



Energy Immersion

The Clifford M. Lewis, S.J. Appalachian Institute
Wheeling Jesuit University

What will I be learning?

Environmental excursions lead students to explore the impacts on communities made in order to harvest Appalachia's coal, natural gas, and alternative energy to feed the needs of the region, nation, and world. In meeting with activists with opposing views, participants gain an appreciation for the complexity of such issues. While not a service-focused trip, the groups do perform a valuable service centered around the environment. The unique and objective education, coupled with daily reflections, result in a "call to action" for each individual and group to implement upon returning home.



Creighton U. students learn about natural gas drilling from Chesapeake Energy.

Partners and Presenters:

- **Chesapeake Energy**—a prominent natural gas drilling company working to tap into the increasing value of Marcellus Shale drilling.
- **Keeper of the Mountains**—an activist organization educating the public on mountaintop removal issues through first-hand tours of an actual MTR site.
- **WV Coal Association**—trade association representing more than 90% of WV's underground and surface coal mining production.
- **Friends of Deckers Creek**—watershed group committed to cleaning and restoring Deckers Creek in Morgantown, WV through acid mine drainage treatment systems and community involvement campaigns.
- **Downstream Strategies**—environmental consulting firm working to link economic development with natural resource stewardship.
- **Mountaineer Wind Energy Center**—wind farm offering alternative renewable energy sources for Appalachia and the eastern US.
- **Center for Coalfield Justice**—coordinate citizens' efforts to defend their rights, protect the environment, and improve and enforce laws and public policy regarding the mining and use of coal and natural gas extraction.
- **Whipple Company Store**—exposes groups to coal town history through interactive tours.

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“The mountains shall yield peace for the people, and the hills peace.”
-Psalm 72:3

How much?

The trip costs \$300/person/week (\$325-
HS groups) with a minimum of 10
people. This cost includes meals,
lodging, programming, and resource
materials. Deposits must be made
approximately 6 months in advance.



Brophy College Prep HS explores Kayford Mountain, a nature preserve surrounded by mountain top removal coal mining.

Call to Action!

At the end of each immersion experience, the Institute performs a “Call to Action” for the entire group to focus on setting goals for awareness and advocacy. We believe post immersion experiences are incredibly important for students coming on immersions and for the future of the communities they’re serving with. The service and programming experiences we offer seek to *awaken students from the sleep of inhumanity*, as Fr. Jon Sobrino put it, and provide them with opportunities to build meaningful relationships and develop objective, informed opinions on issues pertaining to Appalachia and their own home communities.

Where will I be staying?

Throughout the trip, groups will stay in various venues. All accommodations supply kitchen and shower facilities.

Lantz Farm: Jacksonburg, WV—this rustic farm provides a tranquil setting for immersion experiences. Housed on a wildlife management preserve, groups are able to view diverse wildlife through breathtaking hiking trails. The farmhouse sleeps 14 comfortably with a large living room and numerous dining rooms. For larger groups, the newly-furnished barn house sleeps 24.

John XXIII Pastoral Center: Charleston, WV—a beautiful conference and retreat center with pleasant dorm-style and individual living quarters.

The Shack Neighborhood Center: Morgantown, WV—an afterschool facility with a long history of providing for impoverished mining families. Convenient sleeping quarters with comfortable mats for group participants.

Rock Lake Community Center: Charleston, WV—cot-style housing at the infamous Rock Lake Quarry.



Loyola-Baltimore students engage in water quality testing with Friends of Decker’s Creek to learn about the effects of acid mine drainage.

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