

Jacoby Falls in the Loyalsock State Forest: a source of wonder and the location of RDA's upcoming *Keep it Wild* hike.

*"Those who contemplate the beauty of earth find reserves of strength that will endure..."*  
 - Rachel Carson, author of *Silent Spring*

Greetings!

Climate change. Health care. Immigration. Agriculture. Education. Environment. Addiction. Obesity. Economics. Terrorism. And more. And more. And more. Our Dickensian headline refers to two crises, but our guest author, Ruth Steck, says it eloquently in her feature story, "there is no counting them: civilization is throwing off crises like sparks from an arc welder. Everybody can see them, firing up the headlines - but where they all are coming from remains the most dodged question of our age."

Reductionism may indeed be the quintessential hallmark of this modern age. Although providing for fine-tuned expertise, our reductionistic way of thinking may also be our undoing. Like a total eclipse of the sun, our inside-a-nonexistent-box perspective blocks out the intimate connectedness and fundamental source of all the problems we face.

I invite you to read this issue with attention and care, and to think creatively with us as we suggest a plausible remediation for two of our state's enormous problems.

I invite you to click through to the full and unedited comments RDA submitted to DCNR regarding the agency's plan to manage PA's state forests. The scope of this document not only explains our position, but offers you a glimpse of RDA's invaluable and ongoing endeavors on behalf of our members.

I invite you bundle up and bring a friend, a dog, a teenager; come hike with us this coming weekend to Jacoby Falls in the Loyalsock State Forest.

I invite you to mark your calendar, and plan to join RDA at the Community Arts Center at 7:30 on Thursday, April 7th for our free screening of a powerful new documentary film.

I invite you to read the important stories in the sidebar of this newsletter, which provide updates and insights into regional, state, national and global news.

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### In Other News

#### Hollywood Star Joins Fight to Save Maple Trees in Susquehanna County

New Milford Township - Some Hollywood star power showed up to help in the effort to save trees the Holleran family uses for their maple syrup business.

RDA introduced the problem in our last newsletter titled Methane Musings. [Click here to access the newsletter and read the article, "Standoff Imminent as family opposes gas pipeline tree cutting through maple syrup](#)

And lastly, I invite to you renew your membership in RDA - and to consider supporting the valuable work we do by making a contribution during the upcoming Raise the Region fundraiser.

Thank you for reading and caring and participating and sharing this newsletter.

Sincerely,

**Barb Jarmoska**  
RDA Board of Directors

[Click here to visit our Facebook page.](#)

## A Tale of Two Crises

by Ruth Steck, RDA Member, Guest Columnist

I am saying 'two' for the art of the thing, but in truth, there is no counting them: civilization is throwing off crises like sparks from an arc welder. Everybody can see them, firing up the headlines - but where they all are coming from remains the most dodged question of our age.

**Crisis one: One hundred and thirty Americans (mostly young folk) die of a drug overdose every day.**

The way heroin addiction is often understood is based on old studies where a rat is placed by itself in a cage, and given two choices of water to drink, one drugged, one not. It doesn't take long before the rat is choosing heroin all the time. The conclusion drawn was that the drug is so powerful that a state of helpless preference is quickly established.

Some other researchers came along later, though, and changed the parameters of the experiment. Instead of one animal alone in a cage, a group of rats was placed in the most rat-friendly environment the researchers could devise. Once again, there were two choices of water. But in this scenario, nearly no one went for the drugged version, and if they did, none of them used it excessively. Hypothesis: the root of all addiction is loss of felt connection.

I got letters in the mail today, from two young men spending time in state prisons.

One of them I've known for ten years or so. We met when Project CoffeeHouse was still active in Lock Haven. (Project CoffeeHouse, founded by Lu Ann Potter in 2000, was and still is a non-profit devoted to the care and empowerment of the young.) He has been in and out of jail the whole time I've known him. During the pauses between his sentences, we would meet at least once (he stayed with us one time for a month or two) and have long conversations about the nature of things. He is wicked smart. I would say what I always said, "You are writing the story." And he would say what he always said, "I am the rat in society's dumpster," by which I'd know that he'd be going back to jail sooner or later; that he wasn't quite done having the self-conversation which prison may compel in the willing mind. He has leapt during this last round, and I think it could be his last. He has begun to believe there might be something in the world, and in himself, that could feel as good as heroin -- better, in fact, for being free of penalty.

The second young man is the son of a Facebook friend who put out a post some months ago, telling his son's story, and wondering if anyone might write to him while he served his sentence (for running a meth lab out of a van which exploded, searing his face and his esophagus.) He doesn't really like meth, he told me, he just likes making it, "just like wine or shine", he said. What he loves more than anything he's ever met is heroin. He feels ashamed of this, but wanted to be honest. He is terrified that he will not be able to resist it.

[operation."](#)

Actor James Cromwell arrived in Susquehanna County as the natural gas company began efforts to cut down the trees.

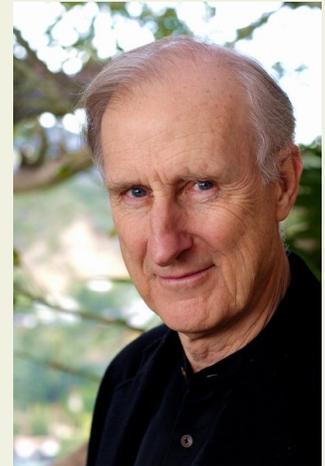


Photo Credit: IMDB

Cromwell has been in numerous Hollywood films and TV shows. Now he's among others joining the fight to save the trees.

[Click here to read more or watch the news coverage from WNEP.](#)

### German Forest Ranger Finds That Trees Have Social Networks, Too

Germany - In the deep stillness of a forest in winter, the sound of footsteps on a carpet of leaves died away. Peter Wohlleben had found what he was looking for: a pair of towering beeches. "These trees are friends," he said, craning his neck to look at the leafless crowns, black against a gray sky. "You see how the thick branches point away from each other? That's so they don't block their buddy's light."

Before moving on to an elderly beech to show how trees, like people, wrinkle as they age, he added, "Sometimes, pairs like this are so interconnected at the roots that when one tree dies, the other one dies, too."

Mr. Wohlleben, 51, is a very tall career forest ranger who, with his ramrod posture and muted green uniform, looks a little like one of the sturdy beeches in the woods he cares for. Yet he is lately something of a sensation as a writer

There they are, their letters, side by side on the table. I want to press them together, meld them into one. Really, they *are* one -- brothers unmet, members of a choir which sings of disconnection on so many channels.

I wish for both of these precious young men (there, I've said it: though they have done wrongs aplenty, there's still a light on in their cells) that they could step out from behind those walls and into community - where they'd be valued, visibly and actively; where purposeful engagement and service was the practiced norm. I see them doing great things: building tiny houses, growing gardens. I see them on some mountain's back, planting trees all day till it's time for dinner, and conversation, and sleep.

Just that: working with committed others in the service of a vital aim, might be enough by itself to effect a cure. But there would be in this scene I'm imagining still another powerful medicine at work: one that apparently emanates from nature itself.

Many recent studies point to the restorative power of natural surroundings, and others are linking the increasing separation of people from nature with a variety of disorders, from ADHD in children to depression in adults.

The science of it all isn't clear yet, but the phenomenon appears incontrovertible: we are changed when immersed within a living landscape. Blood pressure drops, bra in waves change, heart rate slows, breathing deepens and body chemistry alters. Perhaps what happens to us involves the same wondrous physics which brings an infant's heart to match his mother's rhythms as he feels her bigger beat against his cheek.

It makes you wonder what we're walking into when we step into a highland meadow, a stand of pine, a glen of bright water. Did the forest's reputation for enchantment, featured so prominently in the world's folk and fairy tales, arise from a felt sense that something in us changed when we went in there? Often in these stories, the Forest is the place where the hero is transformed.

### **Crisis two: The planet is losing forest at a calamitous pace.**

One of our very earliest works of literature is the epic of Gilgamesh, written around 2100 BC. Gilgamesh, the king of Uruk, sets out with his friend Enkidu, a wild man, and they journey to the Cedar Forest, which is guarded by a monster. Gilgamesh wants to go there because he wants to be the first to cut its trees. The first -- as though there were a bunch of other guys in the background (Sumer was a big empire) plotting to get there ahead of him.

There's more to the story, of course - isn't there always? There are all the reasons why: to burn, to build, to plow, to drill, to kill the scary things that live inside.

A friend pointed me recently to the forest management plan drafted by the state of Pennsylvania's Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, which had been submitted for public comment. The comment period ended at the end of January; published elsewhere in this newsletter is RDA's comment, a masterful piece of work.

The plan itself, I've been told, is a thoughtful document, prepared by people who know more than a thing or two about how to go about taking proper care of a forest, if we ever decided we wanted to. It would cost a bunch of money and require lots of hands.

I know where the hands are, and the money too. Let's give RDA's proposal serious consideration and use some of the gas revenues to fix problems created by the gas industry and its previous extractive partners: lumber and coal. This trio of industries has delivered deforestation, erosion and sediment challenges, water pollution, invasive species and a myriad of related problems to PA's forests.

Further: we are already spending millions trying to manage a runaway heroin epidemic. Let's move some of those funds into pilot programs which would train and pay recovering addicts to do vital maintenance and much-needed remediation in the state's forests.

In healing the land, we may also heal the man.

in Germany, a place where the forest has long played an outside role in the cultural consciousness, in places like fairy tales, 20th-century philosophy, Nazi ideology and the birth of the modern environmental movement.

[Click here to read the full story from the NY Times.](#)

### **EPA Fracking Study Faulted by Science Panel**

The Environmental Protection Agency spent 998 pages last June making the case that fracking isn't a threat to water, but its assertions boil down to just two words.

There's no evidence hydraulic fracturing has led to "widespread, systemic" impacts on drinking water, the EPA said in its landmark study on the technique used to extract oil and gas nationwide. The EPA's finding was seen as a vindication of the technique that involves pumping water, sand and chemicals underground to free oil and gas.

Science advisers reviewing the EPA study said the agency's description isn't good enough. During a six-hour teleconference, the Science Advisory Board review panel parsed the language, zeroing in on the phrase as too vague and ambiguous to serve the public.

A repudiation of the EPA's conclusions could reignite debate over fracking and drive calls for more regulation.

"It still comes down to what does systemic mean and what does widespread mean," said Susan Brantley, a member of the review panel and director of the Earth and Environmental Systems Institute at Pennsylvania State University. "And in this sentence, it's not clear."

[Click here to read the full story posted on Bloomberg Business.](#)

### **Pennsylvania Fracking Water Contamination Higher Than Reported**

The headline flew around the

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*Ruth Steck lives in Pennsdale, PA, where she writes and ruminates. She would have you know that 'ruminates' wasn't just for the alliteration, of which she is perhaps too fond, but that she also has a tiny herd of heritage breed cattle.*

## RDA Comments on the State Forest Resource Management Plan

We offer you a marginally edited and very condensed version of RDA's comments to DCNR below. [Click here to see the complete, 10-page comment document.](#)

For our membership, our state forests are a key component of our quality of life. If we were people who assigned more value to the cultural and social advantages of our larger cities we would not have made our lives here. We have wonderful cultural institutions here, but we are people who are most inspired by the opportunities for a sense of wonder, and the re-creational enhancing environment of the natural world.

The decision by the Rendell administration to turn much of the state forest in our home county of Lycoming into a cash cow to fix state budgetary woes remains a source of anguish among the portion of our community we represent. We appreciate the current administration's commitment to a moratorium on further oil and gas leasing of state forest or park land. We would also like to see the administration publically endorse the recommendation of the Conservation and Natural Resources Advisory Committee that, "DCNR work to the best of its ability to protect the surface area" of the Clarence Moore tracts in the Loysock State Forest and CNRAC's view that, "the preferred course of action would be for DCNR to negotiate a No Surface Disturbance Use Agreement with the owners of the subsurface resources."

The impacts of the shale gas development on public land have been astoundingly negative for the quality of life of the segment of the population we represent and negative even for those we don't, in terms of increased impervious surface and potential long term effects on water quality. In violation of our state Constitution, the esthetic values we are entitled to have been seriously diminished. Most of us have lived here for many decades, enjoying innumerable forest experiences that enhance our sense of wonder, and rejuvenation from our time in the woods. We now have four large areas of public land, plus three more state forest tracts that are leased, and more if state game lands are included. The four large areas are dominated by the scars of buildings, wide roads, pipeline corridors, chain-linked fenced "freshwater" ponds, noise, traffic and often the odors and pollutionary events of gas development.

These impacts are generally dismissed as "temporary" by the industry, though we know that with only 16% of the projected development for Marcellus gas alone underway so far in our state forests, those impacts will be around for the rest of our lives, and most likely long beyond. Arguments continue over impacts from pollutionary events, but what any fair-minded observer cannot dismiss are the industry's impacts on the sense of wonder inspired by the non-human-dominated world. The shock and, to many, disgust of encountering the industrial parks up on the ridge tops of the leased tracts that have been built out in the Tiaughton and Loysock State Forests so far, cannot be dismissed or discounted.

It is a curious fact to us that the same state forest tracts that we have shown to groups and journalists from around the world who wish to see an advanced build-out of a gas field - people from Australia, South Africa, France, Poland, Ireland, Switzerland, numerous states and Canadian Provinces - are the same places our politicians take other legislators to see what a neat and orderly job the operators have done in transforming the flats of the ridge tops into an industrial zone. We hear our local politicians say only two percent of the state forest land has been lost to gas development. Yet the overwhelming majority of people we take out are shocked and disgusted by what they see and go home determined to not let such an abomination

globe like wild fire. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published their long-awaited draft fracking drinking water study and concluded: fracking has had no widespread systemic impact on drinking water. But if you've had your ear to the ground in fracking communities, something didn't sit right with the EPA's takeaway. Though the gas industry claims fracking is safe and doesn't harm drinking water, that story doesn't match what many landowners report from the fracking fields.

At least in Pennsylvania, the reason for this discrepancy comes down to a singular issue: mismanaged record-keeping and reporting by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Based on 2,309 previously unreported fracking complaints unearthed by the non-profit Public Herald, the public can now peek into 1,275 fracking water complaints from 17 of 40 fracking counties. However, Pennsylvania's official tally of water contamination is only 271 for all 40 counties.

Contrary to the EPA fracking study's conclusion, the prevalence of drinking water contamination appears to be much higher than previously reported. Accurate drinking water complaint data is vital to know as Maryland drafts new fracking regulations to potentially welcome the natural gas industry into Western Maryland in 2017.

[Click here to read more from Popular Resistance.](#)

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### How Can We Make Progress Moving Away from Fossil Fuels?

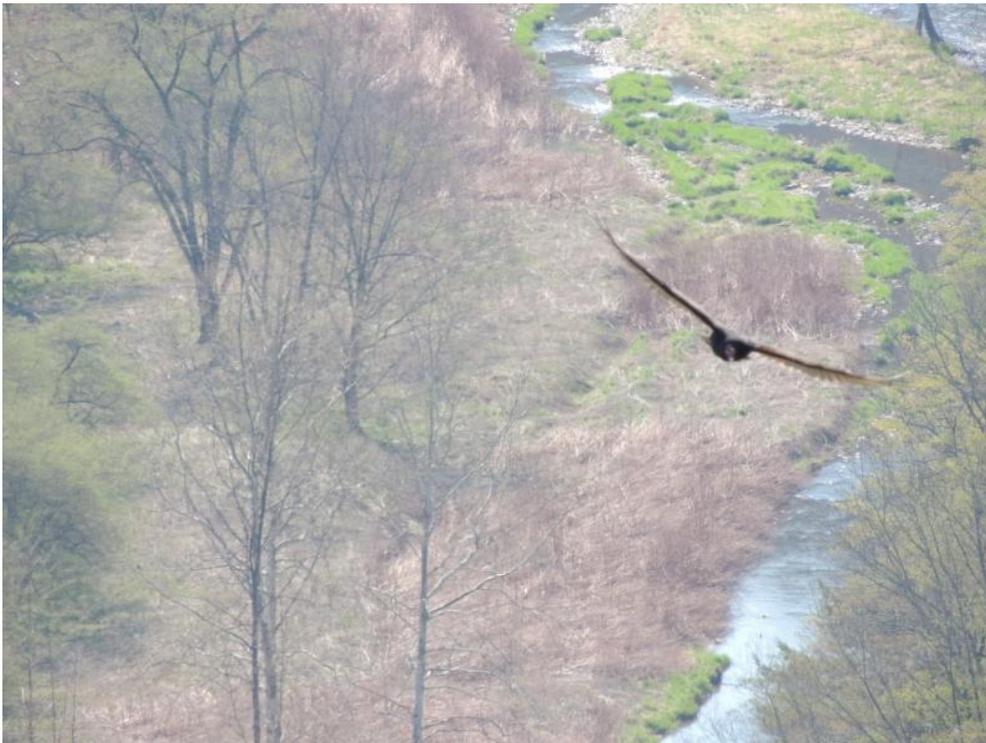
The following is an excerpt from the Union of Concerned Scientists' February column, "Ask the Scientist":

Fossil fuel prices will always fluctuate depending on supply and demand, and low prices tend to lull consumers and policy makers into complacency. When gasoline costs as little as \$2 a gallon, savings from driving a more efficient vehicle are reduced and it is harder for cleaner fuels to compete with fossil fuels. (On the bright side, low

happen to their beloved countryside. The two percent figure is misleading because it includes only that forest land that has been directly converted to industrial use. The fact is that the indirect impacts of this two percent conversion have changed the character and the experience of much larger areas. For example, a pipeline right-of-way that cuts from a ridge-top well pad to the bottom of the valley below, and then cuts up the mountain on the other side, may occupy only 2% of the visible land, but it alters 100% of the landscape, both ecologically and aesthetically.

What is most disturbing to us are not the changes in our enjoyment of our state forest experiences the development has brought as much as the idea that future generations will be forced to accept diminished experiences as the norm in these places. The sights, smells and sounds they encounter and will habitually accept, include the hissing and whirring of dehydrators on well pads, the roar of a semi hauling "residual waste" up and down mountainsides while spewing potentially unhealthy diesel exhaust, the frantic rush of a speeding white pickup, the wide holes and clear cut corridors in the forest, the threat of intimidation of basic curiosity from a security guard, or a concerning dose of formaldehyde from a compressor station a half mile away.

For decades, the state forests were a respite from the troubles of civilization; a place to go with our parents, our grandparents, our children, our grandchildren, with friends, or by ourselves to enjoy and experience the value of the benefits of the natural world. For the diminishment of those experiences we propose additional compensation to the public in the form of enhancements of the state forest experience specifically in those forests where gas extraction has taken place.



A View from the West Rim Trail - Tioga State Forest - Photo Credit: Brooke Woodside

With more funds potentially coming DCNR's way for conservation projects through the [PA Environmental Defense Foundation's lawsuit](#), DCNR could purchase additional equipment and hire more professional foresters to help implement the management plan, design projects and supervise the managers of civilian crews performing the labor. Volunteer, community initiative, university or grant programs could be created to implement forest improvement practices. A new type of Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) crew could merge with the Youth Conservation Corps model DCNR has utilized in the past, with crews trained to implement forest "cleanings," intermediate forest thinning, improvement treatments, invasive species monitoring and treatment, animal exclusion fencing and tree planting, as well as much needed infrastructure projects.

Lack of imagination and vision often can be remedied with engagement with the natural world. The CCC program did remarkable things for our forests, the

gas prices have forced producers to abandon some of their most damaging fossil fuel projects, such as drilling in the Arctic Ocean and making further investments in tar sands.)

Dr. Jeremy Martin's new report explains what is happening in the transportation fuels world and how to ensure clean fuels get even cleaner and oil and gasoline don't get any dirtier. The way to do that - in light of wildly fluctuating oil prices - is establish strong standards that ensure progress on low-carbon fuels, zero-emissions vehicles, fuel economy and renewable electricity.

[Click here to read more.](#)

### Well Count - Lycoming County

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The following permit renewals were issued in Jackson Township, Lycoming County. Click on the blue title below the company name for more information on each well.

Range Resources, App, LLC  
[LAUREL HILL 23H](#)  
[LAUREL HILL 24H](#)  
[LAUREL HILL 25H](#)

### Events/ Action Points

#### ***The Let Go and Love Tour***

Oscar-nominated director Josh Fox brings his new documentary on climate change to 100 cities world wide on the LET GO AND LOVE Tour.

RDA hopes to include Williamsport on the list.

Josh stated the following about the tour: *"After realizing that I could beat fracking in my own backyard and still lose everything I love to climate change, I set out on an epic journey, traveling to 12 countries on six continents, to learn from communities on the front lines of climate change. It may be too late to stop some of the worst consequences, but in this film I ask, 'What is it that climate change can't destroy? What is so deep*

environment and the people who participated, all while benefiting the whole society. A 21st century Pennsylvania version of a CCC program could help young or physically able people from all communities, people in recovery from addictions or trauma or poor choices, transitioning from military service, job loss, etc., those who would welcome or accept outdoor work while acquiring job skills and modest pay and basic accommodations. Such work can lead to finding employment they enjoy that provides low startup cost entrepreneurial opportunities.

Programs could combine volunteer efforts with cost-saving alternatives to government expenses like work-release lockups, provide way points between prison or rehab and going back out on the street alone, fulfill community service requirements, on and on. Such a plan could help our forests survive challenges we face now and those to come, help mitigate community economic problems and family challenges, while providing practical experience as well as contributing to our common wealth by putting our forests on the road to being sources of wonder and inspiration for future generations in ways we can now only imagine.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments.

Responsible Drilling Alliance  
Ralph Kisberg, Working Group Member and Consultant

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Jenni Slotterback, Secretary  
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Roscoe McCloskey  
Dianne Peeling

## ***Keep It Wild: Jacoby Falls***

Mark your calendars & come join us at **11 am on Sunday, February 21st**, as we hike to Jacoby Falls.

Jacoby Falls was an icy wonder last year, as shown in the picture below.



*within us no calamity can take it away?"*

[Click here to learn more about this tour and fundraising campaign.](#)

### **Tell Governor Wolf to cut methane pollution now**

Methane is a potent greenhouse gas that has been leaking into our atmosphere at an astounding rate, especially throughout the oil and gas industry. Recently, Governor Wolf introduced new policies to cut methane pollution for the sake of our health and climate. This proposal isn't perfect, but it's a step in the right direction.

Show Governor Wolf that you support this step for climate action and want to see PA cut methane pollution now.

[Click here to sign this petition from PennEnvironment.](#)

### **Tell EPA to take action on existing sources of methane pollution**

The oil and gas industry is carelessly leaking millions of tons of methane pollution and toxic chemicals into the air that harm our health and speed up climate change. These industrial leaks are like an invisible oil spill happening every day and the oil and gas industry is getting away with it. We need stronger methane pollution standards for the country that will protect Americans with low-cost safeguards that already exist to clean up pollution from oil and gas sites.

Let EPA Administrator McCarthy know you want strong standards for all sources of methane pollution before President Obama leaves office.

[Click here to sign a letter prepared by the Clean Air Council.](#)

**Thank President Obama for halting coal mining on public lands - and ask him to ban oil and gas removal**

Directions: From Rt 180, take exit 21 and go North on Rt 87. Travel approximately 4.5 miles to Rt 973 on your left, which crosses the Slabtown Bridge. Cross the bridge and take an immediate right turn onto Wallis Run Road. Travel approximately 4.3 miles to the parking lot on the right. We hope to see you there!

## Raise the Region

RDA is once again pleased to participate in First Community Foundation Partnership's biggest fundraiser of the year. Raise the Region 2016 is a unique, 30-hour, online giving event that provides an opportunity for people who care about their community to come together and raise as much money as possible for local nonprofits. The event begins at **6:00 pm on Wednesday, March 9 and ends at 11:59 pm on Thursday, March 10**. Blaise Alexander Family Dealerships has generously donated \$150,000 that will be used to stretch a portion of every donation. Mark your calendars & consider making a contribution to RDA during this annual event.



**March 9-10** [www.RaiseTheRegion.org](http://www.RaiseTheRegion.org)

## This Changes Everything

SAVE THE DATE!

**Thursday, April 7th - 7:30 pm - Community Arts Center, Williamsport, PA**

RDA will sponsor a free screening of the award-winning documentary *This Changes Everything*. The film is based on Naomi Klein's book of the same name. [Click here for more details.](#)



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President Obama has announced a bold moratorium on all new coal leases on federal lands - a breakthrough move that will protect our climate and millions of acres of public lands from the ravages of coal mining. But this coal moratorium doesn't apply to all dirty fossil fuels, leaving New Mexico's Chaco Canyon, Utah's Desolation Canyon and many other natural treasures vulnerable to the dangers of fracking and other oil and gas development.

Thank the President for his continued leadership on climate, and ask him to accelerate our move to a clean energy future by expanding this moratorium to all fossil fuels on public lands.

[Click here to sign a petition prepared by NRDC.](#)

**Tell Congress to keep fossil fuels in the ground**

Left Action is planning to deliver one million petition signatures to the White House urging President Obama to keep fossil fuels in the ground by stopping new fossil fuel leasing on federal lands and waters.

Help us reach one million signatures: Urge President Obama to keep fossil fuels in the ground!

[Click here to sign a petition prepared by Friends of the Earth.](#)

## Join RDA!

Our next Working Group meeting will be held on **Wednesday, March 9th at 5:30 pm**. A new meeting location will be announced in the next newsletter. Everyone is invited and encouraged to attend. We welcome your active participation and are in need of help for special events, publicity, research and other projects. Please come join us & see what the RDA Working Group is all about. Attendance at a meeting is not an obligation to join the group.

It costs nothing to sign up for our e-newsletter, but tax-free donations are accepted & greatly appreciated. Please consider a tax-deductible

donation to RDA.

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 2016 and beyond, please consider a tax-free contribution to our efforts.

You can send a donation to the address listed at the bottom of this email, [click here to donate via PayPal](#) or [click here to download our current membership form](#) to fill out and send in along with your donation.

Membership levels:

Adventurer.....	\$10
Explorer.....	\$20
Woodlander.....	\$50
Guardian.....	\$100
Naturalist.....	\$500
Preservationist.....	\$1,000

[Click here for our website.](#)

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## RDA Newsletter

*Brooke Woodside, RDA Working Group, Managing Editor*  
*Barb Jarmoska, Treasurer - RDA Board of Directors, Editor*  
*Ralph Kisberg, RDA Working Group, Contributing Editor*  
*Ted Stroter, RDA Working Group, Chemical Advisor & Contributing Editor*  
*Jim Slotterback, President - RDA Board of Directors*  
*Robbie Cross, Vice President - RDA Board of Directors*  
*Jenni Slotterback, Secretary - RDA Board of Directors*  
*Mark Szybist - RDA Board of Directors*  
*Roscoe McCloskey - RDA Board of Directors*  
*Dianne Peeling - RDA Board of Directors*



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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.

<http://www.responsibledrillingalliance.org>  
Phone: 888.332.1244 (toll free)

Please mail donations to:  
RDA, PO Box 502, Williamsport, PA 17703



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