

# OPINIONS

The News-Gazette

## Coal company's plan threat to environment

Should 24,000 acres of Champaign and Vermilion counties be used to extract, clean and then export high-sulfur coal? Should water from the Salt Fork River and local aquifers be used to process this coal? Should permits be issued for a coal mining project while the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency appear inadequately staffed, trained and responsible for mining site inspection, permit compliance review and incident response?

Is it responsible to allow coal washing residue to filter unchecked back into our ground and surface water supplies?

These were a few interesting questions that percolated to the surface during a recent Sunrise Coal Mine meeting at Homer Lake. The Prairie Rivers Network and local citizen activists gave an eye-opening presentation on the current conditions at another Sunrise Coal company mine in Indiana.

It looks pretty messy over there.

I ask all citizens and this newspaper to pay close attention to the deal going down in the area south of

Homer. A company based in Colorado (Hallador Energy Co.) is asking for state approval to rip about 24,000 acres of eastern Champaign and western Vermilion counties to pieces.

Where's the coal going to be shipped? Who's going to profit and lose from this 19th century energy extraction technique? Where will the water come from?

Check out the Prairie Rivers website: [prairierivers.org](http://prairierivers.org) for more information and ways to be involved.

SCOTT DOSSETT  
Urbana