

SOLAR,

Continued from Front Page

tional Park Service on the potential for the solar project to cause irreversible harm to endangered species, especially the Federally Endangered Kentucky Cave Shrimp.

The cave shrimp live in cave streams fed by surface water from parts of this solar project, Barclay said.

The NPS, a bureau within the United States Department of the Interior, has sought clarity on whether or not electricity would be stored on-site in batteries and what steps or measures would be installed to prevent leaking or spilling of chemicals from them.

Additionally, Barclay notes NPS has raised questions with Geenex on whether or not other specific infrastructure could cause harmful pollutants into waters feeding the habitat basin of the cave shrimp.

Mammoth Cave is the only place in the world that has these cave shrimp.

Barclay states he has attempted to to garner responses from Geenex for “the past several months”, leading the National Park Service to ultimately speak out in opposition to the project. Furthermore,



they request the siting board to consider the environmental protection of these endangered species.

Mammoth Cave National Park is required by legislation and the Organic Act of 1916 to conserve the scenery, natural and historic objects, and wildlife, inside the 52,000-acre national park in addition to the requirements of the Endangered Species Act, which are set forth to protect the endangered species not only in the park, but also on the surface, streams, and in sub-terrain waterways, Barclay expressed in the letter.

Geenex has been aware of the cave shrimp Barclay has expressed concern with as well as a combined total of 42 threatened or endangered species, including some plants, having a moderate to high potential of being within the solar project area, which is around 10 miles south

of Mammoth Cave.

According to a Critical Issues Analysis dated November 2022, two are federally endangered species, 17 state-endangered species, 20 state-threatened, and one federal candidate species are at potential risk from the solar project. The analysis was created for Geenex by Cardno (now Stantec). Extensive descriptions of the numerous species and their habitats and associated waterways are detailed in the report. Other high- to moderate-level species include the Indiana Bat, Short-eared Owl, Southeastern Crowned Snake, and plants like Eggert’s Sunflower, Buffalo Clover, and American Chestnut. The Monarch Butterfly is also listed as a candidate.

More specifically, the analysis report states the Kentucky cave shrimp and all additional endangered cave invertebrates listed by the state database should be considered “moderate” in the likelihood to occur within the project area.

In March 2023, Stantec compiled a Wetland Delineation Report with similar findings for Geenex. Of the 42 species listed in this report, 88% were listed as having a high or moderate likelihood

of living within the project area with the majority being species that are federally or state threatened or endangered. Three bats, the threatened Northern long-eared bat and the endangered Gray and Indiana bats, have a “high” likelihood of occupying the project area.

This report also indicates the potential for the Kentucky Cave Shrimp in Mammoth Cave to be impacted by the Wood Duck Solar project.

However, the same analysis identifies streams and wetlands in the project that “likely percolate and drain beneath the ground to a greater karst system, including Mammoth Cave and greater Green River.”

It is unclear as of press time if Geenex has responded to Barclay’s letter or to any of the potential issues that could result from the solar project on any endangered or threatened species. The BCP has inquired but as of press time, no response has been received from Mammoth Cave officials.

Geenex, a company based out of Charlotte, North Carolina, plans to encompass 2,300 acres of farmland in Barren County for a 100-megawatt solar

farm with a buildable area of around 1,127 acres, according to documents. The Limited Liability Company has entered into private leases with property landowners dating back several years. As of May 5, the company has not filed an application with the Public Service Commission. However, the company did file a Notice of Intent that they would be filing an application last fall.

Wood Duck Solar states the filing will occur in the coming weeks in a recent public notice. The proposed construction of the solar project requires approval by the Electric Generation and Transmission Siting Board.

Sheri Mahan, Executive Advisor of the Kentucky Public Service Commission, responded to an inquiry from BCP explaining the next steps for the project.

“There will be a public information meeting scheduled in the near future. Governor Beshear will be appointing Ad Hoc members to the Siting Board and once that is accomplished, the meeting will be scheduled,” Mahan said.

It is anticipated that after the company officially files an appli-

cation, an evidentiary hearing will take place due to the controversy and local opposition to the project.

Siting Board members take all information into consideration when formulating a ruling for cases, Mahan said. The letter from the National Park Service will be placed in the official record in the case and all items in the record will be considered by the PSC.

“The Siting Board is still in the early stages of this case,” Mahan said. “Once the application is filed, staff will be submitting questions to Geenex for which they will be required to respond.”

PSC documents, including public comments already received, for the case can be found at <https://psc.ky.gov/Case/ViewCaseFilings/2024-00337/Public>.

Additionally, public comments are still being accepted on the proposed solar project, Wood Duck Solar. You may write a letter or file online at the above website. Written letters must be submitted to Kentucky State Board on Electric Generation, 211 Sower Boulevard, PO Box 615, Frankfort, KY 40602. Reference Case # 2024-00337.

COURT,

Continued from Front Page



▲ Photo | Angela Briggs, JPI

Many were in attendance at the Barren-Metcalf Drug Court 20th anniversary celebration on May 1. Pictured from left, Barren River Drug Task Force Director Ron Lafferty; Jarrod Steele, Metcalfe County Sheriff’s Office; and Glasgow Police Captain Ashley Jones.

you can’t ignore it.”

Long before the broader community may have realized the growing problem of substance abuse and addiction, it was evident to law enforcement and the court system.

Aimed at providing an alternative to incarceration for low-level offenders and an opportunity to get their lives back on track, Drug Court (DC) was brought to Barren and Metcalfe Counties.

From the beginning, Circuit Judge Phil Patton was a vocal supporter of the program and was on the bench when it was implemented. DC is a specialized

court docket program whose primary goal is not punishing past bad acts with imprisonment but preventing future bad acts through recovery. Judge Patton says when looking back over his fifty-year career, he is most proud of DC, adding that he runs into people who have gone through the program and “sees how their lives have changed.”

AK Murrey is a program graduate, and one of these changed lives. The ability to personalize the program to best meet the needs of the individual is one of the key components, and Murrey said it “was exactly what I needed.” Murrey, along with

Libby Short and Christy Wall, recently founded CPR, Community Partners for Recovery, a non-profit that connects those facing addiction with a broad range of services.

To have DC be successful, it requires cooperation between law enforcement, judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, correctional officers, social workers and those in treatment services. Judge Alexander said that week in and week out he sees this cooperation, stating, “Everybody pulls together to find something that works.”

The consequences of addiction reach far beyond the individual;

they have a big financial impact on the greater community. From law enforcement to the court system, it is costing more and more to combat crime, not to mention the nearly \$40,000 it takes to house an inmate for one year. While in some cases incarceration is needed, treatment is a better course of action in others. Commonwealth Attorney Resa Gardner says the key to success is to be “tough and smart on crime.”

The impact of addiction is also felt in the workplace, where absenteeism, accidents, and decreased performance are common.

According to Rehab.com, national statistics show Kentucky ranks in the top ten in illegal drug use and overdose deaths, and 15th in narcotics violations. As for treatment, the 2023 National Survey on Drug Use and Health shows that nearly 5% of people aged 12 or older received some form of treatment for substance use disorder in the past year.

The health impacts of addiction can be severe and include chronic illnesses, such as heart disease and liver dam-

age, as well as mental disorders like depression and anxiety.

Candy Reed is the Project Program Coordinator for the Barren-Metcalf DC, and she said she could not be more grateful for the help she receives every day from so many people.

“We are able to be successful because we are all in it for the same reason,” Reed said. “We want to help people get their lives back on track.”

Reed recognized the Barren County Sheriff’s Office, Glasgow Police, Cave City Police, Barren River Drug Task Force, Metcalfe County Sheriff’s Office, Barren County Detention Center, Commonwealth

Attorney’s Office, Department of Public Advocacy, Attorney Greg Berry, Kentucky State Police, Lifeskills, and other non-profits.

Reed, along with Case Managers Matt Mutter and Charlie Lowery, oversee the program and its participants.

Addiction can affect anyone regardless of age, social standing, income, or education level, and is considered a chronic disease, not a choice.

Drug Court was Kentucky’s first Specialty Court program, initiated through a pilot program in 1996. It has since grown to serve all 120 counties in the Commonwealth.



▲ Photo | Angela Briggs, JPI

Pictured at Barren-Metcalf Drug Court 20th anniversary ceremony on May 1 are Jerry Reed, left, and Adam Bow with the Barren County Sheriff’s Office.