

Protecting Communities and Special Places

e-Newsletter September 28, 2013



**"This is the place we love. This is it for us -
and we may have to leave."**

~ John Fenton

IN THIS ISSUE

A Place Where you Can
Go and Not Hear Anything
But Your Heart Beat

The True Cost
of Fracking

The Murky Methane
Issue

Take Action!

In The News

Quote of the Day

Shale Gas Outrage 2013

A Place Where You Can Go and Not Hear Anything But Your Heart Beat

By Ann Pinca

PHILADELPHIA- John Fenton stood tall in his boots, his cowboy hat firmly in place as he spoke of his home in Pavillion, Wyoming - a rugged land where wild mustangs gallop over open spaces and Native American petroglyphs are carved in the rock formation behind his home. As Fenton says, it's "a place where you can go and not hear anything but your heart beat." Or at least that's the way it used to be before the gas drillers came to his land.

Place is very important for all of us, said Fenton, noting that we all have a connection to our land. But now, Fenton's "place" is in the midst of the natural gas industry, his home ringed by well pads on a split estate where he owns the surface rights but not the mineral rights. Consequently, he has no control over the drilling activity on his land. And it's an active drilling area: within a two-mile radius of Fenton's home are 156 active gas wells, five compressor stations, and all the necessary connecting pipelines.

Fenton, the keynote speaker at the September 26 Freedom from Fracking III Conference in Philadelphia, then began to tell of the ten-year ordeal he and his neighbors have suffered since their water went bad. The water woes of Pavillion are widely known through the films Gasland, Gasland II, and a full spate of media attention. Like those in Dimock, Pennsylvania, the citizens of Pavillion have been caught in the glare of the public eye as their water issues center on the question of whether drilling operations--or more specifically, hydraulic fracturing--can contaminate drinking water wells.

Keynote speaker John Fenton speaks to the audience.

IMAGE: ANN PINCA

UPCOMING EVENTS



Power Shift 2013

October 18-21

Pittsburgh, PA

This fall, 10,000+ youth leaders will converge in Pittsburgh, PA to fight for our future. Together we'll build the movement to fight fracking, divest from fossil fuels, build a clean

It's a life Fenton never expected to have. Joking that he flunked speech class in high school, Fenton brought home the point that "this is too important ... to let it go," even though he realizes it isn't always easy to stand up and take action, even if it is for what's right. Fenton said the last ten years have helped him to realize what's

energy future, and stop the climate crisis.

[Find information and register here](#)

Save the Date!

The next Keep it Wild hike will be:

October 19

Watch for details soon!

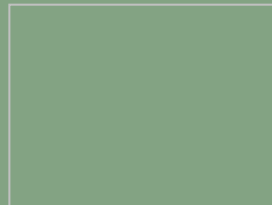
TAKE ACTION!

Keep it Wild!

Do you have a favorite story to share about the Loyalsock State Forest? We'd love to hear from you!

Send us your stories, photos, or even just a few words and we'll publish them in one of our upcoming newsletters.

Send your submissions to keepitwildrda@gmail.com



Update on the Loyalsock State Forest

The Pennsylvania Office of Open Records (OOR) has granted in part a Right to Know Law (RTKL) appeal by PennFuture concerning Anadarko Petroleum Corporation's plans to develop natural gas in the Loyalsock State Forest's "Clarence Moore lands." Under the OOR's September 13 decision, the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) has until October 13 to disclose Anadarko's development plans for the

really important. One aspect of that is the conservation of resources. He's changed his lifestyle to avoid petroleum products as much as possible, including some of the everyday conveniences we take for granted, like plastic bottles and plastic bags. He urged everyone to start making small changes to help.

"We're conveniencing ourselves to extinction," said Fenton, "and the people that are profiting from this are pushing us along the way."

Unfortunately for the affected families of Pavillion, their water troubles are still unresolved. The light at the end of the tunnel that shone brightly in December 2011 when the [EPA linked chemicals found in the water](#) to hydraulic fracturing was extinguished this past June when the EPA announced they were [leaving the investigation](#) and turning it back to the state of Wyoming.

Showing a picture taken just a few days ago of himself and his wife on their land, Fenton took the audience back to his home for a moment saying, "This is the place we love. This is it for us - and we may have to leave." But despite the setback from the EPA decision, Fenton was upbeat as he spoke on Thursday. Stating that his strength comes from knowing others understand his situation, he mentioned encouraging changes that he sees, even if they are small.

John Fenton

IMAGE: ANN PINCA

"We will make something better for our future generations," Fenton asserted. His final words were backed by the strength of the hundreds of people he has met across the country:

"Don't lose heart," said John Fenton. "Together we're unstoppable."

**Shale Gas Outrage 2013
Freedom From Fracking III Conference**

The True Cost Of Fracking

By Ann Pinca

PHILADELPHIA- The former driller spoke of his years working for the oil and gas industry. "I *loved* the gas industry," said Rick "Mac" Sawyer as he addressed the group. But now instead of drilling, he and wife Lisa help those negatively affected by the shale extraction industry through their nonprofit charitable organization, [Shattered Dreams of the Marcellus and Utica Experiment](#).

The Sawyers were part of a panel of speakers from fracking-impacted communities. Their panel discussion was just one of six breakout sessions presented as part of the third annual Freedom From Fracking Conference held September 26 at the Friends Center in Philadelphia.

Aiming to show the real costs of shale extraction, some of the topics featured in this year's conference were health impacts, air quality and climate impacts, community impacts, pipelines, and negative economic impacts. John Fenton from Pavillion, Wyoming, was the keynote speaker, and a workshop, "The Gas Industry in Philadelphia and the Delaware River Port System" concluded the conference.

Taking place on the final day of Shale Gas Outrage 2013, the conference wrapped up a three-day event that included a water drive to collect funds for

Clarence Moore lands. The decision allows DCNR to redact information that Anadarko has identified as "confidential proprietary" information and "trade secrets." Until now, the DCNR has refused to allow the public access to Anadarko's development plans.

Read the [full release here](#)

House Co-Sponsorship Memorandum Circulated by Rep. Greg Vitali

Rep. Greg Vitali, D-Delaware, intends to introduce a Resolution that would urge Governor Corbett to do everything in his power to prevent drilling operations from occurring on the Clarence Moore tracts in the Loyalsock State Forest.

Read the notice [here](#).

IN THE NEWS

This Week's Scoops

Colorado is still cleaning up after the devastating floods with at least [two more oil spills](#) recorded, which leaves some wondering: [just what will be left behind](#) as flood waters recede?

Water made the news in Pennsylvania again, or rather the testing of it did, as Microbac Laboratories, which tested Pennsylvania drinking and non-drinking water, [agreed to pay a \\$60,000 fine and relinquish its accreditation](#) after poor quality control and mismanagement were discovered at its facility.

Meanwhile, folks in Dallas (Pa., that is) were none too pleased when local high school officials rounded up students and kept them in the auditorium [when the smell of natural gas filled the school](#) after a planned

impacted families in need of replacement water. Shale Gas Outrage is held in September in conjunction with the annual industry conference, [Shale Insight](#), held in Philadelphia at the same time.

For complete information on Shale Gas Outrage 2013, including schedules and sponsors, [look here](#).

For photos from the conference, [look here](#).

Stephen Cleghorn presents his comments during the Community Impacts panel discussion. From left to right: Lisa Sawyer, Iris Marie Bloom, Stephen Cleghorn, Lee McCaslin, Mac Sawyer
IMAGE: ANN PINCA

The Murky Methane Issue

By Ted Stroter, RDA Board of Directors and Chemical Advisor

If you've seen well water contaminated with methane, you know that the water generally appears to be a murky, cloudy color if enough methane is present. Where the methane comes from is a debate we won't get into now - instead, I will discuss another murky methane issue.

RDA strives to inform people about the negative impacts of natural gas drilling operations to balance out the constant gas industry hype seen and heard on television and in newspaper ads. These ads always portray "clean-burning" natural gas as the "perfect" savior for our energy problems, since natural gas only creates about half the carbon dioxide emissions when burned compared to coal.

With our atmosphere already containing way too much carbon dioxide, the best response to that claim is a quote I read while researching carbon dioxide emissions, augmented with some of my own words: "Burning natural gas instead of coal to help global warming is like stabbing yourself with a knife instead of shooting yourself in the head with a gun. It might take longer but you are still going to kill yourself."

What we really need to prevent global warming is a national energy policy that weans us off fossil fuels through aggressive energy conservation programs along with more support for renewable and alternate energies.

Natural gas is mainly methane, and the big murky issue in hot debate right now is exactly how much methane is leaked during the many operations needed to extract, treat and ship the gas to market. Since methane is many times more powerful than carbon dioxide as a greenhouse gas and exacerbates global warming, it is important to know just how much is lost to the atmosphere.

We now have several studies from various agencies, universities, independent organizations and others with personnel that have seemingly great expertise in fields required to understand and measure/calculate the methane losses as a percentage of total natural gas extracted. Here's where the murkiness comes in: Each study's results don't always agree with the other studies and a big debate ensues.

Can RDA help to inform our readers on this very complicated debate? In this case we will provide:

1. The latest methane leakage study sponsored by the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) and conducted by the University of Texas (UT) showing *lower leakage levels* [here](#).
2. A recent National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration study showing *higher leakage levels* [here](#).

release for nearby pipeline construction. Proper notification from Williams prior to the release is under debate, but what does seem certain is that emergency planning was a bit light for a natural gas emergency, despite the presence of a natural gas metering station about a half-mile away from the school.

But it's trains, not pipelines, that bring Bakken Shale oil to the Philadelphia Energy Solutions refinery. At 70,000 barrels per train, some worry that somewhere along the rails between North Dakota and Philadelphia, another devastating accident like that at Lac-Mégantic may occur.

While oil may come into Pennsylvania, Senator Gene Yaw apparently wants to see coal continue to go out, as he was recently named co-chair of the Senate "Coal Caucus" committee. Co-chair Sen. Tim Soboy cites "thousands of jobs" and energy independence as goals of the committee - hmmm, where have we heard that before?

Finally, while some Butler County residents are filing lawsuits against Rex Energy after living with bad water for two years, Gov. Corbett and Lt. Gov. Cawley praised energy industry leaders at this year's Shale Insight conference. Too bad Pa's top state officials couldn't stop by the Friends Center to listen to their "other" constituents, who are forced to live with the consequences of our state's "second industrial revolution."

**Need to contact
RDA? Call us at
888-332-1244**

Join RDA

3. A critique of the EDF/University of Texas study here.

What should we make of this issue other than realizing it's similar to getting a Republican and a Democrat to agree on anything? The best I can do is give you my opinion as RDA's chemical advisor who spent several decades auditing/overseeing chemical operations. From my experience, here are a few potential pros and cons to consider about this latest methane study. First the cons:

- The gas industry knew ahead of time what sites were to be reviewed /audited for methane leakage, and the industry was providing the funding for the University of Texas who was selecting and auditing the sites. Each site chosen probably had its operations running with maximum methane capture technologies. This is not likely to be the norm.
- The sample size of selected sites is small and may not represent a true picture of the industry across the US.
- Not all operations of natural gas drilling were tested.

Potential problems with this study? Certainly possible. However there are also these pros:

- This study was the first to use significant monitoring at the well sites for its conclusions rather than relying on very complicated methodologies and assumptions with minimal monitoring to obtain conclusions.
- The study showed that methane leakage can probably be minimized if all the available mitigation technologies are used and maintained.
- The study will continue with more testing at different sites across the US and will cover all operations so we should get a much better idea of the status of leaking methane from the gas industry.

Now, if we could only get the industry to correct their well casing failure rate. Well casings are what the industry likes to tout as the sure-fire protection of our drinking water from contamination, yet well casings that experience initial failure or failure a few years after drilling begins are a big problem - which leads us to that other murky methane issue....

Related links:

[Read the Public Accountability Initiative's report on conflicts of interest associated with the EDF/UT study](#)

[Read EDF's FAQ about the report](#)

RDA Newsletter

Ann Pinca, managing editor
Ted Stroter, RDA Board of Directors editor
Ralph Kisberg, contributing editor
Robbie Cross, President - RDA Board of Directors
Jenni Slotterback, Secretary - RDA Board of Directors
Barb Jarmoska, Treasurer - RDA Board of Directors
Mark Szybist - RDA Board of Directors
Roscoe McCloskey - RDA Board of Directors

This weekly e-letter is written and designed by the RDA consultants and Board of Directors and sent to RDA members/subscribers. Every effort is made to assure complete accuracy in each issue. This publication and the information contained herein is copyrighted by RDA and Ann Pinca and may not be reproduced without permission.

All rights reserved. Readers are invited to forward this newsletter in its entirety to broaden the scope of its outreach. Readers are also invited to comment to the managing editor regarding contents and to submit articles to be considered for publication in a future issue.

Please note: The RDA newsletter includes reporting on a variety of events and activities, which do not necessarily reflect the philosophy of the organization. RDA practices only non-violent

action in voicing the organization's beliefs and concerns.

We welcome your active participation and are in need of help for special events, publicity, research, and other projects. Contact us for details.

As a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, RDA relies on donations for the important work we do. In order for RDA to continue its valuable education and advocacy outreach in 2013, please consider a tax-free contribution to our efforts.

[Return to top](#)

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

Donations may also be sent by mail to: Responsible Drilling Alliance, P.O. Box 502, Williamsport, PA 17703
Thank you for your support!

[Donate](#)

