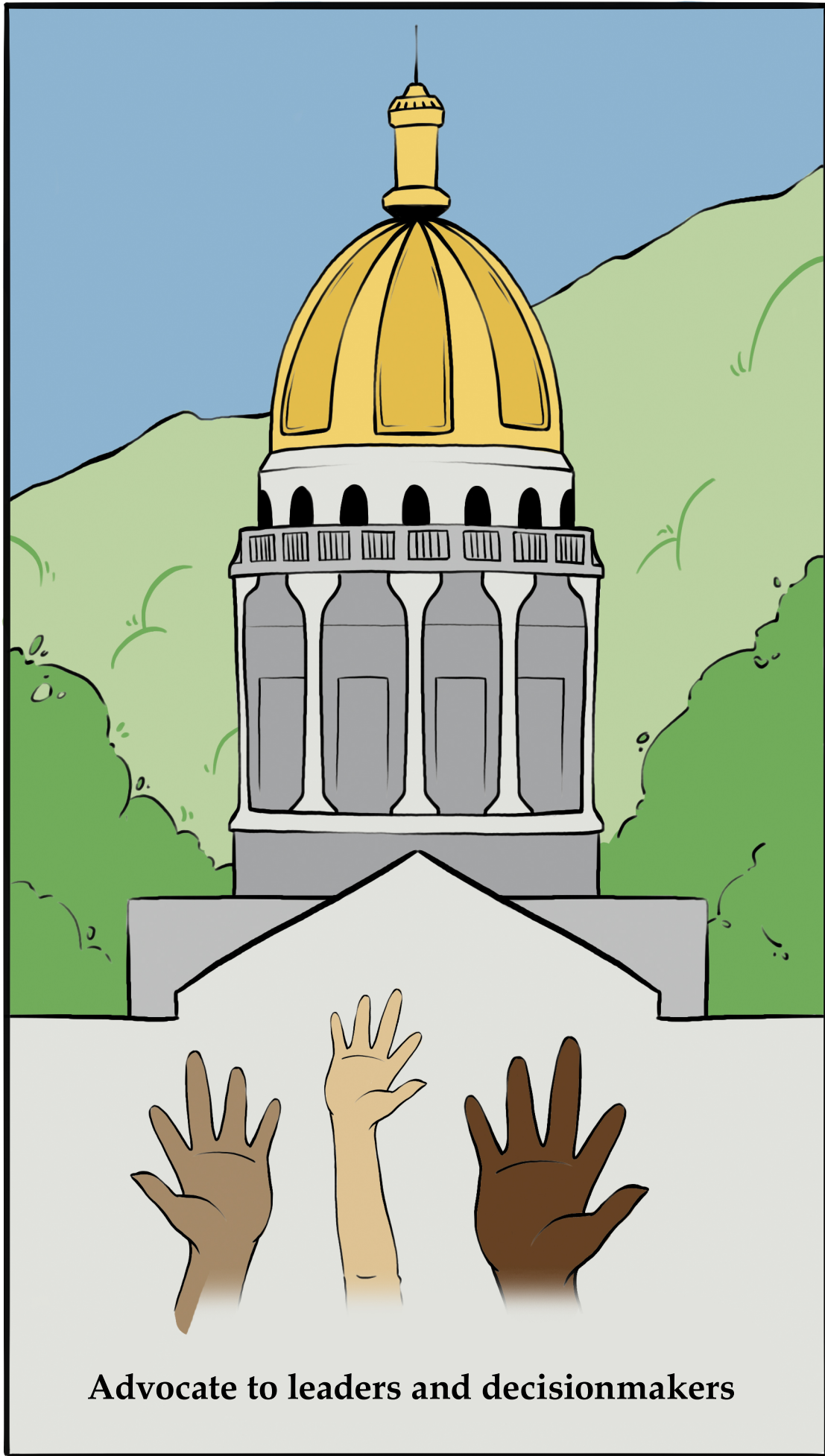
Historically, these types of projects have caused harm to our water, land, and air. This makes it harder for people living nearby to stay healthy.





Ways to Act for Environmental Justice

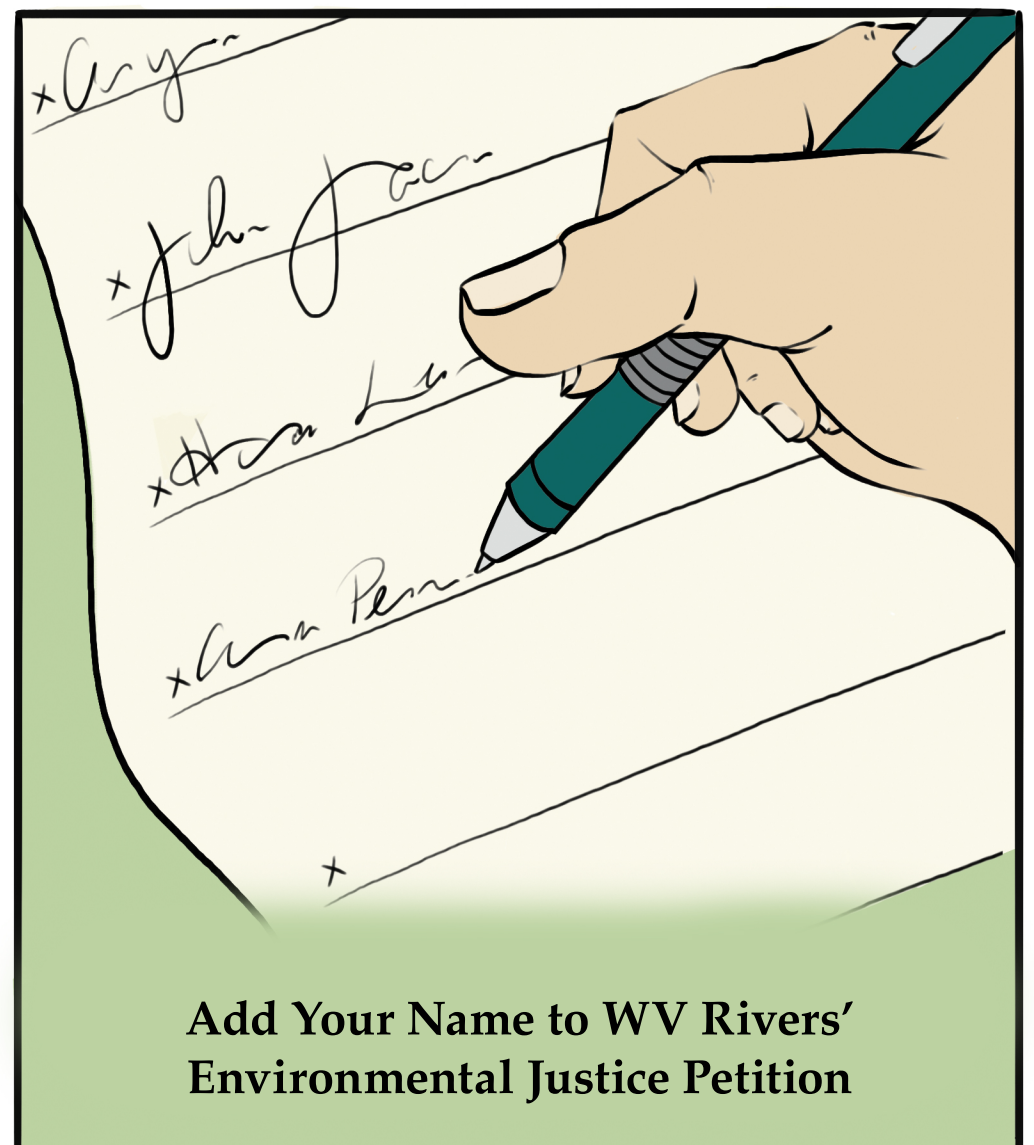
Scan QR Code for More Info



Advocate to leaders and decisionmakers



Become a volunteer monitor for your community



Add Your Name to WV Rivers' Environmental Justice Petition

This guide to environmental justice (EJ) was designed in June 2024 by the West Virginia Rivers Coalition (WV Rivers). Seamus Spencer did the illustrations. WV Rivers acknowledges that our EJ work is fluid and ever-evolving, like the rivers and streams we work to protect, and we know there is always more to learn. While WV has no federally recognized tribes, this land was the ancestral territory of many indigenous communities who have taught us that we should be good stewards of the earth and that water is sacred.

If you have any questions, suggested edits, or comments, please reach out to us at wvrivers@wvrivers.org or by phone at 304-637-7201.