



## **Appalachia Rising West Virginia | Building Momentum for Alternative Landscape Futures in West Virginia**

“Appalachia Rising: West Virginia” is a multi-media report featured as part of the Architectural League of New York’s American Roundtable project. Through photography, video, audio clips, mappings, and renderings, the report asks the question “How can we build momentum for alternative landscape futures in West Virginia?”



## The Architectural League's American Roundtable Project

The American Roundtable project is an initiative of the Architectural League of New York. The project brings together on-the-ground perspectives of the condition of American small to mid-sized communities and what they need to thrive. The League commissioned nine design-led multi-media reports organized around five themes including Environment, Health, Infrastructure, Public Space, and Work & Economy.



### American Roundtable

An Architectural League initiative offering on-the-ground perspectives on the condition of small to mid-size American communities.

#### Reports



Appalachia, West Virginia



Lower Rio Grande, New Mexico



River Valley, Maine



South Beach, Washington



Along the Lumbee River, North Carolina



Cheyenne River Reservation, South Dakota

#### Themes

To promote comparison and synthesis across the reports, American Roundtable is organized around five broad themes: **Public Space**, **Health**, **Work & Economy**, **Infrastructure**, and **Environment**.

We invite you to explore these themes and the ways they operate in the built environment of American communities.



Environment



Health



Infrastructure



Public Space



Work & Economy



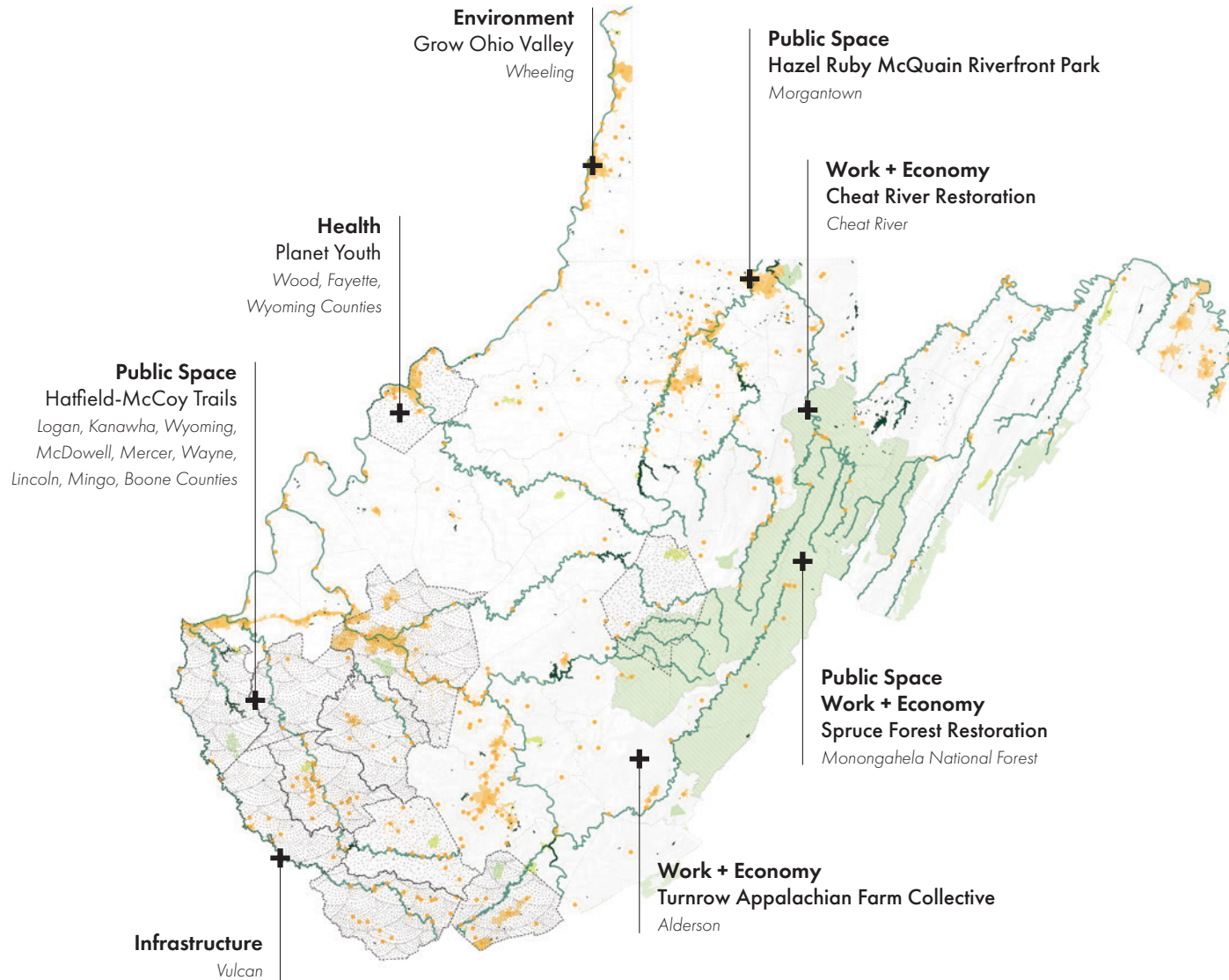
**A Post-Carbon Future, Leveraging Land as the State's Greatest Resource**

Led by a landscape architect and a team of female identifying Appalachian documentarians, Appalachia Rising collectively envisions a post-carbon future, 100 years from today, that leverages the resilience of West Virginia's people and places and builds upon its greatest assets — its land.



### **Showcasing Existing Places, Designing Alternative Futures**

The Appalachia Rising report aims to build momentum toward alternative landscape futures in two parts. First, the report showcases emerging examples of land-based projects as precedents across the state. Second, the report features visions of alternative landscape futures inspired by letters written by West Virginians.



### Existing Places | Emerging Land-based Projects Actively Shaping West Virginia's Future

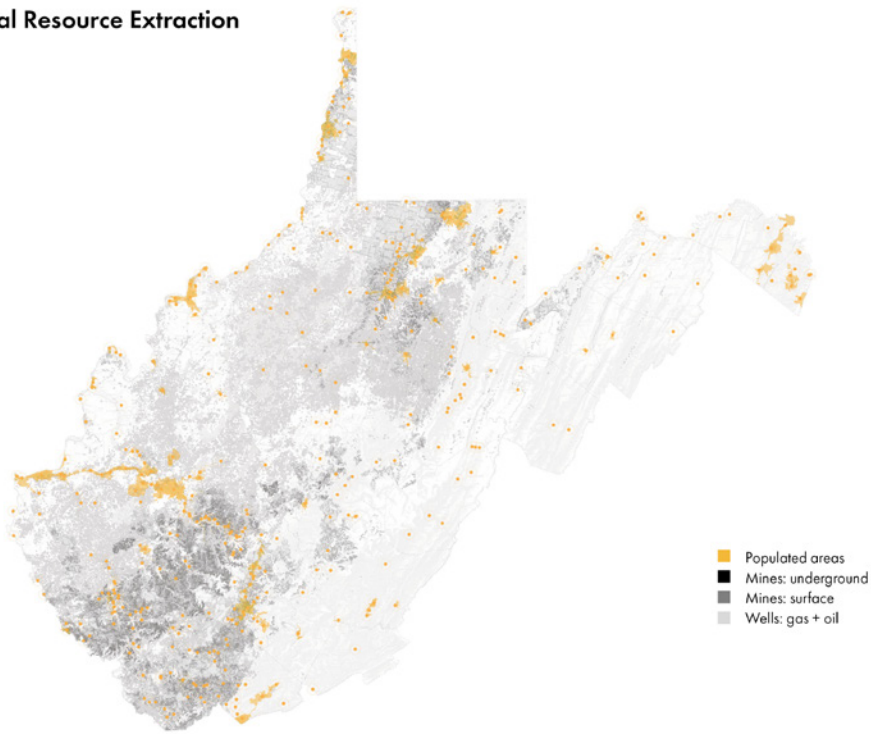
Through the lens of the five American Roundtable themes (Infrastructure, Health, Work and Economy, Environment, and Public Space), the report includes five multi-media features that document emerging land-based projects currently providing inspirational counterpoints to the state's declining extraction economy.



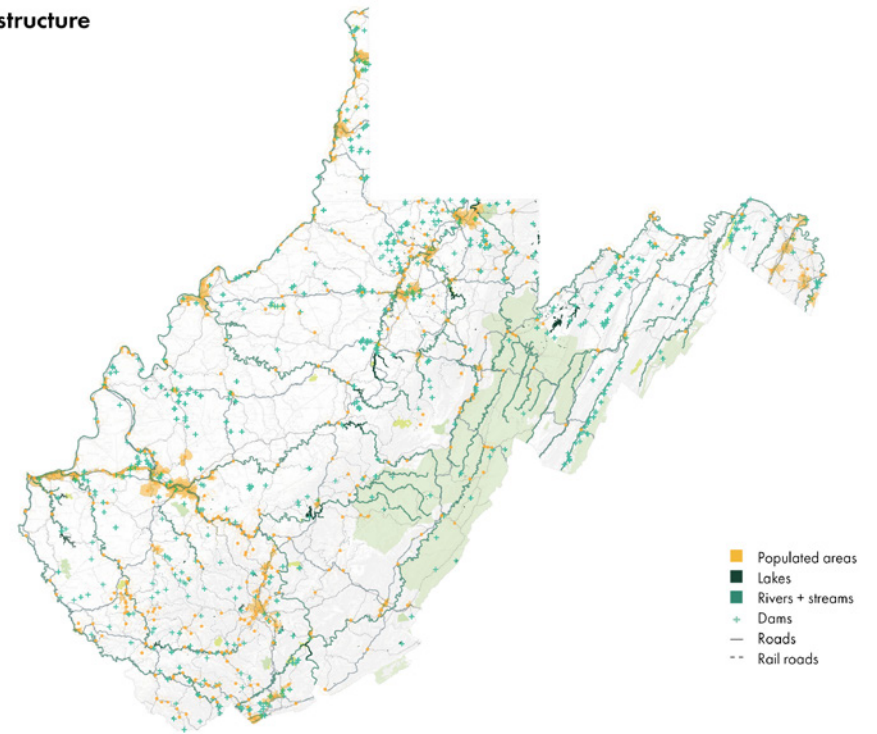
## Existing Places | Health

In a powerful short documentary film, issues of public health in West Virginia are addressed through the story of grant-funded youth programs that temporarily provide short-term after-school activities for kids. Highlighting the natural beauty and outdoor recreational assets available across the state, the video advocates for sustained investment in structured outdoor recreation in order to dramatically improve public health and reduce drug use across the state.

## Natural Resource Extraction



## Infrastructure



## Existing Places | Infrastructure

Through a series of writings and mappings, the theme of Infrastructure explores the history of infrastructural investment in West Virginia communities marked by decades of precarity and neglect, and how reframing the landscape as foundational infrastructure is necessary for the state's future.



Cheat River Restoration



Spruce Forest Restoration



Turnrow Appalachian Farm Collective

### Existing Places | Work + Economy

Through writing and audio clips, the theme of Work + Economy is explored through profiles of three experimental land-based ventures that provide economic benefits and novel work opportunities across the state.





## Existing Places | Environment

The theme of Environment is questioned through vivid photography capturing the impact of Wheeling-based urban agriculture initiative Grow Ohio Valley. How can the environment provide a source of inspiration in places where the landscape has been systematically dismantled and exploited? Grow Ohio Valley has become a regional model for thoughtful urban farming by repurposing a variety of urban environments for food production.



Monongahela National Forest



Hatfield-McCoy Trails



Hazel Ruby McQuain Riverfront Park

### Existing Places | Public Space

Through three project profiles, the theme of Public Space is explored across a variety of scales of West Virginia public spaces. This feature asks what defines public space in Appalachia and how can public spaces support the region's future by celebrating the unique identity of a place.



A photograph of a rural landscape. In the foreground, a small pond is surrounded by green grass and reeds. Two children, a boy in a dark shirt and a girl in a green shirt, are leaning over the edge of the pond, looking into the water. In the background, there is a large greenhouse on the left and a small, round building with a wooden door and a window on the right. The sky is clear and blue.

27 May 2020

**Dear Alexander,**

*They say salamanders are one of those beings that can't survive what we've done to our places, a sensitive species, a coal mine canary...That's why I think of you, a hundred years from now, playing in your own West Virginia creek. Alexander. Salamander...after 2020, the whole country upended. You'll learn that history soon if you don't know it yet. By the time Jack's son, your grandfather, finished school in 2050, West Virginia was a better place to make a life than California was. You see, what happened here first eventually happened everywhere else. And because we had so much practice with things falling apart, West Virginians, through it all, held onto their best qualities: decency, integrity, kindness, generosity.*

**- Ann Pancake (Author, WV Resident)**



## Alternative Futures | The Natural Beauty of the State

"Dearest Loved One, I am hoping that the best of small-town life is still available to you...I am hopeful that the natural beauty of the state is still readily available for hiking and camping—inspiring West Virginians to protect it...May your own love for our state continue to preserve what makes it authentic and exceptional."




### Alternative Futures | Soil Makes Sense, Land is Comfort

"My Dear, Amid this COVID-19 pandemic, civil unrest, and a great movement for equality, soil makes sense. Land is comfort. It's home...The year 2020 is a reckoning for humans. And with a lot of hard work and thoughtful intention, I know a great reward exists that I think your generation may reap."



## Alternative Futures | The Life Force of New Industries

"To my kin, many years from now, Grow your own food and continue to pass the knowledge of using this fertile yet steep soil onto future generations...Treat streams and rivers as friends, they give us life and could be the life force for our new industries."



8 June 2020

**Dear great-granddaughter,**

*...young people (including myself) were leaving the state because there simply weren't a lot of job options at home. But then something changed. The next generation started speaking up. They didn't want to leave...they knew things had to change. They marched in the streets. They started voting for people who fought for West Virginia's future instead of its past...*

**Love you,  
Great Grandma Emily**

**(Emily Calandrelli, Engineer + TV Host,  
Former WV Resident)**

*PS. The secret family recipe for pepperoni rolls is in the cupboard above the fridge at your mother's home.*



## Events



January 13, 2021  
Understanding the Past/Documenting the Present/Imagining the Future

Event



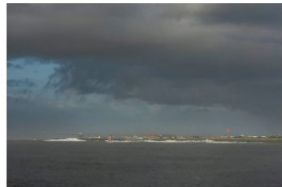
January 27, 2021  
American Roundtable: *Appalachia Rising*, West Virginia

Event



January 29, 2021  
American Roundtable: *Diverse Peoples, Arid Landscapes, and the Built Environment*, Lower Rio Grande, New Mexico

Event



February 26, 2021  
American Roundtable: *Dynamic Landscapes*, South Beach, Washington

Event



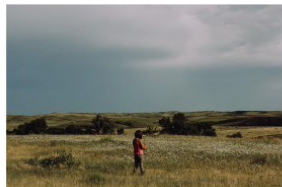
March 5, 2021  
American Roundtable: *Labor, Landscapes, and Legacies*, River Valley, Maine

Event



March 12, 2021  
American Roundtable: *Along the Lumber River*, North Carolina

Event



March 24, 2021  
American Roundtable: *The Lakota Nation and the Legacy of American Colonization*, Cheyenne River Reservation, South Dakota

Event



April 9, 2021  
American Roundtable: *Brownsville Undercurrents*, Texas

Event



April 23, 2021  
American Roundtable: *In the Mahoning Valley*, Ohio

Event



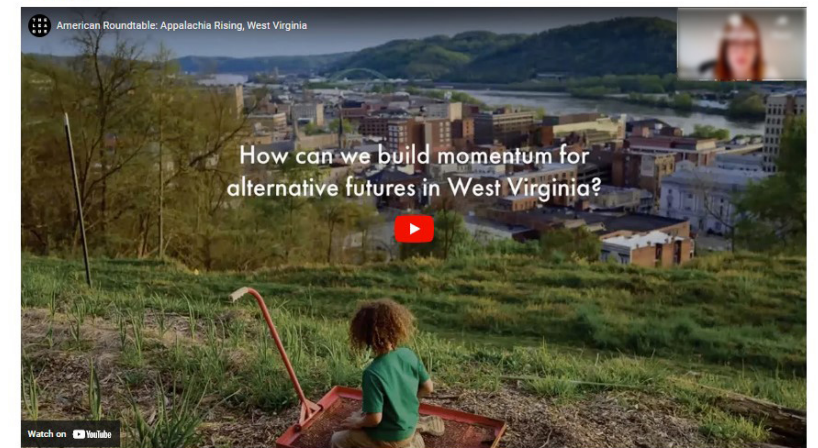
Explore Video American Roundtable

Share

## Appalachia Rising, West Virginia

Editor [redacted] and report contributors [redacted] and [redacted] present the report *Appalachia Rising* and discuss key themes and findings.

January 27, 2021



Recorded on January 27, 2021.

## Regional Focus, National Impact

The American Roundtable project became a national dialogue focused on understanding pasts, documenting presents, and imagining futures for communities across America. As an initiative instigated during the COVID19 pandemic, the digital reach of the project provided national dissemination through dozens of Zoom events, online content ([www.archleague.org/project/american-roundtable/](http://www.archleague.org/project/american-roundtable/)), and digital lectures.