

**News letter June 2007**  
**Information McDowell County WV**

Area – 534 sq. miles

Number of U.S. Highways – 1

Population, 1950: 98,887

Population 2000 Census - 27,329

Population 2006 Estimate - 23,882 (-12.6% from 2000)

Persons with a disability, age 5+, 2000 - 10,180

Number of homes 2000 – 11,169

Number of homes 2000 per square mile 20.9

Persons per square mile, 2000 - 51.1

High school graduates, percent of persons age 25+, 2000 - 50.0%

Median value of owner-occupied housing units, 2000 \$22,600      Statewide - \$72,800

Persons below poverty level 2004 – 33.0%      Statewide - 16.2%

About a fourth of Appalachia's counties - 108 - are considered economically distressed, meaning they have unemployment rates of **8.6** percent or higher, poverty rates of **19.7** percent or higher and per-capita incomes of **\$12,934** or lower.

**McDowell - Unemployment > 30% Poverty rate > 30% Disabled > 40% Per capita income - \$7,951**

Approximately 60% of the land is owned by absent corporate land holders, generating no tax revenue. The same land owners are powerful lobbyists affectively working to prevent clean air, clean water and flood control legislation. Over 15 % of homes in McDowell were lost on floods in 2001 and 2002 – many other homes and businesses were severely damaged. Most businesses are located in flood planes as this is where road intersections generally occur.

Sixty seven percent of homes have no waste water treatment, allowing 314,000 gallons of untreated waste per day to enter streams.

EPA statistics indicate that 558 persons in McDowell are drinking untreated groundwater. The EPA concedes that the number is under-reported. Where available, municipal water systems have inadequate treatment facilities. One had barium levels so high that they advised that the water be used only for flushing toilets. Users who refused to pay water bills were cutoff. Lawsuits remain unsettled except for restoring water service during the litigation period.

Latest EPA figures (1998) for testing municipal water treatment plants lists results for only 330 plants NATION WIDE. Only one was in the state of WV. It tested in the range of 1,000 to 9,999 coliform bacteria per 100 ml (aprox 3.3 ounces). Nationwide, only 7 tested worse. Considering that almost every township in the U.S. has a water treatment plant, the total number of plants tested is miniscule.