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**PacifiCorp ignores responsibility to clean up coal ash contamination at Utah plant**  
*New lawsuit aims to fix "extremely high levels of pollutants" in Huntington ground and surface water*

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SALT LAKE CITY – To ensure that millions of tons of toxic coal ash waste at Rocky Mountain Power's Huntington power plant in central Utah are cleaned up after decades of mismanagement, a coalition of conservation groups have filed a lawsuit against its parent company, PacifiCorp, a subsidiary of Warren Buffett-owned Berkshire Hathaway Energy.

The Sierra Club, HEAL Utah, and Public Justice sent PacifiCorp a notice in October asking the utility to address a litany of problems that have contaminated land and water at the Huntington coal-burning power plant in central Utah, including its scheme to spray waste-tainted water and leachate onto a "research farm" next to the plant for "irrigation." The groups filed their lawsuit in late February and served it to PacifiCorp on Monday after the company failed to take action to address all of the ongoing contamination problems.

"PacifiCorp and Rocky Mountain Power had months to come up with a plan to address the hazardous wastewater problem they've had for years at Huntington," said HEAL Utah executive director Matt Pacenza. "But instead of investing in solutions to clean up the problem, the utility thinks it's a better idea to keep spreading the mess around, hoping no one will notice."

According to the complaint, Rocky Mountain Power's mismanagement in handling, transport and disposal of the coal-ash waste "have caused extensive contamination of local ground and/or surface waters, which may present an imminent and substantial endangerment to health and the environment." The suit also cites problems with runoff coming from a massive pile of coal stored near the plant.

In an effort to keep plumes of contaminated groundwater from spreading from these sources and further contaminating Huntington Creek, Rocky Mountain Power has resorted to a number of "elaborate engineering" efforts. The most egregious of these is a "research farm" that Rocky Mountain Power created next to the plant that attempts to sidestep proper safeguards for disposing of contaminated wastewater. Leachate and other sources of wastewater collected from the plant are used to irrigate alfalfa and other crops. These wastewater practices and others have caused contamination of groundwater and Huntington Creek.

Records show that company also has back-filled two small natural streams below its coal ash landfills that had become contaminated in order to keep them from flowing directly into Huntington Creek. Water from the streams is diverted into pipes that drain into an ash-waste facility at the plant – even though it doesn't appear the company ever received any permits to fill or divert the streams, as the law requires.

The net result of these problems is contaminated water flowing into and fouling Huntington Creek and its tributaries, so the groups are asking the U.S. District Court to enforce federal clean water and hazardous waste standards and require PacifiCorp to fix the problems.

“For decades, coal ash waste from the Huntington coal-fired power plant has endangered clean water in Utah with toxic pollutants like lead and mercury,” said Lindsay Beebe, an organizer for the Sierra Club's Beyond Coal campaign in Utah. “So when a coal plant owner like PacifiCorp circumvents even the most basic safeguards to protect against water contamination from coal waste, we must take action to put an end to these dangerous practices and protect clean water for our communities.”

Running at full capacity, the Huntington plant generates an estimated 320,000 tons of coal ash waste annually. The material, which includes sludge from scrubbers and other power plant waste, is dumped into unlined landfills, one used since at least 1973 and a newer one built in 2000. Wastewater and leachate from the landfills is then collected in two unlined waste ponds at Huntington, before being sprayed onto the facility's “research farm.”

EPA data show millions of pounds of toxic chemicals disposed of in Huntington's ash waste landfills, including barium, chromium, manganese, mercury and vanadium (see below). Monitoring data, which come directly from reports to the Utah Dept. of Water Quality, show concentrations of indicator pollutants steadily intensifying and spreading in ground and surface water as it moves downhill from the landfills toward the research farm.

A 2003 report shows that contamination levels grew progressively worse starting around 1996 as a plume of toxic chemicals identified with coal ash spread into a spring near the ash landfills. Levels of boron – a common indicator of coal ash contamination – increased by a factor of 50 and nitrates by a factor 12, dissolved solids jumped more than 500 percent and chloride levels spiked 600 percent.

A 2007 report prepared by a consultant for PacifiCorp tracked contamination seeping to large volumes of sulfur-laden slurry from the plant's pollution scrubbers disposed of in the newer landfill. Monitoring data from 2003 to 2014 show that pollution from the coal ash waste in the landfills has spread widely across the site and reached the groundwater adjacent to Huntington Creek in places.

In addition to the waste, the lawsuit claims that a massive pile of coal stored across the highway from the Huntington plant lacked even the most basic storm water protections to keep tainted water from running off of it and eventually into Huntington Creek.

HEAL Utah and the Sierra Club filed the complaint with the assistance of Public Justice, a group with experience working on coal ash legal issues. Under the Clean Water Act, the company faces fines up to \$37,500 per day per violation.

“Despite being given ample time, PacifiCorp has been unable to offer any real solutions to the dangers posed by its fake farm and other coal ash disposal operations,” said Public Justice attorney Richard Webster. “Instead, it has continued to threaten Huntington Creek and the surrounding area with toxins from the ash. While PacifiCorp may not have a plan to act, we do. Today's lawsuit is necessary to protect the community and end the contamination caused by this ludicrous and illegal operation.”

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*Copies of the lawsuit are available upon request from the media contacts above.  
Photos of the Huntington plant, coal pile and research farm also are available upon request.*

Cumulative Releases of Selected Toxic Contaminants  
in Coal Ash Waste at the Huntington Power Plant,  
Emery County, Utah  
*2000-2014\**

<b>Chemical Pollutant</b>	<b>Coal Ash Disposed in Landfills (Lbs)</b>	<b>Research Farm Application (Lbs)</b>	<b>Total On-site Releases (Lbs)</b>
Barium	13,207,730	6,045	13,213,775
Chromium	1,237,530	66	1,237,596
Manganese	1,340,452	2	1,340,454
Mercury	2,541	1	2,541
Vanadium	821,735	-	821,735

\* Source: EPA Toxics Release Inventory for the Huntington plant