

There's still time to speak out for the Loyalsock State Forest - Photo credit: Richard Karp

"Our lives begin and end the day we become silent about things that matter." -Martin Luther King, Jr.

Greetings!

Time is running out to comment on DCNR's plan for our state forests. Please take a moment to submit a personalized comment telling the agency what the forests mean to you. Do you want a gas pad or an access road right next to your favorite hiking trail? See our feature article below for more details.

Continuing to make the correlation between methane and climate change, our second article brings you the latest on the Aliso Canyon methane leak, as well as some inspiring words from our President's final State of the Union address. This is followed by an important petition from the Clean Air Council.

RDA Vice President Robbie Cross provides a picturesque description of the latest *Keep it Wild* hike to Angel Falls followed by the announcement of a Pulitzer Prize-winning science writer who will be speaking at Bucknell University in the very near future.

In Other News kicks off with RDA's latest actions demanding a Government Accountability Office review of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Oklahoma's frack wastewater injection well-induced earthquakes are getting worse, bizarre weather has become a global phenomenon and some gas industry executives are selling their stocks. Closer to home, Reverend Leah Shade published an excellent op-ed piece in a Sunbury newspaper last week. We share a link to that article with you.

On the heels of Inflection's ten well casing and cementing violations last month ([details in the RDA newsletter, here](#)) comes another well casing and cementing violation issued by the PA Department of Environmental Protection. This time it's to Exco Resources for not reporting a defect at one of their wells in Gamble Township. [Click here for more information on this violation](#). The "Well Count" section in the sidebar shows this same company has also been approved for a new well in Penn Township.

As usual, some worthwhile petitions are included for your participation. Please also participate in sharing this newsletter.

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In Other News

RDA Demands Investigation of Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

RDA joined the Delaware Riverkeeper Network, hundreds of other organizations and thousands of concerned community members in calling for a Government Accountability Office (GAO) investigation of the Federal Energy Regulation Commission (FERC). The letter urging Senator Bernie Sanders and Senator Elizabeth Warren to use their key seats on the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources to call for a GAO review details FERC's ongoing bias toward the same pipeline companies it is intended to regulate, and

Thank you for caring and staying informed.

Sincerely,

Brooke Woodside
RDA Member, Managing Editor

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

Time is Running Out to Comment on DCNR's Plan for Our State Forests

Our state forestland is under siege. The PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) has drafted a new plan to manage Penn's Woods, a plan that all but abandons the agency's core mission as a trustee of commonwealth lands and guardian of citizens' rights under Article I Section 27 of Pennsylvania's Constitution.

[Click here to view the draft 2015 State Forest Resource Management Plan](#) prepared by DCNR.

The department is still accepting public comment on the State Forest Resource Management Plan (SFRMP). Please act today by taking the time to speak out for our state forests. Be sure to personalize your comment to show DCNR how much the forests mean to you and what your fears and concerns are regarding gas drilling in these special places. The comment period closes **Sunday, January 31, 2016**.

The following talking points on the SFRMP have been provided courtesy of the [Pennsylvania Environmental Defense Foundation](#). Feel free to use any of the following in your personal comment and include any other concerns you may have.

DCNR'S ROLE:

Article I, Section 27 of the Pennsylvania Constitution provides as follows:

The people have a right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of the environment. Pennsylvania's public natural resources are the common property of all the people, including generations yet to come. As trustee of these resources, the Commonwealth shall conserve and maintain them for the benefit of all the people.

This article gives DCNR a legal position as trustee of the public's natural resources. There is no acknowledgment of this right and responsibility in the plan; this trusteeship should be clearly stated in the new plan, as it was in the former, [2003 plan](#).

MISSION AND VALUES:

The policy should not be amended to include values and uses that are not a part of the Bureau of Forestry's mission, which states: *"The mission of the Bureau is to ensure the long-term health, viability, and productivity of the commonwealth's forests and to conserve native wild plants."* NOTE: Providing money for PA's general budget is NOT a part of the mission statement and responsibility for such income is in conflict with the role of DCNR. Unconventional gas drilling brings unavoidable forest fragmentation; fragmented forests are unhealthy forests. The two cannot coexist.

GEOLOGIC RESOURCES:

In the 2003 SFRMP, the Bureau proposed a moratorium on shallow gas leasing due to the potential negative impacts of forest fragmentation associated with the density of well sites and access roads necessary for shallow gas development. This proposal was met with opposition from the legislature and the oil and gas industry, and subsequently revised. In the new plan, **we see a worsening of this incompatibility between the best interests of the forests and the desires of the gas industry.**

highlights the toll this abuse of power has taken on local communities.

[Click here to read more.](#)

Oklahoma's Still Shaking

As reported in one of our past newsletters, "[Voices of Reason, Voices of Truth](#)," frack wastewater injection wells are really shaking things up in Oklahoma.

Magnitude 4.7 and 4.8 earthquakes recently shook the state only 30 seconds apart; and 30 quakes were reported within 19 hours.

In 2015, 907 quakes of magnitude 3.0 or greater were reported in Oklahoma, up from 584 in 2014, according to KFOR-TV.

Before that, there were only 42 such earthquakes in the state in 2010 and one such tremor in 2005.

[Click here for more information from Weather.com.](#)

Climate Chaos, Across the Map

What is going on with the weather?

With tornado outbreaks in the south, Christmas temperatures that sent trees into bloom in Central Park, drought in parts of Africa and historic floods drowning the old industrial cities of England, 2015 closed with a string of weather anomalies all over the world.

The year, expected to be the hottest on record, may be over, but the trouble will not be. Rain in the central United States has been so heavy that major floods are beginning along the Mississippi River and are likely to intensify in coming weeks. California may lurch from drought to flood by late winter. Most serious, millions of people could be threatened by a developing food shortage in southern Africa.

[Click here to read more from the New York Times.](#)

The 2015 plan should incorporate all current impacts to our State Forests from the existing leases for unconventional gas extraction, including the findings contained in [DCNR's 2014 Shale-Gas Monitoring Report](#).

The Draft SFRMP acknowledges the Shale-Gas Monitoring Report and recognizes the continued need to monitor, but it does not state any of the current or future impacts, how to address or mitigate these impacts, or where the funding will come from to do so. Referring to geologic resources, the plan states, "Development of geologic resources should occur when it is compatible with landscape goals and functions, avoids sensitive ecological and socially important areas, and minimizes adverse impacts." (The Geologic Resources chapter of the Draft SFRMP begins on page 132 and the Geologic Resources Management Principle, Goals and Objectives on page 141.)

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS:

The plan should discuss current and long-term plans to deal with the cumulative impacts from the existing leases.

FUTURE NEEDS:

The plan should list all DCNR current and projected needs for Oil & Gas Lease Fund (OGLF) money to take care of our state forests, including completing all backlogged projects for dam restoration, cleaning up acid mine drainage problems, removing or plugging abandoned oil and gas wells and restoring existing wells and well pads to conform to current regulations. The cost of doing this is currently estimated at up to \$1 billion. (The Infrastructure Chapter of the Draft SFRMP begins on page 184, but needs are listed throughout every chapter.)

OWNERSHIP OF MINERAL RIGHTS:

The plan should address the fact that funds are needed to purchase mineral rights to preserve the integrity of critical and key tracts of State Forest such as the Clarence Moore lands in the Loysock State Forest.

Email comments to:

StateForestPlan2015@pa.gov

Mail comments to:

Bureau of Forestry

Planning Section

PO Box 8552

Harrisburg, PA 17105-8552



Forest fragmentation - let's keep it to a minimum.

"Forests are the lungs of our land, purifying the air and giving fresh strength to our people." - Franklin D. Roosevelt

Methane & Climate Change

Why Are Range Resources Executives Selling Their Stocks?

Five Range Resources executives have sold thousands of shares in the last month, according to company filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Those dumping stocks include former CEO and board Chairman John Pinkerton, current CEO Jeffrey Ventura, Chief Financial Officer Roger Manny, Chief Operating Officer Ray Walker Jr. and Senior Vice President Alan Farquharson.

Pinkerton has sold more than 260,000 shares since the end of October and still directly owns more than 390,000 shares.

Throughout five different transactions in the last two months, the chairman has sold the shares for \$26 to \$36, totaling about \$7 million.

The company spokesman and investor relations officials did not return correspondence to those seeking comment.

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

Gas Pipeline Poses Major Problems

RDA congratulates Reverend Leah Shade for speaking out about this important issue.

On January 16th, a Sunbury newspaper published Reverend Leah's excellent op-ed regarding plans for a local natural gas pipeline. Her article calls out FERC, the Greater Susquehanna Valley Chamber of Commerce, SEDA-COG, U.S. Representative Tom Marino, and other lawmakers who have "touted the ephemeral benefits of this project" but are "either unaware of or deliberately ignoring clear warnings that such a project would be a hazard for the Valley and the planet."

[Click here to read the full article as it was published in the Daily Item.](#)

On the east coast, speaking in his final State of the Union address, President Obama told the nation, *"We've got to accelerate the transition away from dirty energy. Rather than subsidize the past, we should invest in the future - especially in communities that rely on fossil fuels...Look, if anybody still wants to dispute the science around climate change, have at it. You'll be pretty lonely, because you'll be debating our military, most of America's business leaders, the majority of the American people, almost the entire scientific community and 200 nations around the world who agree it's a problem and intend to solve it."*

On the west coast, California's Governor Jerry Brown officially declared a state of emergency regarding the ongoing Aliso Canyon methane leak at the SoCal natural gas storage facility. He also ordered new regulations, including stepped-up inspections and safety measures for all natural gas storage facilities in California in response to the continuing leak that has displaced thousands of people from the Porter Ranch neighborhood of Los Angeles.

The emergency regulations would require Southern California Gas Co. and other operators of gas storage facilities to conduct daily inspections of wellheads using infrared leak-detection technology, verify the mechanical integrity of wells, measure gas flow and pressure and regularly test safety valves, among other steps. Each facility would also have to draft a risk management plan that would examine the corrosion potential of pipes and other safety threats. [Click here to read more from the Los Angeles Times.](#)

These all seem like good steps, not only to protect the citizens of California from future problems, but also to help combat climate change as long as methane is extracted, transported, processed, stored and burned.

The industry falsely claims that natural gas is a bridge fuel to an emerging era of renewable energy. Yet the entire drilling, fracking and transport process at its best leaks methane into the atmosphere, let alone when something like this out-of-control storage facility leak occurs. After all, natural gas is mostly methane, which is 84 times more potent as a global warming agent than CO₂ over a 20 year period. This negates any potential gains for the global climate in cutting CO₂ emissions, while also causing local environmental and health damages.

TAKE ACTION TO REGULATE METHANE EMISSIONS IN PA

Pennsylvania has nearly 8,000 active fracked wells operated by 66 different companies, which may have as few as one or as many as several hundred wells in their control. Just seven of these companies, which collectively operate around 2,500 wells, participate in the Natural Gas STAR Program, the U.S. EPA's voluntary partnership that encourages oil and gas companies to reduce methane emissions.

The gas industry frequently argues in favor of a voluntary approach, but such low rates of participation mean that nothing is being done to stop methane pollution at most of the wells in the Commonwealth. We just have to look at the latest air emissions inventory to see that this is true - the only place where methane pollution is on the decline is the one place subject to regulation.

We need to require that every operator meet air pollution standards that reduce leaks of methane and its co-pollutants, like benzene and formaldehyde. Applying strong rules to everyone is a smart approach that works.

[Click here to sign the Clean Air Council's petition to Governor Wolf urging him to enforce stronger methane regulations.](#)

Keep it Wild: Angel Falls Hike

by Robbie Cross, RDA Vice President

The weather breaking on the morning of Saturday, January 9th was less than

Well Count - Lycoming County

The following permits were issued within the listed Lycoming County municipalities. Click on the blue titles below each company's name to learn more about each new well.

Penn Township
[EXCO Resources PA, LLC](#)
[WARNER NORTH UNIT 3H](#)

Cogan House Township
[Range Resources Appalachia](#)
[LAUREL HILL 2H](#)
[LAUREL HILL 3H](#)
[LAUREL HILL 4H](#)

Events/ Action Points

----- Plug the Fracking Leaks, EPA!

A fracked gas storage well in Aliso Canyon, California has been leaking for months. It has already released more than 77,000 tons of natural gas, making it the biggest climate polluter in California. It's also making people sick: nearby residents have complained of headaches, nosebleeds and nausea, and the fracked gas is making smog and ozone pollution worse.

Hundreds of people have been evacuated, thousands are suing the company. The Governor has declared a state of Emergency, and California members of Congress are demanding action.

But back in Washington, D.C., President Obama and the EPA already have a solution: The EPA is finalizing rules to limit methane leaks. But the rules don't go far enough, and they don't yet apply to existing storage sites like Aliso Canyon.

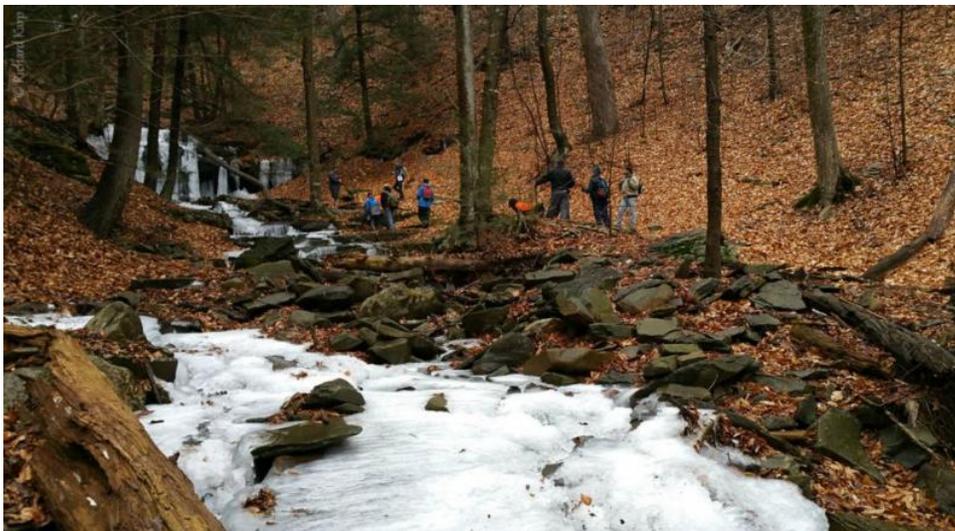
Tell the EPA and President Obama to quit dragging their feet, and to toughen up the EPA's proposed rules to plug ALL the fracking leaks.

[Click here to sign this petition prepared by Environmental Action.](#)

inspiring, temperature hovering a little below freezing and a fine mist drifting across the landscape suggesting a concern for driving conditions. Not to be put off from the first RDA hike of 2016, accomplished photographer Rick Karp and I set off up Rt 87, passing a modest accident before reaching Ogdonia Rd. Following the meandering creek by the same name, we slowly ascended the valley, carefully negotiating a road which turned slick and icy just before reaching the Loyalsock Trail parking lot.

We were surprised that hikers were already assembling, and by the time *Keep It Wild* hike leader and fellow board member Roscoe McCloskey offered a brief orientation, the group had reached well over a dozen ranging in age from the early teens to, umm, a bit over 70. The hike began, a relatively easy ramble heading down Ogdonia Creek then crossing it to the north side. Formations of white, snow-like ice edged the creek in places, giving evidence that our long overdue winter had finally arrived.

Roughly half a mile into the hike, the Loyalsock Trail (LT) left the creek heading aggressively uphill to the north. We continued to follow the stream and the original path of the LT for close to another half mile, eventually reaching Falls Run, a tributary that tumbled rapidly downhill toward us. We headed up. Shortly we came to the lower cascading section of Angel Falls and stopped to enjoy the views. Rick eventually persuaded us to assemble for a photograph.



Angel Falls - Photo credit: Richard Karp (both photos)

Some of us familiar with the area knew that the more spectacular part of the falls was a few hundred yards above, and before long a vanguard group was scrambling up a very steep section bordering the run, eventually reaching the original section of the LT. We followed the remnants of the original trail into a small basin with sheer rock walls and at the far end a thin but expanding column of water with a ribbon of ice dropped over a ledge at least 70 feet above us--truly a magnificent sight.

Tell the Department of Justice to Prosecute Exxon

Exxon knew about climate change, and instead of acting, spent decades lying to the American public and delaying action.

It's time to prosecute ExxonMobil for its 20-year campaign to knowingly delude the American public about the danger posed by fossil fuels and climate change.

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

Tell Congress: Keep Fossil Fuels in the Ground!

It's time to protect our people, our economy and our planet. It's time to take action to turn the tide on global climate change. It's time to end all new leases for coal mining, oil drilling, tar sands extraction and fracking on our public lands, stop all new leases for drilling off the Pacific, Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coastlines and prohibit offshore drilling in the Arctic. Let's keep it in the ground!

We need to manage our coastlines and public lands for the benefit of the public, not big polluters.

[Click here to sign this petition prepared by Senator Jeff Merkley.](#)

Join RDA!

Our next Working Group meeting will be held on **Monday, February 8th, 5:30 pm** at the Mill Tavern, Broad Street, Montoursville. 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 &

Several of us decided to ascend the steep ridge bordering the falls for the aerial views and then connected with the rerouted portion of the LT for a different return route. Back in the parking lot an animated group of hikers seemed to agree that it was a very good day to be hiking in this, at least for now, non-impacted portion of our forest.

Elizabeth Kolbert at Bucknell

Don't miss your chance to hear from a Pulitzer Prize winning science writer, coming soon to Bucknell.

Elizabeth Kolbert, author of *The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History* and a frequent contributor to *The New Yorker*, will present a talk at the Weis Center for the Performing Arts on **Tuesday, January 26, at 7:30 pm**. Kolbert will address how man-made climate change has contributed to the sixth mass extinction in Earth's history, the current spasm of plant and animal loss that threatens to eliminate 20 to 50 percent of all living species on Earth within this century. Her talk, "The Prophet of Love: And Other Tales of Power and Deceit," will be followed by a question-and-answer session and book signing.

The event is free and open to the public. Recognized as "one of our very best science writers," Kolbert received the 2015 Pulitzer Prize for General Non-Fiction for *The Sixth Extinction*, which chronicles five previous mass species extinctions and argues that the planet is now in the midst of a sixth.

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

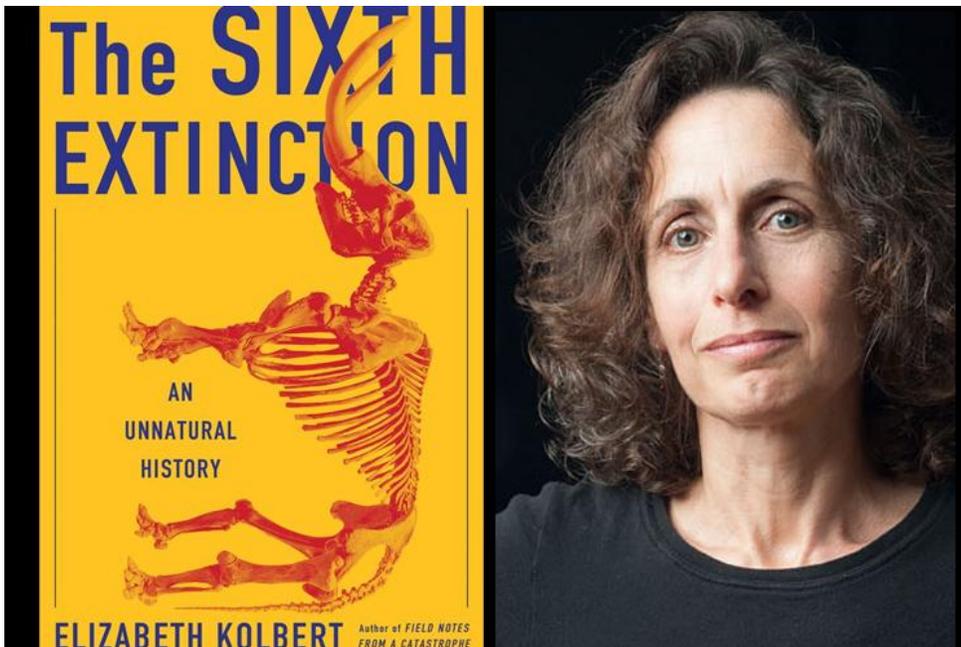
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Elizabeth Kolbert's *The Sixth Extinction* was selected as one of The New York Times Book Review's "10 Best Books of 2014."

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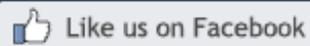
Please note: The RDA newsletter includes reporting on a variety of events and activities, which do not necessarily reflect the philosophy of the organization. RDA practices only non-violent action in voicing the organization's beliefs and concerns.

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