



Elk Lake High School soccer team runs around a field behind their school, near Dimock, PA; Source: google images

## Greetings!

This issue opens up with a question from RDA's chemical adviser to our PA lawmakers and the gas industry, "Where is the balance and common sense?" This is followed by a summary of a recently released report from The Center for Rural PA on youth perspectives of the Marcellus Shale gas development. I then close this edition with a bit on renewable energy & introduce affordable alternative electric suppliers you can use to power your home.

*In Other News* presents a PEDF update on the recently filed Appeal, insurance adjustments due to gas industry-related earthquakes, and a photo documentary of what it is like to live with fracking. There are also plenty of action points worthy of your participation.

RDA is continuing our efforts to protect our communities and special places, and we are still seeking new memberships and active involvement in our endeavors. Please consider joining with us.

Thank you for caring & staying informed.

Sincerely,

**Brooke Woodside**

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## Events/ Action Points

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## In Other News

**PEDF Lawsuit Update**

## PA lawmakers and the gas industry: Where is the balance & common sense?

by Ted Stroter, RDA chemical adviser and working group member

While I recognize the importance of oil and gas products in our everyday lives, I am constantly amazed by our lawmakers' utter lack of balance and common sense with regard to this industry.

The latest example of this occurred in two articles on the front page of the January 29th edition of the Williamsport Sun-Gazette.

The first article discussed legislation proposed by PA Senator Eugene Yaw. He claims the legislation is "designed to protect landowners with natural gas production on their properties." Yaw wants to use legal means to expedite royalty payments from gas companies to leaseholders and to protect property owners who question the fairness of their royalty checks from retaliation by the gas companies.

If I understand the intent behind this proposed legislation, we cannot always trust the gas companies to look past their profits and do the right thing by the property owners with leases. Therefore we need more legislative oversight to control gas company behavior. What an interesting contradiction, given the fact that Senator Yaw was an ardent supporter of Act 13 which required all zoning districts, including residential, to permit the highly industrialized extraction and transport of natural gas. Via Act 13, Senator Yaw voted to subjugate the wishes of property owners to the desires of the gas industry; now he is proposing legislation to protect property owners from iniquitous industry tactics.

Senator Yaw must have finally succumbed to the outrage of his constituents. Was our pro-industry Senator biting his tongue while proposing bills to "control" the gas industry's actions?

One thing appears certain, we cannot always trust all gas companies to do the right thing, neither with royalty payments, nor with regards to the environment. For evidence of the latter, [click here to see article entitled "Drillers Did Not Report Half Of Spills That Led To Fines" published in a Pittsburgh newspaper.](#)

Oh, but surely we can rest easy with gas activities beside our schools, nursing homes, and backyards because the EPA has us covered, ensuring via federal regulatory authority that the oil & gas industry does things right. Guess again. The oil and gas industry has exemptions to major federal environmental laws including the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, the Safe Drinking Water Act, the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (which governs disposal of hazardous wastes), as well as others. [Click here to read more on this.](#)

Well... maybe our state regulatory agency, the Department of Environmental Protection, has a adequate oversight of this industry, making sure they act properly to maintain our clean air & drinking water. After all, we have all heard the claims from the industry and it's supporters assuring us that PA has "the tightest environmental laws in the country." However, it appears that under Tom Corbett, a huge industry supporter, DEP was not given a adequate resources nor the a autonomy to provide a adequate oversight. The PA Auditor General released a report last year that concluded:

*Pennsylvania's Department of Environmental Protection has been unable to keep up with the workload placed on it by a proliferation of shale gas wells in the last five years, and has failed to respond adequately to many public complaints about water and air contamination resulting from gas*

Does Article I, Section 27 of PA's Constitution have meaning?

PEDF attorney John Childe has filed an Appeal to PA's Supreme Court in our ongoing lawsuit to determine the future of our State Forest and Park lands and our Public Trust.

The Commonwealth Court has denied both our claims and Application for Reargument, clearing the way for the Supreme Court to make a historic determination and affirm the people's rights as voted in by a four-to-one margin of the population nearly forty-four years ago.

Please go to [www.pedf.org](http://www.pedf.org) to read both the Appeal and accompanying Jurisdictional Statement..

### Insurance Industry Adjusts to Earthquake Risk Caused by Fracking

In another sign that fracking is increasingly being acknowledged as a cause of earthquakes, the insurance industry has announced that it is now linking the controversial drilling procedure with seismic activity in establishing its rates.

[Click to read the full story.](#)

### Living with Fracking

What's it like to live next door to the fracking rigs? Six photographers spent two years in gas-rich Pennsylvania trying to find out.

[Click here to see more.](#)

### Audubon Society Meeting: Marcellus Shale-Gas Drilling and Forest Fragmentation

Wednesday, Feb 25 - 6 pm

James V. Brown Library  
Lowery Room - 3rd Floor

**Effects of Marcellus Shale-Gas Development on Forest Fragmentation and the Forest Bird Community in North-Central**

development. [Click here for the article featured in the NY Times.](#)

Now we get to the 2nd article in that edition of the Sun-Gazette. This story focused on U.S. Representative Tom Marino's support of legislation designed to "*streamline the approval process for energy, infrastructure and other construction projects.*" As a retired chemical and environmental safety engineer, I spent most of my career reviewing and approving environmental impact assessments for every new chemical operation, as well as changes to existing operations at the plant where I worked. It was my job to guarantee the protection of both people and the environment. In my professional experience, that statement by Representative Marino is not just ludicrous, it's downright scary. Streamlining the approval process means less time to make certain the oil and gas industry will get it right. Can we leave it up to the bottom-line-driven oil and gas industry to voluntarily always do the right thing? History and evidence say no.

In their ongoing adulation of the gas industry, the biggest selling point our legislators tout is all about the jobs the industry brings to the state. Yet, according to the PA Bureau of Labor Statistics, the number of direct jobs provided by Marcellus Shale activities is less than 1/2 of 1% of PA's total workforce.

The judicious oversight of this resource is absolutely essential. Currently I fail to see sufficient balance or common sense here. The behavior of our elected officials brings to mind this astute quote by Mark Twain, "*Sometimes I wonder if the world is being run by smart people putting us on, or by imbeciles who really mean it.*"

## Youth Perspectives on Marcellus Shale Gas Development: Community Change and Future Prospects

by The Center for Rural Pennsylvania

The following was taken from the Executive Summary of the report. [Click here to read the report in its entirety.](#)

This research examined the perspectives of youth in Pennsylvania communities that have experienced active Marcellus Shale natural gas development. The data were gathered during focus group discussions with educators and youth in 2013 in the northern tier Pennsylvania counties of Bradford and Lycoming, and the southwest counties of Washington and Green. These focus groups were conducted as part of a larger, multi-sector case study assessment of Marcellus Shale development impacts. The focus groups discussed Marcellus-related community change, workforce development, youth career, educational and residential aspirations, and the ways in which schools were perceived to be affected by and/or responding to Marcellus-related community change. In this research, the focus was on several particular topical areas, including youth perceptions of community change, curricular offerings and workforce development in response to Marcellus Shale development, and youth aspirations for future residence, educational attainment and career paths, and how these aspirations may or may not be shaped by the changes youth see around them that they associate with gas industry development.

The main themes that emerged from these focus groups are as follows:

- The gas industry, in many places, has affected what youth see as the unique, close-knit rural character of their home communities.
- Traffic has dramatically increased and so have concerns about road conditions and driving safety. Unprompted, students in all discussions spoke at length about these issues.
- Youth spoke about what they interpreted as fragmentation of land, and destruction of natural areas, with direct impacts on wildlife and their ability to enjoy the local natural amenities.

### Pennsylvania

with Lillie Langlois, PhD Candidate, Wildlife and Fisheries Science at Penn State

The rapid expansion of Marcellus Shale drilling has been breaking up the largest unbroken block of trees spanning the state's north central region. This is the basis for Lillie's research, and her presentation to LAS.

[Click here to see what forest fragmentation looks like.](#)

### House Democratic Policy Hearing

**Monday, March 2, 10 am**

Minority Caucus Room  
State Capitol Building  
418 MC

### PA Carbon Neutrality

Representative Vitali will be hosting a hearing of the House Democratic Policy Committee to discuss what PA should be doing to achieve carbon neutrality.

[Click here to see a list of confirmed speakers and more details on the event.](#)

[Click here for more information on PA carbon neutrality from Rep Vitali.](#)

### Rivertown Coalition Spring Workshop

**Saturday, March 7  
8:30 am-12:30 pm**

St Paul's UCC Church  
400 Market Street  
Selinsgrove, PA

### "News from the River"

Rivertown Coalition - a sister group from Union, Snyder and Northumberland Counties - is holding their fourth spring educational workshop. Though these counties have little active drilling, they have numerous support industries and are targeted for a bunch of pipelines.

### Speakers:

Dr. Kathy Straub from the Environmental Studies Department, Susquehanna

- Youth expressed uncertainty about the investment that the gas industry had in local areas. While noting examples of local philanthropy by gas companies, far more often, students talked about the industry presence and characterized industry workers as transient and lacking commitment to the affected localities.
- Relatedly, youth also expressed uncertainty about the longevity of the gas industry and economic impacts. While not using this language, their discussion often made reference to the likelihood of a post-boom "bust".
- Students expressed relatively moderate to low interest in obtaining gas industry work after leaving high school. Even though many of the students had friends or family members working in the industry and acknowledged the near unprecedented earnings for someone just coming out of high school, there were concerns regarding work longevity, stability, and injury. Concerns related to shift-hours, travel, and possible relocation were noted as being particularly incompatible with a family friendly work environment.
- Youth reported that industry recruitment efforts contained messages discouraging post-secondary educational attainment, and, that given the potential wages, college was seen by many as a "waste" of time, money and opportunity.

[Click here to read the full report from the Center for Rural Pennsylvania.](#)

## So what's the alternative?

by Brooke Woodside, RDA working group

Renewable energy of course! If you are one of PA's residents that has actually installed solar, wind, and/or geothermal energy on or near your home, congratulations & thank you for that! That is an awesome way to achieve energy self-sufficiency as well as supporting such excellent technologies.

That is, however, not the only way to run your home strictly on renewable energies. I was fortunate enough to run into a renewable electric supplier at the last major film event RDA was permitted to host at the Community Arts Center. Aside from also heating with oil for the coldest 3 or 4 months of the winter (planning to replace with something much better), my home has been mainly powered by renewable solar feeding the grid through Community Energy. [Click here to read about one of their award-winning achievements installed in Lancaster, PA in 2013.](#)



Community Energy's "Keystone Solar" Project shows an industry-leading agricultural preservation design. Photo credit: Community Energy Solar

Jennie Demjanick, Energy Policy Analyst for the PennFuture Energy Center, shows

University - climate Issues; Ralph Kisberg from the RDA - the development of the gas industry in Lycoming County; Deidre Lally (representative of Clean Air/Clean Water) - pipelines and the conversion of the Shamokin Dam power plant to gas

Continental breakfast, No charge, but registration would be appreciated.

[Click here to RSVP.](#)

### Global Divestment Day

February 13 & 14

#### Divest from Fossil Fuels

Together, we will show that we are a truly global and growing force to be reckoned with. As the fossil fuel industry throws more money at fossil fuel expansion, we will turn up the volume of our divestment movement. And we won't stop until we win.

[Click here for more details.](#)

### Governor Wolf: Follow NY's Lead & Ban Fracking Now

**This petition is brought to us by Food & Water Watch.**

This victory came after years of education, mobilization and advocacy work done by Food & Water Watch as a co-founding member of New Yorkers Against Fracking, and the strong network of allies and grassroots activists in NY.

After activists demanded that New York study the health effects of fracking, a two-year investigation by the state's own commission confirmed what the movement has been saying all along, that fracking cannot be done safely.

[Click here to send Wolf a message to ban fracking.](#)

### Stop the Mariner East and the Atlantic Sunrise Pipelines

**The Clean Air Council has prepared the following petitions:**

us that achieving 100% renewable electricity IS possible in an article she published just last week. She compares Pennsylvania's Alternative Energy Portfolio Standard and the Renewable Portfolio Standard for Vermont. Though the states might at first seem to have little in common, she points out how they are actually surprisingly similar. Did you know Burlington, VT is the first city in the US to be powered by 100% renewable energy? That is quite a feat! [Click here to read more on this as well as other renewable energy efforts happening worldwide.](#)

Switching to a renewable electric supplier is easier and more affordable than you may think. The following website lists prices to compare for the various electric suppliers in PA: [PA Power Switch](#). Before you click the link, feel free to watch PPL's short video below explaining your different electric choices & options. Along with listing fixed/variable rates, prices and any potential cancellation fees, PA Power Switch also notes the types and percentages of energy sources provided by each supplier. If you would like even further information before making a decision, [PennFuture has some great information and articles listed in the sidebar to the right of their Energy Center page.](#)



PPL Shopping 101

## Speaking of renewable energy

RDA welcomes Josh Fox, producer/director of Gasland; and Zephyr Teachout, law professor at Fordham University

Mark your calendar and plan to join RDA on Sunday, March 15th at 7 pm at the Lycoming College Clarke Chapel!

Josh and Zephyr, along with musicians and renewable energy experts, will be in Williamsport as a part of the Grassroots Solutions Tour. Watch future RDA newsletters for more details about the evening and learn more about the tour here: [http://solutionsgrassroots.nationbuilder.com/the\\_tour](http://solutionsgrassroots.nationbuilder.com/the_tour)

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### Mariner East Pipeline

Sunoco Logistics is attempting to get air quality permits from the DEP for three more pumping stations along the proposed Mariner East pipeline in Huntingdon County, Dauphin County, and Perry County.

If approved, the pipeline would transport 70,000 barrels per day of ethane and propane across Pennsylvania to ship overseas for plastic manufacturing. While Sunoco Logistics would reap the profits from this project, our communities would be left with the dangers of these explosive products at higher pressures in the pipeline that is over 80 years old!

[Click here to sign.](#)

### Atlantic Sunrise Pipeline

The proposed Atlantic Sunrise Pipeline would span 178 miles through eight counties in PA. If approved, it would directly impact the lives of thousands of people living in these communities.

Help protect PA from the construction of this damaging pipeline. By signing this petition, you are urging the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and PA elected officials to deny the Atlantic Sunrise Pipeline and to instead protect PA homes, farms and natural areas.

[Click here to sign.](#)

### Protect Our Public Lands from Fracking

Representative Mark Pocan (WI-2) recently introduced a bill to ban fracking on all public lands - the strongest piece of federal legislation against fracking to date. Fracking on public lands means clear-cutting forests for well pads, air pollution, potential water contamination and thousands of trucks carrying water, toxic chemicals and waste.

Our US parks and national forests are irreplaceable. Not only do they provide beautiful recreational areas and essential wildlife habitat, they also protect critical drinking

water sources.

[Click here to sign the Food and Water Watch petition asking Representatives to ban fracking on public land.](#)

## 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.

#### Membership levels:

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

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

## Past Newsletters

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

## Join Our Mailing List

### RDA Newsletter

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*Barb Jarmoska, Treasurer - RDA Board of Directors, Editor*  
*Ralph Kisberg, RDA Working Group, Contributing Editor*  
*Ted Stroter, RDA Working Group, Chemical Advisor & Contributing Editor*  
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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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