



## OKLAHOMA COAL ASH DISPOSAL, CONTAMINATED SITES AND REGULATORY GAPS

### *Summary of Coal Ash Generating Facilities in OK*

FACILITY	OPERATOR	ONSITE DISPOSAL	COUNTY
Hugo Power Station	Western Farmers Elec Coop Inc	4 ponds	Choctaw
Northeastern 3&4 Plant	American Electric Power	1 pond and landfill	Rogers
Sooner	Oklahoma Gas & Electric Co	none	Noble
Muskogee	Oklahoma Gas & Electric Co	none	Muskogee
GRDA	Grand River Dam Authority	landfill	Mayer
AES Shady Point	AES Shady Point LLC	none	Leflore

landfill= one or more landfills onsite

### **Amount of Coal Ash Generated Per Year**

Oklahoma electric utilities generate 1.5 million tons of coal ash annually. Oklahoma ranks 28<sup>th</sup> nationally for coal ash generation.<sup>ii</sup>

### **Coal Ash Ponds in North Dakota**

*Number of Coal Ash Ponds:* Five ponds at two plants.

*Age of Ponds:* Four of the ponds in Oklahoma were commissioned in 1982, and the fifth was commissioned in 1980.<sup>iii</sup> The age of these ponds makes it unlikely that they have critical safeguards like composite liners and leachate collection systems.

*Size and Quality of Ponds:* The ponds in Oklahoma have a collective storage capacity of 2,040 acre feet and cover 157 acres. The average height of these units is 20.6 feet, including one pond at Hugo Power Station that is 30 feet high (3 stories tall).<sup>iv</sup> All four ponds at Hugo Power Station have been identified by EPA as being in “poor” condition after inspections by EPA contractors.<sup>v</sup>

### **Coal Ash Landfills in Oklahoma**

Two coal-fired power plants in Oklahoma store waste in onsite landfills. In 2005, these facilities stored a collective 110,700 tons of fly ash and 13,200 tons of bottom ash in onsite landfills.<sup>vi</sup>

### **Coal Ash Contamination in Oklahoma**

*Northeastern Station:* Groundwater at this unlined ash landfill contains selenium up to 37 times, arsenic up to 6 times, lead up to 13 times, and barium up to 4 times the federal drinking water standard Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL)). Chromium and thallium also exceed MCLs, while vanadium is nine times state standards. Contamination flows in three directions, towards at least six private wells within two miles and three public wells within five miles.<sup>vii</sup>

*Bokoshe Landfill:* Coal ash dumping at the “Making Money Having Fun” landfill in Bokoshe, OK threatens the health and safety of Bokoshe citizens. Fugitive dust from the landfill is blamed for the high asthma rate suffered by school children, and residents claim high rates of cancer and other illnesses near the landfill. Eighty truckloads of ash a day are dumped in the landfill according to Bokoshe residents.<sup>viii</sup>

### **Oklahoma Regulatory Gaps Leave Communities Unprotected**

Oklahoma state regulations fail to require basic disposal safeguards. State regulations do not require groundwater monitoring at all coal ash ponds and landfills nor do the regulations require composite liners at all new coal ash ponds and landfills.

For more information, contact Lisa Evans, Earthjustice, [levans@earthjustice.org](mailto:levans@earthjustice.org), 781-631-4119.

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<sup>i</sup> Information Request Responses from Electric Utilities, U.S. ENVTL PROT. AGENCY (Jan. 13, 2012), <http://www.epa.gov/osw/nonhaz/industrial/special/fossil/surveys/> (follow link to Database Results (XLS)) (“Database”); U.S. Dept. of Energy’s Energy Information Administration, Form EIA-767, Annual Steam-Electric Plant Operation and Design Data. 2005.

<sup>ii</sup> U.S. Dept. of Energy’s Energy Information Administration, Form EIA-767, Annual Steam-Electric Plant Operation and Design Data. 2005.

<sup>iii</sup> Database

<sup>iv</sup> *Id.*

<sup>v</sup> *Id.*

<sup>vi</sup> U.S. Dept. of Energy’s Energy Information Administration, Form EIA-767, Annual Steam-Electric Plant Operation and Design Data. 2005.

<sup>vii</sup> Environmental Integrity Project, Earthjustice and Sierra Club. In Harm’s Way: Lack of Federal Coal Ash Regulations Endangers Americans and Their Environment xx (Aug. 2010).

<sup>viii</sup> Jim Sciutto, ABC World News, *Oklahoma Town Fears Cancer, Asthma May be Linked to Dump Site* (Mar. 29, 2011), available at <http://abcnews.go.com/US/oklahoma-town-fears-cancer-asthma-linked-dump-site/story?id=13240312#.T6LmPRxQbZg>.