



Bradford County Frackwater Pit

Greetings!

Did you know the EPA leaves it up to "adequate" state management to deal with tracking and properly disposing of fracking waste? If so, any idea how states are doing with these tasks? Earthworks just released a new report detailing how Marcellus/Utica shale states are failing to carry out these important duties. Read all about it in the article featured below. Hopefully Governor Wolf, our "new sheriff in town," will truly start to rein in on this and other important health/environmental issues to better protect Pennsylvanians, as presented in the second article.

This issue closes out with some proactive measures that helped Penn State and the U.S.G.S. detect methane contamination in a local stream. Utilizing this stream-based water monitoring system may prove very useful in assessing future environmental impacts caused by unconventional gas drilling.

In Other News links to articles regarding industry economics, our public lands, the recent MD fracking moratorium, and some FERC activism. Finally, we encourage you to take part in the important *Events/Action Points* listed in the sidebar.

Thank you for caring and staying informed.

Sincerely,

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Events/ Action Points

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In Other News

**Frack Club Exposed:
Banks Bail on Shale**

States undermine EPA's argument for exempting fracking waste

New study details Marcellus/Utica shale states' failures to regulate oil and gas waste, leaving health and environment at risk.

Earthworks - Washington, D.C., April 2nd -- A new report shows that states ignore the risks of sometimes hazardous oil and gas waste despite EPA's exemption of such waste from federal oversight based on "adequate" state management. [Wasting Away: Four states' failure to manage oil and gas waste in the Marcellus and Utica Shale](#) examines how Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia and New York neither regulate oil and gas development wastes as hazardous, nor can assure the public that they are protected from exposure to hazardous waste.

"Thirty years ago the Environmental Protection Agency exempted oil and gas waste from federal classification as hazardous, not because the waste isn't hazardous, but because EPA determined state oversight was adequate," said report lead author and Earthworks' Eastern Program Coordinator Nadia Steinzor. She continued, "But our analysis shows that states aren't keeping track of this waste or disposing of it properly. States must take realistic, concrete steps to better protect the public."

Focused on the Marcellus and Utica shale region, *Wasting Away* systematically identifies shortcomings in existing and proposed state regulation of oil and gas exploration, development and production wastes. It identifies pivotal challenges facing the states, explains five key factors underlying the inadequacy of state oil and gas waste management, and makes concrete recommendations for states to ensure that the waste is properly handled and drillers are held accountable for the waste they create.

"Drilling waste harms the environment and health, even though states have a mandate to protect both. Their current 'see no evil' approach is part of the reason communities across the country are banning fracking altogether," said Bruce Baizel, co-author of the report and Earthworks' Energy Program Director. "States have a clear path forward: if the waste is dangerous and hazardous, stop pretending it isn't and treat it and track it like the problem it is."

QUOTES FROM GROUPS IN STATES STUDIED IN THE REPORT

Ohio

"Ohio's land and water are at great risk from improper and under-regulated disposal of fracking wastes. As this report details, regulations in Ohio remain woefully inadequate when it comes to protecting human health and the environment from the radiological and chemical risks associated with fracking waste." --Melanie Houston, Director of Water Policy and Environmental Health at the Ohio Environmental Council

Pennsylvania

"Earthworks' latest report reminds us not only of the danger Marcellus Shale natural gas drilling waste poses to our environment and health, but also that more needs to be done in Pennsylvania as it relates tracking, storage, and oversight. This report comes at great time as Pennsylvania consider revisions to Chapter 78 oil and gas regulations. Hopefully its findings will spur the Commonwealth to ban all open pits for the storage of waste and to develop a

The first rule of Frack Club was don't talk about Frack Club. [Particularly to the lenders](#). A few of whom might be old enough to actually remember the Sub Prime Mortgage Meltdown.

Banks pull the rug from under the US shale sector.

[Click here to read more.](#)

Our Land, Up for Grabs

A battle is looming over America's public lands.

It's difficult to understand why given decades of consistent, strong support from voters of both parties for protecting land, water and the thousands of jobs and billions of dollars in economic benefits these resources make possible.

[Click here to read more.](#)

House OKs MD Fracking Moratorium

The Maryland House of Delegates passed legislation March 24 that would enact a three-year moratorium on hydraulic fracturing statewide, with a 93-45 vote in favor. The same day, the senate passed a bill that would ensure state taxpayers are not responsible for cleanup after fracking accidents.

[Click here to read more.](#)

For FERC's Sake, Regulate

The most important government agency you've never heard of has never met a fracking lobbyist it didn't like.

Joe Lieberman observed, 'Oftentimes, FERC seemed to view itself not as a regulator but as a facilitator - not as a market cop, but as a market cheerleader.'

[Click here for more info.](#)

Proposed Water Withdrawal from the Loyalsock Creek

cradle-to-grave tracking system." -- Steve Hvozdoch, Pennsylvania Campaigns Director, Clean Water Action

West Virginia

"In just the past two years, over 500,000 tons of drill cuttings and shale gas waste products have been buried in the municipal waste landfill in our county. As this report shows, none of it has been properly characterized nor tested for radioactivity. The State of West Virginia has repeatedly chosen to stay willfully ignorant with regard to the radioactive content of Marcellus shale waste. It really does not want the public to know what all is in it." -- Bill Hughes, Chairman of the Wetzel County Solid Waste Authority

New York

"This report illuminates the dirty secret of oil and gas development-what to do with the enormous amount of waste generated each year. In New York, problems with the improper reuse and disposal of oil and gas waste persist despite the ban on high-volume fracking. We have a state that not only allows importation of waste from Pennsylvania into New York's landfills, but also permits the not-so-beneficial reuse of oil and gas waste on our roads. It's past time for New York to rethink its haphazard approach to oil and gas waste." -- Misti Duvall, Staff Attorney at Riverkeeper

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Gas drilling industry should realize Wolf is new sheriff in town

By PennLive Op-Ed - Myron Arnowitt, Joanne Kilgour and Joe Minott

Gov. Tom Wolf pledged more than once on the campaign trail that he would rein in the natural gas industry and hold it accountable in a way that his predecessor, Gov. Tom Corbett, seemed either unwilling or unable to do.

Our new governor expects drilling to be done in a manner that protects public health and the environment, and the vast majority of Pennsylvanians support this level of accountability. Yet, industry lobbyists cried wolf at a recent advisory board hearing as if common sense rules that will protect our air and water signaled the end of drilling in Pennsylvania.

The Susquehanna River Basin Commission will hold a public meeting on Chief Oil and Gas Company's proposed water withdrawal from the Loyalsock Creek at Forksville. The original meeting scheduled for April 14th was canceled. A new date/time/location will soon be announced by SRBC.

The Natural Gas Gamble (Webinar)

Webinar: Addressing Our Growing Reliance on Natural Gas

Thursday, April 9th
1:30 pm - 2:30 pm

The Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) invites you to a webinar briefing on the implications of our growing reliance on natural gas for electricity and what you can do about it.

New UCS analysis underscores the costly and complex risks of over-relying on natural gas for electricity and the economic and environmental benefits of more renewable energy efficiency. Authors of our recent report, *The Natural Gas Gamble*, will be discussing our findings and their implications.

[RSVP and tune in today!](#)

Banff Film Festival

**The State Theater,
State College, PA**

Friday & Saturday,
April 10 & 11

Doors: 6 pm
Films: 7 pm

Hot on the heels of the largest, and one of the most prestigious mountain festivals in the world, the Banff Mountain Film Festival World Tour has hit the road. From adrenaline-fueled action sports, to an exploration of wild landscapes and remote mountain cultures, films in this year's tour are sure to captivate the explorer within you.

Come early to visit with RDA and other local sponsors/community groups who will have displays and information



A gas drilling rig towers over private property - PennLive file photo

At issue are proposed updates to Pa. Code Chapter 78, the state's oil and gas regulations. They govern everything from how drilling wastewater is handled to surface activities at well sites. Impacts to our air and water as well as noise and light pollution are also being considered.

This is a governor who realizes that government answers to the people and not special interests.

The proposed rules were announced in December 2013 - a year after the state's oil and gas law, Act 13, was enacted. They were followed by a robust public comment period during which more than 24,000 comments were received by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

More than a year later, at a hearing of the Oil and Gas Technical Advisory Board (TAB) on Friday, March 20, a representative of the Pennsylvania Independent Oil & Gas Association audaciously questioned whether "public interests" warranted the Board's "considerations."

A representative of the Marcellus Shale Coalition sang that same tired refrain, that new standards for drillers would "increase costs" and "threaten continued development."

As we all know, the natural gas industry in Pennsylvania isn't going anywhere.

A poor record

The inescapable truth is that natural gas drillers have been operating with impunity in Pennsylvania in recent years and mocking the public trust. Violations were under-reported or not reported at all and when fines were even issued, the amounts were so small as to provide no real deterrent to large, highly-profitable gas companies.

Fracking wastewater breached its flimsy, above-ground liners, wells exploded, emissions of methane - a potent greenhouse gas - were given short shrift. It should come as no surprise that Gov. Wolf would choose to be the new sheriff in town, bringing law and order to an industry that has been allowed to run roughshod over Pennsylvania, and Pennsylvanians.

Among the proposed new rules are stringent permitting requirements for placing well pads near public resources that could include schools and playgrounds, and restoring contaminated drinking water supplies to pre-drill conditions.

available in the lobby. Prizes, including mountain gear, will be raffled off during intermission.

Big thanks to the Sierra Club Moshannon Group and Appalachian Outdoors for bringing this inspiring festival to our area.

Different films each night!

[Click here for more info/ to order tickets.](#)

Action Alert: DEP Final Rulemaking Comment Period Extended

Environmental Protection Performance Standards at Oil and Gas Well Sites; Advance Notice of Final Rulemaking

**Comments Due:
Tuesday, May 19, 2015**

The DEP has revised the rulemaking to reflect public comments submitted during the 2014 public comment period. The Department has a deadline of March, 2016. They are providing us with one last opportunity to submit comments on the changes. This is a very tight deadline, but the DEP has revised the schedule to include a 45 day comment period and 3 hearings, 2 of which will be scheduled in the Northern Tier region.

We really need folks that live in the drilling fields to participate by submitting a comment. These regulations do not restrict where the operators can drill, but how they do it. It creates better performance standards while working near our homes and schools. From all the provisions now up for comment, we selected the seven (noted below) as the most important for operations near our homes and schools:

Definitions, Clean Streams Law authority, Notification Zones, Noise Mitigation, Water Supply Protection, Centralized Tank Storage, and Reporting of Spills and Releases.

[Click here for more info from C.O.G.E.N.T.](#)

These actions need to be mandated by regulation because the industry has not been the steward of the environment that Pennsylvanians need. Similarly, methane, a greenhouse gas 84 times more potent than carbon in the first 20 years after its release, is not being addressed by drillers, whose claim to "voluntary" measures is a mere sound bite.

It can be stated plainly that the natural gas industry in Pennsylvania is not currently operating in a manner that protects public health and the environment - self-policing has been akin to courtiers at a bacchanal when the public deserves nothing less than a sober effort.

Strong standards

We encourage Gov. Wolf and the DEP to implement strong, much-needed standards for natural gas operations in Pennsylvania. This is a governor who realizes that government answers to the people and not special interests.

It is ludicrous for drillers to suggest that committees such as the TAB do not have to consider the public interest in their deliberations. When DEP finds harm to our natural resources and the health of our children, the committees should recommend measures to protect us.

Why should Pennsylvanians have to pay for the environmental and health damage caused by large and powerful corporations? If the sheriff has finally come to town, we're happy to give him the opportunity to get this right.

Myron Arnowitt is Pennsylvania Director of Clean Water Action. Joanne Kilgour is Director of Sierra Club's Pennsylvania Chapter. Joe Minott is Executive Director of Clean Air Council.

[Click here for the original as posted on Pennlive.](#)

Methane monitoring method reveals high levels in Pennsylvania stream

Methane monitoring method reveals high levels in Pennsylvania stream

by Matthew Carroll - March 31, 2015

UNIVERSITY PARK, PA -- A new stream-based monitoring system recently discovered high levels of methane in a Pennsylvania stream near the site of a reported Marcellus shale gas well leak, according to researchers at Penn State and the U.S. Geological Survey. The system could be a valuable screening tool to assess the environmental impact of extracting natural gas using fracking.

Multiple samples from the stream, Sugar Run in Lycoming County, showed a groundwater inflow of thermogenic methane, consistent with what would be found in shale gas, the researchers report in a recent issue of Environmental Science and Technology. Victor Heilweil, research hydrologist, Utah Water Science Center, USGS, was lead author on the paper.

Respect Our Voices on Oil and Gas Oversight

If the Pennsylvania Independent Oil and Gas Association (PIOGA) had their way, PA shalefield residents and public interest groups would "have no place" on oil and gas oversight bodies.

Tell PA Governor Tom Wolf and DEP Secretary John Quigley that shalefield residents and public interest groups should be front and center in overseeing the oil and gas industries.

[Click here to sign this petition prepared for you by the Clean Air Council.](#)

Extracting Fossil Fuels from Your Portfolio

An updated guide to personal divestment and reinvestment

Sign up with Green Century Funds to have a guide emailed to you, so you can learn how to get started investing fossil fuel free.

[Click here to learn more.](#)

Prioritize Renewable Energy, Not Natural Gas

Right now, the EPA is finalizing limits on global warming emissions from power plants, the largest source of these emissions in the United States. The EPA's Clean Power Plan is our best opportunity to curb the growing consequences of climate change and accelerate the growth of clean energy—but it's not strong enough. The draft plan relies heavily on a switch from coal to natural gas and underestimates the power of renewable energy, such as wind and solar, to help cut power plant carbon emissions.

New analysis from the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) underscores the costly and complex risks of over-relying on natural gas for electricity and the economic and environmental benefits of more renewable energy and energy efficiency. [Click here to read their full report.](#)



Small stream where methane was found - Image: Paul Grieve, Penn State

"I found it startling that our USGS and Penn State team of four people did a reconnaissance of 15 streams and discovered one instance of natural gas degassing into a stream that may very well be explained by a nearby leaking shale gas well," said Susan Brantley, distinguished professor of geosciences and director of the Earth and Environmental Systems Institute at Penn State.

After testing Sugar Run and finding high methane levels, researchers learned that several nearby domestic water supplies were reportedly contaminated by a Marcellus gas well that had a defective casing or cement, according to the researchers.

Additional analyses of the degassing methane revealed characteristics also observed at the leaking gas well, but scientists were not able to prove the methane in Sugar Run is caused by the leak because they do not have baseline samples of the stream. Still, the researchers pointed to the findings to show stream monitoring is an effective, efficient method for monitoring shale-gas impacts.

"We hope this new technique developed by the USGS can now be used as a way of monitoring stray gas not only when it gets into drinking water, but when it gets into streams, which are much easier to access than homeowner wells," said Brantley, a co-author of the study. "In addition, streams collect water from nearby areas and may be very cost effective waters to target for monitoring because they integrate over larger land areas."

Most monitoring around gas wells has traditionally been limited to domestic water wells. Testing that way alone, especially in rural areas where the wells are spread out, has made assessing the true impact of wells difficult, researchers said in the report.

"Watersheds funnel water and chemicals to streams and by sampling at the end of the funnel we are able to find leaks that would otherwise be like looking for a needle in a haystack," said Kip Solomon, professor of geology and director of the Noble Gas Laboratory at the University of Utah, another co-author of the report.

Also working on this project were Paul L. Grieve, former graduate student, Penn State, now a geologist at AECOM ; Scott A. Hynek, postdoctoral fellow, Earth and Environmental Systems Institute and Department of Geosciences, Penn State; and Dennis W. Risser , hydrologist, Pennsylvania Water Science Center, U.S.G.S.

The U.S.G.S and the National Science Foundation supported this work.

[Click here to view the original.](#)

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Natural gas is still a fossil fuel and dramatically expanding its use poses risks to the climate and our economy. A smarter path forward is to take greater advantage of cost-effective renewable energy.

[Click here to sign this petition to the EPA prepared by UCS.](#)

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.

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 2015, 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.

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

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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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