

2013 Report

Last year was a very exciting year for BEST/MATRR, and this year looks to be even more active and effective than last year!

All year in 2013 – BEST/MATRR representative Garry Morgan recorded Federal NRC and TVA meetings in the area, as well as weekly local City Council and County Commission meetings, and posted all on YouTube as a courtesy of BEST/MATRR supporting environmental stewardship and open government. On the national level, Garry informs anti-nuclear and clean energy groups across the country through his multiple list-serve postings with links to his energy blog articles. (See [sample blog](#))

All year in 2013 – BEST/MATRR representative Gretel Johnston researched and wrote about nuclear power issues and solutions in letters, official comments, and on the MATRR.org website, creating three new webpages for 2013: [Radiation Monitoring](#), [Radiation Videos](#), and [Make Radiation Visible](#).

January through May of 2013 – BEST/MATRR expanded our radiation monitoring around Browns Ferry Nuclear Power Plant to 50 sites and recorded radiation levels in various weather conditions. (See video on our monitoring program and report, <http://youtu.be/tz1617Ap9Vc> and [Radiation Monitoring](#) web page)

February 4, 2013 – BEST/MATRR invited Union of Concerned Scientists Director of Nuclear Safety, David Lochbaum, to speak to our local Scottsboro City Council and Jackson County Commission in Alabama regarding long term issues with Bellefonte Nuclear Plant, including infrastructure, time delays, financial planning and decommissioning. We distributed a Press Release.

February 9, 2013 – BEST/MATRR representative Garry Morgan appeared on WGOW FM radio talk show in Chattanooga with host Jeff Styles to discuss relicensing issues for the Sequoyah Nuclear Plant.

February 11, 2013 – BEST/MATRR representatives Garry Morgan, Stewart Horn, Sandy Kurtz, and Gretel Johnston spoke at a TVA Board meeting. Ms. Johnston presented the four new board members with copies of two books, *Carbon Free and Nuclear Free* by Arjun Makhijani and *Winning Our Energy Independence* by former TVA Chairman David S. Freeman. Johnston also presented views and a letter asking the TVA to lead the nation in “Sustainable and Safe Energy Choices”, and Morgan talked about TVA closed meetings and the Federal Sunshine Act. (See [letter](#) and [TimesFreePress](#) article)

February 23, 2013 – BEST/MATRR annual members meeting was held in Chattanooga, TN and UCS Director of Nuclear Safety David Loachbaum was invited to speak about nuclear issues in the TN Valley, including proposed SMRs. BREDL Executive Director, Lou Zeller attended and presented us with a \$700 donation specified for BEST/MATRR from Musicians United for Safe Energy ([MUSE](#)).

March 11, 2013 – The 2nd annual MATRR-spearheaded Fukushima Fallout flash mob actions expanded to New York City and France. (See photos and information at [Fallouts.org](#))

April 26, 2013 – BEST/MATRR investigation by Garry Morgan into secret TVA Board voting for the new CEO led to an OIG report #17A-14875 on whether notational votes meet Federal Sunshine Act requirements. <http://oig.tva.gov/reports/audit-inpsections.html>

April 3, 2013 – BEST/MATRR submitted formal comments to the NRC and spoke out about the issues at a public meeting on the relicensing of the Sequoyah Nuclear Power Plant. (See [comments](#))

April and May, 2013 – BEST/MATRR contributed ideas and research, as well as \$1,000 to BREDL, to support their Petition to Intervene in the relicensing of the Sequoyah Nuclear Power Plant.

April, 2013 – BEST/MATRR commissioned epidemiologist Joseph Mangano, MPH to study our radiation monitoring data, as well as the CDC, NCI, and Alabama State health data for the downwind areas surrounding Browns Ferry Nuclear Power Plant.

April 13, 2013 – BEST/MATRR provided an informational booth, distributing literature and personal interactions with the public at the annual Earth Day Festival in Florence, Alabama.

April 18, 2013 – BEST/MATRR representatives spoke at the TVA Board meeting, and submitted the letter “[Nuclear Power is Not Clean: The Dirty Secret](#),” in response to the newly installed CEO Bill Johnson’s Report to the Board in February – when he repeatedly referred to “clean nuclear power,” which by English language dictionary definitions’ is an oxymoron. (See [letter](#) and [blog report](#))

April 21, 2013 – BEST/MATRR provided an informational booth, distributing literature and personal interactions with the public at the all day annual Earth Day Festival in Huntsville, Alabama.

May, 2013 – Garry Morgan, Director of our BEST/MATRR Radiation Monitoring Project, and Gretel Johnston revised our “BEST Radiation Monitoring Manual”, incorporating lessons learned in the field and expanding the focus so that anyone anywhere could use our Manual to plan and begin their own group’s radiation monitoring project. (See 30 pg. manual “[BEST Radiation Monitoring Manual.pdf](#)”)

May, 2013 – BEST/MATRR research on the history of problems and ongoing issues at the Browns Ferry Nuclear Power Plant were added to the epidemiologist’s report by MATRR co-founder and web creator, then the report was formatted and registered for publication in print and digital formats.

June 6, 2013 – Our 52 page report *Radioactive Emissions and Health Hazards Surrounding Browns Ferry Nuclear Power Plant in Alabama* by Joseph Mangano, MPH and Gretel Johnston, was released on June 6. ([Free download available online](#))

June 7, 2013 – BEST/MATRR representatives, Morgan and Johnston, attend FEMA and NRC out-briefing on Emergency Preparedness Exercise & Drill for Browns Ferry at the Morgan County Courthouse in Decatur, Alabama. They presented our new report, both asking and answering questions, and were interviewed by WAFF-TV News of Huntsville.

June, 2013 – Some hardcopies and many digital download links were sent to national, state, and local officials. Alabama Governor Bentley received both, and digital copies were sent to the Alabama Director of the Department of Public Safety, Director of the Department of Public Health, Director of the Office of Radiation Control, Alabama State Fire Marshal, and the Alabama State Attorney General, as well as Alabama Senators and Representatives.

July 2, 2013 – NBC affiliate WAFF-TV News in Huntsville aired an investigative report, “Why North Alabama Cancer Rates Stand Out.” (Video removed but see [article here](#).)

July 7, 2013 – Birmingham News and Huntsville Times publish a joint investigative three-part report: “Browns Ferry: Shrinking the Safety Margin at Alabama’s Largest Nuclear Plant.” The articles do not mention our report, sent to them one month earlier, but the public is becoming educated on the issues. (See [articles here](#))

July 20, 2013 – BEST/MATRR launched a public educational program with two showings of the documentary film, “The Atomic States of America,” at an arts center in Huntsville, Alabama. After each showing, co-author Gretel Johnston talked about our newly released Browns Ferry report (Browns Ferry is 30 miles from Huntsville), and nuclear engineer and Union of Concerned Scientists ([UCS](#)) Director of Nuclear Safety, David Lochbaum (who was once a nuclear operator at Browns Ferry), spoke about Browns Ferry issues. Both speakers answered audience questions. (See [Huntsville Times preview](#))

August 22, 2013 – BEST/MATRR representatives spoke at a TVA board meeting. Garry Morgan presented a paper on the inadequacy of the [TVA Decommissioning Fund](#), and Gretel Johnston presented

our Browns Ferry report to the directors, *Radioactive Emissions and Health Hazards Surrounding Browns Ferry Nuclear Power Plant in Alabama*. (See [letter](#) and [online report](#))

September 7, 2013 – BEST/MATRR held a mid-year meeting to elect an interim Vice President and approve expanded By-Laws and our revised budget. (Note: Sandy Kurtz had resigned as BEST/MATRR Vice President and Executive Board member in early June, citing personal reasons.) During the meeting, Garry Morgan moderated and gave an educational presentation on monitoring methods and equipment; Lou Zeller, Executive Director of our umbrella organization, the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League (BREDL) attended via Skype and spoke about their Sequoyah Petition to Intervene; and Gretel Johnston presented BEST/MATRR's Browns Ferry report published in June. The meeting was an all day event held near Sewanee, TN and 20 members attended. (See [Report to Group](#))

September, 2013 – A generous, yet anonymous, member of BEST/MATRR donated matching funds to purchase a radiological spectrometer to improve the depth of our radiation testing. We raised matching funds and purchased the spectrometer and are working on mastering the use of this instrument which identifies some 400 different radionuclides, hoping to share this resource with our friend groups.

September, 2013 – We also received funds for a grant applied for in May, thanks to recommendations for the merit of our work by Lou Zeller of the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League ([BREDL](#)), and to Lois Gibbs of the Center for Health, Environment, and Justice ([CHEJ](#)).

September, October, 2013 – During the summer, Ms. Johnston represented BEST/MATRR in calls with Paul Gunter and co-petitioner activists, in preparation for the NRC Petition Review Board (PRB) meeting regarding the Beyond Nuclear petition to shut down Fukushima-style GE Mark I & II reactors in the U.S. Johnston's comments to the Petition Review Board were recorded via phone on September 30, 2013, and formal [written comments](#) were submitted on October 28, 2013.

October 3, 2013 – BEST/MATRR co-sponsored 2nd Annual "[Wild and Scenic Film Festival](#)" with other Alabama environmental organizations. Some short films were documentaries on nuclear power issues.

October 23, 2013 – BEST/MATRR representatives Garry Morgan and Gretel Johnston spoke about "A Better Way for TVA" at the newly formed Regional Energy Resource Advisory Council (RERC). (View [comments](#) and a short video of both speakers: <http://youtu.be/mM-wt-3EXLI>)

November 14, 2013 – For the first time in four years, BEST/MATRR did not attend a TVA board meeting, which was held in Oxford, Miss. Family matters prevented our attendance, but Secretary Garry Morgan studied the [TVA presentations](#) to the board online as well as the public comments in the listening session.

November 22, 2013 – BEST/MATRR submitted recommendations for the TVA Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) for future planning, suggesting ways to increase Energy Efficiency, improving the assets and lives of Valley residents and reducing the need for costly nuclear expansion. (See [letter](#))

December 12, 2013 – BEST/MATRR representatives Garry Morgan and Gretel Johnston were asked to join a national committee of select anti-nuclear groups formed to meet with policymakers in Washington, DC in January, 2014. The BEST/MATRR executive committee decided to send Gretel Johnston to DC to launch our MAKE RADIATION VISIBLE campaign nationally. After several committee phone meetings discussing each of our areas of concern, the committee chose to narrow the focus to two topics: High Burnup Fuel issues, for which Dr. Marvin Resnikoff (from Vermont) and Donna Gilmore (from California) wrote the factsheet [High Burnup Nuclear Fuel: Pushing the Safety Envelope](#), and the second topic was radiation monitoring and the ideas presented in Johnston's [MAKE RADIATION VISIBLE](#) factsheet, including suggestions for upgrading NRC rules from annual reports on averaged quarterly radionuclide emissions to modern monitoring technology, providing real-time online radiation data to the public. Committee members Diane D'Arrigo of the Nuclear Information and Resource Service (NIRS) and Susan Shapiro, an environmental lawyer with the Indian Point Safe Energy Coalition (IPSEC) had also been calling for real-time online monitoring, so there was a strong coalition of voices advocating the MAKE RADIATION VISIBLE requests at the meetings with policymakers in DC and Maryland.

December 17, 2013 – BEST/MATRR representatives, Garry Morgan and Gretel Johnston, as well as BREDL representative, Sandy Kurtz, attended the NRC followup on relicensing at SQN; all three spoke, and BEST/MATRR submitted formal comments. ([See comments](#))

Ending the year 2013 with the invitation to join a multi-group committee to directly meet with policymakers in DC was an honor bestowed on BEST/MATRR. The committee was Co-chaired by Priscilla Star of Coalition Against Nukes and Gene Stone of Residents Organized for a Safe Environment, and consisted of physicist Dr. Marvin Resnikoff of Radioactive Waste Management Associates (RWMA), Donna Gilmore of SanOnofreSafety.org, Diane D'Arrigo and Executive Director Tim Judson of Nuclear Information and Resource Service (NIRS), environmental lawyer Susan Shapiro of Indian Point Safe Environment Coalition (IPSEC), Hudson Sloop Clearwater, and Riverkeeper, and our two BEST/MATRR representatives.

As you can see, we are working very hard to help make the world a safer and better place for future generations. We think the nuclear issues are so critical because these most toxic elements remain dangerous for millions of years. We think the fact that 60 years of research has provided no solution for radioactive waste is a clear indication that “the nuclear power experiment has failed” (as TEC Chair Don Safer so eloquently phrases the point), and by not recognizing this failure and not working to secure the radioactive waste, we are leaving future generations an immense financial and environmental debt.

Our expenses have broadened along with the scope of our work, and we ask that anyone who believes in the goals we are working to accomplish will help us with whatever [DONATION](#) you can for 2014. BEST/MATRR's expanding campaign to **MAKE RADIATION VISIBLE** has been received with a sense of hope by environmentalists around the country, and with keen interest by the policymakers to whom we have presented the ideas and steps to accomplish the goal. We believe the time has come to remove ‘invisible’ from the world's fears about nuclear poisons; and with your support, we will work together to make that happen – to **MAKE RADIATION VISIBLE**.

With gratitude and best wishes,

Gretel Johnston
for BEST/MATRR

On behalf of:
Stewart Horn, President
Garry Morgan, Secretary/Treasurer

Bellefonte Efficiency & Sustainability Team (BEST)
Mothers Against Tennessee River Radiation (MATRR)

MATRR.org – Because It Matters

P.S. Please provide links to these papers on your websites and Facebook pages. Thanks!

NUCLEAR POWER SECURITY paper @ <http://best-matrr.org/NuclearPowerSecurity.pdf>

MAKE RADIATION VISIBLE paper @ <http://best-matrr.org/MakeRadiationVisible.pdf>