

Protecting Communities and Special Places

e-Newsletter December 7, 2013



**"We do this over and over again. We find something that's wonderful--usually related to energy--and we just rush ahead without thinking about what the impacts are."
~Mary Beth Adams, U.S. Forest Service**

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Old Loggers Ale!



MarcellusByDesign Has Design Flaw

By Ann Pinca

Laporte, Pa. - A MarcellusByDesign workshop held December 4 in the courtroom of the Sullivan County Courthouse fell far short of the expectations of many looking for an opportunity for real discussion and public input on the physical impacts of natural gas development.

Presented by landscape architecture professors and students from Penn State University, the workshop was a component of a larger National Science Foundation (NSF) grant project, "Marcellus Matters: Engaging Adults in Science and Energy," under the direction of Michael Arthur, professor of geosciences and co-director of the Marcellus Center for Outreach and Research (MCOR). The stated goals of the workshop were:

- Familiarize citizens with the scope and potential benefits of planning in landscape protection
- Identify the roles that citizens can play in planning
- Empower citizens with the knowledge they need to participate in planning
- Identify potential goals and priorities for participatory planning

Brian Orland, Director of Interdisciplinary Programs, and Timothy Murtha, Associate Professor of Landscape Architecture, were the facilitators for the workshop, aided by twelve undergraduate students and one graduate student. The program consisted of individual student presentations and three

Students presented ideas to preserve

Tapping Party

**Wednesday
December 11
6 to 8 p.m.**

Bring a friend and join RDA members at Riepstine's for the official tapping of Old Loggers Ale. Festivities include free hors-d'oeuvres and music by Doug McMinn. There is no cover charge for this event and Keep It Wild merchandise will be available for purchase. All proceeds from the sale of Old Logger's Ale and Keep It Wild merchandise will be used in ongoing efforts to preserve the Loyalsock State Forest.

[Find more information here](#)



Keep It Wild Hike #12 at The Haystacks

**Sunday
December 8
11:00 a.m.**

Join RDA for a hike along the Loyalsock to the popular Haystacks.

The 4.6 mile hike begins at the trailhead of the Loyalsock Trail; estimated hiking time is 2 1/2 to 3 hours.

[Find more information here](#)

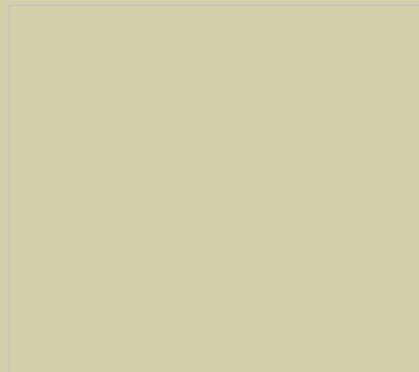
or
[Check it out on Facebook](#)

break-out sessions incorporating hands-on activities.

ridgeline views like this one in Elkland Township.

Student presentations included many topics, and to their credit, the students' work reflected that they had invested much time, effort, and creativity to the problems selected to solve in terms of landscape architecture. Topics ranged from strategies to protect ridgeline views and reduction of visual impacts of infrastructure to storm water run-off prevention. Included were a few promising sustainability measures the county could better use to avoid the inevitable boom and bust cycle that natural gas development will bring.

But most presentations were about cosmetic fixes, and simply disguising industrial infrastructure is not what people concerned about health impacts from pollution are concerned about. A less visible compressor station or condensate tank disguised by camouflage-type painting may better blend in with the landscape, but does not in any way reduce its impact: it is still there and so is the pollution.



The imposing M1S Compressor Station better blended into the background when different paint techniques were digitally applied to photos - but it was still there.

Likewise, other student projects on pipeline placement and mitigation techniques that may lessen the overall visual effect of pipeline corridors still do not take away the very real problems of forest fragmentation or the species population isolation, stream chemistry changes, edge habitat and invasive species problems that the hundreds of miles of pipeline anticipated for Sullivan County will bring.

Hands-on break-out sessions included to allow public input were troubling. Designed mainly to rate or rank areas of the county most important to protect, the activities forced participants into a "[Sophie's Choice](#)" situation, making them choose which area to save and which to condemn to industrial destruction.

The only redeeming feature of the hands-on activities was direct interaction with the students. They appreciated hearing the concerns of the citizens to provide a better understanding, since, as one student said, "We don't live here." While encouraging to know that college students are at least looking into the problems facing citizens in rural areas of gas development, it can only be hoped that they understand the real issues, even through the lens of a landscape architecture class.

In the end, there seemed little presented at this workshop to assuage the

Pre-release screening!

Groundswell Rising

Dec. 8, 2013
7:00 p.m.

\$10 suggested donation

Pocono Community
Theater
East Stroudsburg, PA

Limited seating;
reservations essential!
Phone: 570.421.6684

[Find more
information here](#)

Pennsylvania Community Rights Workshop

Who decides what
happens in your
community, and how
did it get that way?

February 21, 6-9 p.m.
February 22, 9-4 p.m.

**Susquehanna
University**

Sponsored by
Shale Justice,
presented by [CELDF](#)

Space is limited to 40
participants!

[Click here for information](#)

TAKE ACTION!

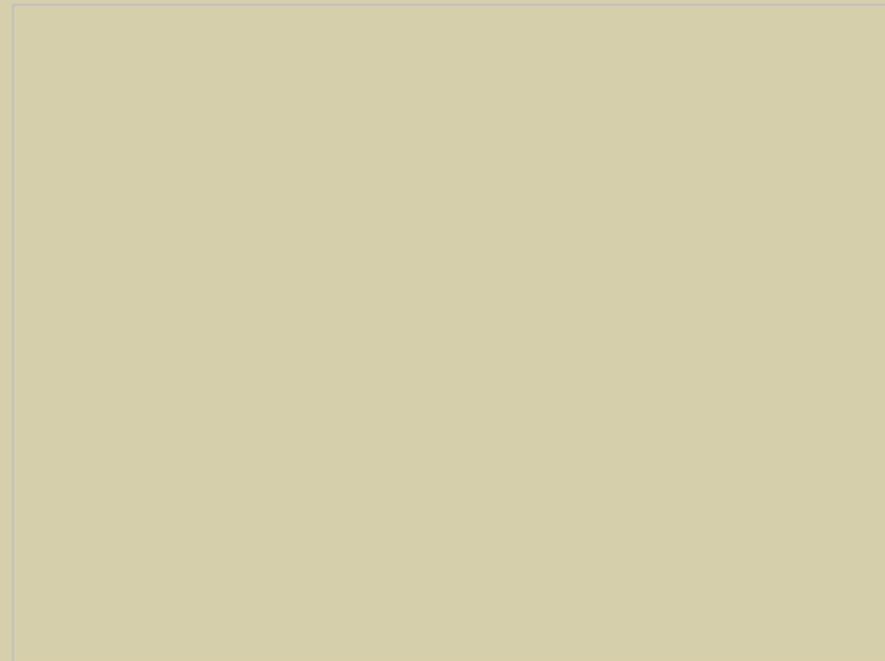
SAY NO TO THE TPP!

The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) is a new "free trade" agreement being negotiated between the U.S. and 11 other Pacific Rim countries. Like other Free Trade Agreements, this one is basically a permanent power grab by

worries of those in Sullivan County faced with the infliction of an aggressive, pollutant industry on the rural beauty of their homeland, other than that the damages might be covered up through landscaping visual tricks.

Suggestions that the oil and gas industry will cooperate with landowners in infrastructure placement and design as suggested in this workshop seem unlikely, especially since most would include added costs.

Sadly, the likely reality seems more "business as usual," like what came up shortly after the workshop at the county planning meeting, when a resident asked if there was anything known about the placement of a particular gathering line and no one could answer his question. He just wondered, he said, since the actual location had been under dispute for some time and was now staked out across his front lawn--and the pipeline crew had been there working on it that morning.



Students used crowdsourcing to determine the most important view in Sullivan County. Their results showed that the view of the Loyalsock Canyon Vista was #1.

ALL IMAGES: ANN PINCA

RDA Nominates the Old Loggers Path For DCNR 2014 Trail of the Year

RDA's Land Conservation Committee is very pleased to announce their nomination of the Old Loggers Path for the 2014 Trail of the Year. In October, the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) announced this [new initiative](#), coordinated by DCNR's Pennsylvania Trails Advisory Committee and designed to bring about greater public awareness of Pennsylvania's thousands of miles of trails available to the public.

corporations and financial companies that will make it impossible for the citizens of countries joining the TPP to choose what laws and rules they want to live under.

For Americans, it would lead to **increased gas exports**--and **increased fracking in Pa.**--and increased imported foods, while undermining our domestic laws and increasing the financialization of nature.

[Click here to act](#)

IN THE NEWS

This Week's Scoops

A [new study](#) indicates that EPA estimates for methane leakage may be underestimated by as [much as 50%](#). EPA head Gina McCarthy said that the EPA will [look closely](#) at the Harvard study.

Meanwhile, Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper, a supporter of hydraulic fracturing who claims to have [once consumed fracking fluid](#) to prove it was safe, called for [strict limits on methane](#) and other leaking gas from Colorado wells. Seems the growing haze in the Centennial State is causing a rash of cities and municipalities to enact [bans on fracking](#). But don't expect things to be easy for those cities with bans; the Colorado Oil & Gas Association (COGA) has since [filed suit against](#) some of those Colorado cities.

Watch the latest look at leaky wells with Dr. Tony Ingraffea.

The committee offered the following explanation in answer to the question, "Why should this trail be named trail of the year?"

Precious wild areas such as the Old Loggers Path (OLP) are a central defining characteristic of our region. This area is valued for its beauty, history, and the extraordinary ecological and recreational resources it provides. The OLP offers the opportunity for both "locals" and visitors to experience the unique beauty and wild character of the irreplaceable natural resources our region holds. The trail is accessible and links to other trails within the Loyalsock State Forest creating a versatile trail system enjoyed by diverse groups. Located near the ecologically important Devil's Elbow Natural Area and bordered by the McIntyre Wild Area, it also provides access to Rock Run, which was named "The Best Swimming Hole in the United States" in the October, 2007 issue of Backpacker magazine. OLP is common ground for trail associations, fishing and hunting groups, state and national birding organizations and those concerned about protecting our cherished public lands. A "Trail of the Year" designation for OLP would demonstrate how strongly our community feels about preserving our heritage, outdoor recreation, and wilderness experience.

IMAGE: RICHARD KARP

The winning trail will be announced in January 2014. A commemorative poster will be created by the advisory committee and DCNR to honor the selected Trail of the Year.

A panel of judges selected from the Pennsylvania Trails Advisory Committee will review all nominations received. Judging is based on the quality of the narrative and supporting materials submitted.

Keystone Trails Association [has also nominated](#) the Old Loggers Path for the 2014 Trail of the Year, providing double the chance that the Old Loggers Path will get the statewide recognition it so greatly deserves!

[Look here to see additional details of the RDA trail nomination](#)

Hiking along the Old Loggers Path

IMAGE: RICHARD KARP

Ferretti and Abruzzo Nominations Pass Committee Vote, But....

Gov. Tom Corbett's appointed nominees Ellen Ferretti and Chris Abruzzo



Latest Evidence on Leaky Gas Wells - Dr. Ingraffea 11-21-13

Join RDA

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.



were both approved by the Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee at a hearing on December 4, but moving on for Abruzzo may not be the "no brainer" it first appeared to be. Both Ferretti and Abruzzo are serving as acting secretaries of the state environmental agencies they are nominated to head: Ferretti with the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) and Abruzzo with the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

Abruzzo has found himself surrounded by a firestorm of controversy over his answer to Sen. Daylin Leach's (D-Montgomery) question about climate change. According to several reports, when asked whether he believed in climate change and if human actions had a part in causing it, Abruzzo responded that though he agrees climate change exists and that humans have contributed to it--and that there are impacts--he has "not read any scientific studies that would lead me to conclude there are adverse impacts to human beings, animals, or plant life at this small level of climate change."

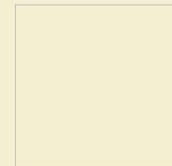
Additional questioning was enough to make Sen. Leach cast a lone dissenting vote for Abruzzo's nomination. Their exchange launched a public outcry to keep Abruzzo from heading Pennsylvania's DEP. Coming right on the heels of the National Academy of Science's climate change report replete with warnings of climate "tipping points," at least one grass roots group has quickly organized a campaign to petition against Abruzzo's appointment. The full Senate is expected to vote next week on the nominations of Ferretti and Abruzzo.

Watch the entire hearing here; the exchange with Sen. Leach begins at 48:50.

UPDATE: Read Acting DEP Secretary Abruzzo's response to Sen. Leach here.

RDA Newsletter

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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.

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