

# Season's Greetings

RDA is wishing you all the best this holiday season & throughout the new year ahead!

Greetings!

Season's Greetings & Merry Christmas! As this busy holiday month is in full swing, we hope you'll find the time to sit and read the important information and action steps we offer in this, RDA's final newsletter of 2015.

Our feature story is an op-ed written by RDA Board member Barb Jarmoska. Three examples of what Barb calls the *Pennsylvania Paradox* reveal the ways in which our state is out of step and out of touch with the rest of the world. As the global society increasingly moves to a renewable energy future, PA leadership continues to tighten its short-sighted grip on subsidizing our state's ever-increasing dependence on fossil fuels. Just as Mark Lichty [warned us in the last newsletter](#), natural gas is a bad investment.

One *Keep it Wild!* hike has come to pass and another is on the horizon. Check out our photo summary of the Haystacks hike & mark your calendar to join us for the next one.

In Other News kicks off with more on fracking and climate change. A new report shows the Barnett shale emitting 90% more methane than originally estimated. Along with that disturbing fact, the Attorney General and some of our local legislators are taking a stand against the shady lease practices of Chesapeake Energy, seeking millions for PA lease-holders.

A nine minute podcast on frack wastewater from 2012 is also included. Eerily, it warns of two potential problems that have come to fruition since then: radioactivity ([Click here to read about the tainted watershed in Western PA](#)) and disposal issues ([Click here to read about Oklahoma's non-stop earthquakes due to frack wastewater injection wells](#)). An informative video on fracking's effects in the US and Australia is also included in defense of North Yorkshire, England. The sidebar closes with many opportunities to submit comments and add your name to petitions.

A crucial PA Supreme Court case will be heard in 2016. [The Pennsylvania Environmental Defense Fund \(PEDF\)](#) will argue the implications of Article 1 Section 27 of the PA Constitution. This section gives each PA citizen "*the right to clean air, pure water, and to the esthetic values of the environment. Pennsylvania's public natural resources are the common property of all the people, including the generations yet to come. As trustee of these resources, the Commonwealth shall conserve and maintain them for the benefit of all the people.*"

The future of Pennsylvania's public lands, including the Loyalsock State Forest, is at stake. RDA will use your year-end contributions to support this more-than-worthy legal effort. Please consider making a donation to help cover some of the significant costs of this critical court case. Simply note "Keep it Wild" on the reference line of your check and mail to the address listed below, or include it in the Paypal memo ([Click here to donate via Paypal](#)).

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## In Other News

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#### Texas Fracking Zone Emits 90% More Methane Than EPA Estimated

The Barnett Shale's emissions have been vastly underestimated, an Environmental Defense Fund-backed study finds.

Understanding the scope of methane leaks is crucial, because the answer will determine whether the ongoing shift from coal to natural gas-fired electricity creates a net benefit for climate change. Although gas power plants emit much less carbon dioxide than coal plants do, even small leaks of methane - the main component of natural gas - could undermine that advantage.

Methane is 86 times more potent than CO2 as a greenhouse gas on 20-year timescales, and 34 times more powerful on 100-year timescales.

[Click here to read more from Inside Climate News.](#)

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#### Attorney General's Office Sues Chesapeake Energy for 'Deceptive' Gas Leases

State Attorney General

I join with the entire RDA Board in wishing you all a joyous holiday and a healthy and prosperous New Year.

Thank you for taking the time to read this publication. Please feel free to pass it around.

Sincerely,

**Brooke Woodside**  
RDA Member, Managing Editor

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

## The Pennsylvania Paradox

By Barb Jarmoska, RDA Board of Directors

Earlier this month, 195 nations and the European Union, representing billions of earth citizens, reached an unprecedented consensus at the Conference of Parties to the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21). A plan to slow global warming was agreed upon with the hope of averting disastrous climate effects. Global dependence on fossil fuels is beginning to wind down and a commitment to an increasing reliance on clean, renewable energy has begun. Janos Pasztor, the U.N. assistant secretary-general on climate change, proclaimed that the message of the Paris Agreement is to "send a strong signal... that this is the direction we are going, to a low-carbon, low-emissions world, so investing in new technology is the way to go."

"The agreement requires the world to wean itself off of fossil fuels by the middle of the century," said Alden Meyer, the director of strategy and policy of the Union of Concerned Scientists. "We have to get to net zero of greenhouse gases by 2060 or so. That can be through a combination of reducing emissions and increasing uptake of carbon dioxide by forests and agriculture by natural syncs. There is no way to meet this goal without phasing out fossil fuels over that time."

Although the commitments made in Paris are insufficient to protect the most vulnerable people or to reverse the trend of rapidly declining biodiversity, the COP21 deal is a compromise, a crucial and forward-looking step in the right direction.

Huffington Post proclaimed, "...the Paris Agreement does send a strong signal to the business community and financial markets that we are moving to a low-carbon, renewable energy future."

Here in PA, that "strong signal" has been blocked by false promises and padded campaign coffers. The message of COP21 is not reaching the ears of Pennsylvania's elected and appointed officials who, as a whole, remain heedless of the warnings, ignorant of the predictions, and deaf to the global consensus on climate change. The gas industry's stranglehold continues to dominate... welcome to the Pennsylvania paradox.

November saw the release of the Pennsylvania Pipeline Infrastructure Task Force Draft Report. The governor's 48-member Task Force, said to be comprised of "stakeholders" is hardly a balanced group, as the stakes most members hold have nothing to do with methane's impact on climate change. The report's 184 recommendations make no mention of the methane that leaks from pipelines nor does it hold in regard the forest fragmentation, invasive species, damage to wetlands, and other environmental impacts of PA's proposed 30,000-mile web of new pipelines. The report accurately claims, "All told, this pipeline infrastructure build-out will impact communities and the environment in every county in Pennsylvania."

Kathleen Kane's office filed a lawsuit Wednesday against Chesapeake Energy, seeking millions of dollars for Pennsylvanians who leased land to the company for fracking.

The Oklahoma City-based driller is one of the most active in Pennsylvania. It was an early adopter of fracking and touts itself as the nation's second largest producer of natural gas. It's also been widely accused of unfair business practices - including using below-market gas prices, making improper deductions from royalty payments and misreporting gas production data.

Kane spokesman Jeff Johnson says the lawsuit could affect more than 4,000 Pennsylvania landowners who signed leases with the company.

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

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### Podcast: Managing Wastewater from Fracking, with Robert B. Jackson

In this nine minute podcast, host Ashley Ahearn talks with Duke University professor Robert B. Jackson about another fracking-related water concern: the millions of gallons of contaminated wastewater generated by the process.

[Click here to listen to this podcast.](#)

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### An Informative Video Worth Sharing

Not sure why you should be against fracking? Check out the video below to see how the citizens of Yorkshire, England are learning from what communities in Australia and America have to say about the effects of fracking on their lives.



Fracking: next stop Yorkshire?

[Click here to view the full Pipeline Infrastructure Task Force Draft Report.](#) Your comments can be made up until December 29th by clicking the following link: <http://www.a.hs.dep.pa.gov/eComment/>.

The paradox continues in the hands of SEDA-Council of Governments and its Regional Gas Utilization Initiative (RGUI). Strategizing to promote massive corporate and taxpayer investment in the infrastructure to drill, transport, and utilize fracked gas, the initiative makes no mention of climate change or the impact of methane as a greenhouse gas as it strives to "identify key investments in natural gas infrastructure that will help sustain existing and new industrial activity." [Click here to learn more about the SEDA-COG plan.](#)

On December 10th, the Pennsylvania Senate delayed action on climate change and gave the green light to funding for fracked-gas infrastructure. In a backroom deal, an amendment was penned into the fiscal code (House Bill 1327) that delays the implementation of the Clean Power Plan (CPP). The fact that 82% of all Pennsylvanians support the CPP matters not to the wheeler dealer legislators who are more concerned with pleasing the industry than the citizens of PA. It is neither the changing climate nor the common wealth that has their attention.

If passed and signed by the governor, HB 1327 would transfer \$12 million in funding from renewable energy to fracked gas infrastructure. After failing to pass a severance tax, this handout of our tax dollars to multinational fossil fuel corporations is solid evidence of the fracking industry's reach. These elected and appointed decision makers appear heedless of two basic facts about the methane molecule.

RDA working group member Ralph Kisberg's comments on behalf of RDA to the Environmental Protection Agency make the relation and risk between methane and climate change very clear:

*There are two basic facts about the methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) molecule: 1) methane is the smallest organic molecule, and 2) methane is lighter than air. These two properties allow methane to readily escape into the atmosphere from many formations and containers. Most importantly, methane's global warming potential is 80+ times more harmful than CO<sub>2</sub> over a 20-year period.*

*To date in Lycoming County, the PA Department of Environmental Protection has determined that methane leaking from gas operations impacted the water supply of twelve homes. Vigorous bubbling (easily distinguished from that of biogenic methane) has been seen in at least eight watercourses in Lycoming and contiguous counties over the last eight years.*

*RDA's deep and unaddressed concern is the question of where else formerly locked-in-shale methane may eventually reach the planet's surface, unnoticed, unmeasured, and un-capturable, directly due to the hydraulic fracturing process. This is a valid, long term concern that is not part of the debate on unconventional gas development. RDA believes that to be a serious omission.*

*We have heard various percentage figures as to recovery rates from shale gas reserves by the current preferred method of extraction. In an under-oath testimony from one of the local well operators at a township conditional use hearing for a well pad, we were told that about 15% of the gas in an area targeted by hydraulically fracturing a horizontal well bore will be recovered. We have heard from a geologist/engineer with a PhD in Rock Fracture Mechanics that the current method renders the remaining gas unrecoverable in the future. We have heard from a PR representative of the Commonwealth's largest gas lessee (in 2012), that they have no idea how far apart horizontal well bores will be in the*

## Low Natural Gas Prices Squeeze Industry and Fell a C. E. O.

Plummeting oil and natural gas prices have whipsawed the energy industry, forcing cancellations of billions of dollars of projects, late payments on loans and over a quarter of a million layoffs worldwide.

On December 14th, with domestic gas prices hitting their lowest level since 2001, Cubic Energy, a company that produces natural gas and oil, became the latest of several dozen producers to file for bankruptcy protection this year. Even a company the size of Chesapeake Energy, one of the nation's biggest producers, is struggling to reduce its \$11.6 billion debt load.

[Click here to read more.](#)

## Events/ Action Points

### Pipelines - Coming to a Neighborhood Near You

The Pennsylvania Pipeline Infrastructure Task Force recently released its draft report on the anticipated massive construction of gas industry infrastructure. The task force and DEP will accept public comments on the recommendations of the report only until December 29th.

No public hearings are scheduled, in spite of the fact that the report acknowledges that, "All told, this pipeline infrastructure build-out will impact communities and the environment in every county in Pennsylvania."

[Click here to submit a comment to DEP.](#)

### Our State Forests v. Fracking

Please act TODAY to continue protecting Pennsylvania State Forests from fracking.

The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) is drafting a

future, once production falls off enough from the currently 1,000-foot apart bores already drilled in order to avoid communication and then unrecoverable gas. We have seen horizontal well bores in our county less than 350-feet apart.

We are concerned with the potential for our region and other shale fields to become long term sources of future, uncontrollable methane emissions. This includes emissions from currently active or abandoned well sites, of which there is estimated to be some 300,000 in Pennsylvania. [Click here to read RDA's entire comment to the EPA.](#)

It bears repeating: unknown and unmeasured volumes of methane molecules are escaping into the atmosphere, each with a global warming potential that is 80+ times more harmful than CO2 over a 20-year period.

The infrastructure to develop methane gas is not yet in place. If the proposed build-out becomes a reality, PA will have invested billions of dollars and made an irreversible commitment to the use of a potent, climate-changing greenhouse gas for generations to come. We will have done so at the exact time in history when the world came together in agreement to travel a different road.

The burden of this Pennsylvania paradox will rest on the shoulders of our children and grandchildren.

## Keep it Wild!: Haystack Photos

The Haystacks hike was a whole lot of fun, as you can see! Mark your calendars and plan to join us on our next hike to Angel Falls on **Saturday, January 9th**. More details will follow in our next newsletter.



plan that will change the way it manages our 2.2 million acre state forest system including shale gas and water resources, and they want your input.

So whose plan will it be? Will it be a plan for the people of Pennsylvania who enjoy the great outdoors? Or will it be a plan designed for the exploitation of thousands of acres of forest land for industrial energy development?

Take action now and let DCNR know they need to create a plan that protects our state forests from existing and future natural gas drilling operations.

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

### Request a Government Office Review of FERC

FERC is a blatantly biased agency that doesn't just favor the pipeline companies over the public, but actively works to help advance pipelines, including by stripping the public of our legal rights to challenge projects in the courts.

A Government Accountability Office review of FERC could help to shine the light of day on the abuses of FERC and help all of the communities and environments being devastated by the construction and operation of fracked gas pipelines and LNG export facilities.

Senators Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren are on the committee that can request and get the GAO investigation we need. But both of them are very busy given their high profile work. So we need to make sure they hear from enough of us to understand the importance of granting our request - that means thousands of us need to ask. Please help us get there.

[Click here to sign this petition prepared by the Delaware River Keeper Network.](#)

### 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.



## Well Count - Lycoming County

The following permits were issued within the following Lycoming County municipalities. Click on the blue titles to learn more about each individual well.

### Cascade Township

Anadarko E&P Onshore, LLC

[BROOKS FAMILY A 203H \(new well\)](#)

[MAC A 201H \(new well\)](#)

### Lewis Township

Range Resources Appalachia, LLC

[CORNWALL BEAR UNIT 1H \(new well\)](#)

[CORNWALL TURKEY UNIT 4H \(new well\)](#)

### Lycoming County Stats

What's wrong with this picture?

Since unconventional gas well drilling began in Pennsylvania, the year 2012 recorded the highest number of inspection events: 13,294. At the end of 2012, there were 5,290 active wells.

2015 is projected to end with 12,000 inspection events for the year, with an estimated 8,550 active wells operating in the state.

These values represent a 62% increase in the number of active wells, and a 10% decline in the number of inspections per year.

The total number of unique inspection ID's assigned to date is 65,945, and the DEP's compliance reporting lists 5,502 unique violation ID's - an historical ratio of 1 violation ID for every 12 inspection ID's.

The ratio of violations to inspections for the entire year of 2012 was 1 in 17, and 1 in 34 for 2015 (to date).

## Join RDA!

### Sign Up/Make a Donation

We welcome your active participation and are in need of help for special events, publicity, research and other projects. Our next Working Group meeting will be held on **Monday, January 11th, 5:30 pm** at the Mill Tavern, Broad Street, Montoursville. Everyone is invited and encouraged to attend. 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. 2016 is right around the corner. Please

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.](#)

### Fracking Industry Workers Deserve Better Protections

Recently, a warehouse storing fracking chemicals caught fire near Pittsburgh. Plumes of black smoke poured from Lubrizol Corporation's Oilfield Chemistry facility and explosions were heard. Five workers were injured, three of which were hospitalized. The plumes from the fire resulted in the evacuation of 70 nearby homes in Leetsdale. [Click here to read more about the story from the Pittsburg Post Gazette.](#)

Workers at sites like this, along with compressor stations and drilling operations, are often the first to face the dangers of fracking. Yet just like environmental protections around fracking, worker safety rules lack the protections that workers need and deserve.

[Click here to sign PennEnvironment's petition if you agree.](#)

### Past Newsletters

[Click here to access our newsletter archive.](#)

### Join Our Mailing List

[Click here to join our mailing list.](#)

consider a year-end 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

[www.RDAPA.org](http://www.RDAPA.org)

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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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