

Protecting Communities and Special Places

e-Newsletter February 14, 2014



"The reality is this: We are making the transition out of fossil fuel later than we should, because *the vested interests* find this the best course for business--but it is clearly not the best course for society." ~ Lisi Krall, Professor SUNY Cortland

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UPCOMING EVENTS



RDA Needs YOU!

**Working Group
Meeting**

Feb. 19, 5:30 p.m.

Herdic House
407 West Fourth St.

-



Keep It Wild Hike #14 Jacoby Falls

**February 16
11:00 a.m.**

Bring your camera for this winter hike to spectacular Jacoby Falls! Beginning at the Cotner Farm, this trail travels moderately steep terrain for 1.6 miles on the way to the falls. Sturdy winter hiking boots and/or crampons are recommended. A round trip can be completed easily within 3 hours even if you stop to enjoy the sights.

The Jacoby Falls Trailhead is located along Wallis Run Road approximately 4.1 miles north of the Route 973 bridge at Loyalsockville Park at the DCNR Cotner Farm; information sign is on the right. Find more information [here](#)

www.keepitwildrda.org

SHALE PERCEPTION

By Robb Bomboy

Photography and Film
Exhibition in protest of
Marcellus Shale
Hydraulic Fracturing

February 16, 3 p.m.

Mechanicsburg, Pa.

More information [here](#)

Film Screening

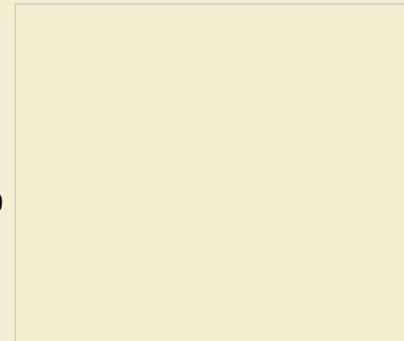
Renewing Our Energy

By ANN PINCA

This week, the Department of Energy (DOE) approved the Cameron LNG facility in Hackberry, Louisiana, owned by Sempra Energy. Cameron LNG is the sixth license approved on the long list of DOE applications to export American natural gas to better-paying markets abroad. Louisiana is already home to the first approved LNG export plant, Cheniere Energy's Sabine Pass, currently under construction with an anticipated final price tag of \$12 billion dollars.

Twelve billion dollars! How short-sighted and absurd it seems to spend all those dollars to *export* a finite American resource. If nothing else about the multiple issues swirling around the oil and gas industry resonates with citizens, the fact that so much capital, including government subsidies, is directed to an inevitably dead-end resource should cause alarm. What could the United States achieve with \$12 billion industry dollars invested in renewable energy instead?

Yet in spite of its well-advertised and well-funded oil and gas cousin, renewable energy has managed to grow. According to an EcoWatch article by Jay Warmke last April, wind energy capacity has grown 960 percent in the last 10 years, while solar generating capacity has increased 1,200 percent in just five years. Declining installation prices for both commercial wind turbines and photovoltaic (PV) systems have contributed to that growth and should continue to do so.



Part of the biomass heating plant at Hughesville High School in Lycoming County.

But exciting as those numbers sound, the overall energy generation from wind and solar represented only a tiny two percent of the total energy consumed by Americans in 2011, with hydro-electric power, biomass, and geothermal adding another nine percent. In spite of the promising growth of renewable energy, the United States obviously has a long way to go to meet its energy needs through renewable sources.

Americans use 20 percent of the world's annual energy output, but account for only 4.5 percent of the world's population, according to an article in the Post Carbon Institute's book, *Energy: Overdevelopment and the Delusion of Endless Growth*. The truth is, Americans waste a lot of energy because it has always been cheap. But now, as the consequences of our energy needs are more keenly seen and felt in resource extractions like hydraulic fracturing, mountaintop coal removal, and even sprawling wind farms, we need to increase our "energy literacy."

Most people, myself included, probably never gave much thought to where the power came from when flipping a light switch, turning on the television, or taking a Sunday drive. Now we know all too well that every watt of electricity or ounce of gasoline comes with an environmental or social justice price tag, and the price keeps going up. Eventually, if not even now, we will not want to pay that price. So what can we do?

"The Ethics of Fracking"

**February 19
4 - 5:00 p.m.**

McGowan School of
Business
Burke Auditorium
Kings College

[Look here for more
information](#)

Shalefield Justice Spring Break

March 15-22

Krislund Camp
Madisonburg, Pa.

[Look here for more
information and to
register](#)

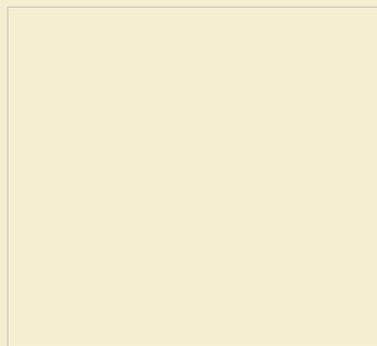
TAKE ACTION!

Governor Corbett, Is Nothing Sacred? Don't Frack Our State Forests!

A Rally in the
Rotunda is planned
to take place
**Tuesday, February 25
at 12 p.m.**
in the Capitol at
Harrisburg to present a
petition and to tell Gov.
Corbett and the
legislature to not frack
our state forests. Contact
Clean Water
Action at 717.233.1717
717.233.180 for more
information.

[Click here to sign the
petition](#)

**Stop the TPP and
Fast Track!**



*Shrub willow grown on the East
Lycoming School District property
will be harvested on a three-year
rotation to provide fuel for the
biomass heating plant.*

Two ideas presented by the Post Carbon Institute are *energy conservation* and *distributed renewable generation*. Energy conservation, simply using less energy and/or increasing energy efficiency, is a good start. As the book says, "Conservation helps us appreciate the energy we use," and points out that we have slipped into using and doing things with energy that we could easily do with our own muscle power--think leaf blowers instead of rakes.

With distributed renewable generation, energy production is shifted from large power plants and long-distance transmission lines to individual or community-based generation. Think roof-top solar panels, small biomass facilities, or small wind turbines. A locally-based energy distribution system will increase property values, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, make communities less vulnerable to power outages, and preserve ecosystems.

It's time to realize that new approaches are needed, that huge investments in fossil fuels make little sense because they ultimately have no future. A whole new world of energy is already growing, with new innovations like [bladeless vertical windmills](#) and [algae-powered street lights](#) already underway. It's time to invest in the future, not in the past. EcoWatch's Warmke proposes that the fossil fuel industry can only compete with renewable energy because of the government subsidies still granted to an industry that is "long-established, wealthy and well connected."

In the Post Carbon Institute's energy book, SUNY Cortland Economics Professor Lisi Krall supports that idea, suggesting that fossil fuels are still pursued because "*the vested interests* find this the best course for business--but it is clearly not the best course for society." Krall continues with this thought: "In the final chapter of our use of fossil fuels we will commit ourselves to the messiest, dirtiest, most socially and economically disruptive transition we can possibly muster unless we are willing to change course."

It is beyond time to change our course. American ingenuity has already proven that we can build better, live more energy efficiently, and create energy through sustainable, renewable sources; we just need the political will to do it. By reducing our energy demands and embracing renewable energy generation, Americans can truly renew our energy for the future.

A solar field installed at East Lycoming School District in Hughesville, Pa. In addition to substantially reducing its carbon footprint, the school district anticipates \$98,000 savings in annual operational costs through its biomass and solar installments, with \$96,000 revenue generation from the solar field.

All images in this article by ANN PINCA

STOP COVE POINT RALLY IN BALTIMORE

The Trans Pacific Partnership Trade Agreement (TPP) will affect you in many ways. One way is through increased shale gas development. Legislation is under consideration to "Fast Track" the agreement, which flies in the face of democratic process.

Write or call your representative today and tell them to vote "NO" for Fast Track legislation and "NO" for the TPP.

To learn more, [click here](#) or attend the Trans Pacific Partnership Trade Agreement Forum on **February 20, 6:30-8:30 p.m.** in Jenkintown, Pa. Find details on the forum [here](#).

For additional information and to access petitions, [click here](#)

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.

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

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 2014, please consider a tax-free contribution to our efforts.

Please use the Donate

**Thursday, February 20
Noon-1:30 p.m**

Join [Chesapeake Climate Action Network](#) and hundreds of citizens from near and far in a rally to "get loud" about the proposed Cove Point LNG export facility in Lusby, Md. Exporting America's natural gas will create a "drilling treadmill" that insures the gas industry's industrial presence in Pennsylvania and all the implications that come with it. Find more information about the rally and sign-up information [here](#). Download a flyer [here](#) if you want to share the news in your community.

Ride with RDA to the Cove Point Rally on February 20!

RDA will provide van transportation to the rally: seats are available on *first-reserved-first-served* basis. Carpool will leave Wegmans in Williamsport at 7:40 a.m. and will meet the van at Reptileland on Rt. 15 at 8 a.m. Plan to enjoy a "slow food" lunch in Baltimore following the rally; return time is approximately 5:00 p.m.

If you would like to travel with RDA, contact Board member Barb Jamoska 570.435.2at 570.435.227570.435.2272 or barb@freshlife.com

Find more details on the crucial issue of Cove Point [here](#)

A Farewell

With this edition of the RDA newsletter, I say farewell as managing editor. My thanks to RDA for the opportunity to present the news to you on a weekly basis, and my thanks to you, the readers, for checking in each week to stay aware and keep informed. Stay tuned for next week's newsletter, stay warm, and as always, Keep It Wild.

*With sincere thanks,
Ann*

Swatara Creek State Park, Lebanon County, Pa.

IMAGE: ANN PINCA

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

