

JANUARY 2013



# E X T R A



## PROMISED LAND

### How real is the story?

If you've been watching *Promised Land* (the Gus Van Sant, Matt Damon film), or if you're just about to see it, you may be wondering, “How realistic is this movie?”

You might wonder, especially, because a corporate campaign is trying to discredit the premise of the story: An ambitious ‘land-man,’ a rapacious drilling company and the toxic practice of ‘fracking’ combine to spark a moral crisis in a small town.

So here's a quick guide to beginning to sort it out.

**Where is ‘McKinley’, actually?** ‘McKinley’ is a fictional place, meant to stand for ‘Anywhereville, USA’. *Promised Land* was filmed in two real locations, both within 40 miles of Pittsburgh, PA, here in the heart of ‘fracking country.’ The movie's farms, towns and hills – the ones the people of ‘McKinley’ love so deeply – are the real-world homes that we care about, and are working hard to protect.

**Do ‘land men’ really target rural communities?** Yes, absolutely. The fracking business is only partly about ‘gas’ – more importantly, it's about ‘land’. Drilling companies (such as Range Resources and Chesapeake Energy) need to assemble big parcels of acreage; and, to do that, they need to steamroll

### Year-end Update:

#### Some highs and lows of 2012

It's been a busy year! In case you missed these, or wondered ‘And then what happened?’ here's a wrap-up.

**Harrisburg:** Tom Corbett is still Governor, in spite of recent disclosures that fracking companies paid for his 2011 vacation.

The Pennsylvania Supreme Court has not yet ruled on the injunction against the zoning provisions of ‘Act 13’. By law, the injunction is in force, although the Corbett Administration—and the industry—are ignoring it.

opposition and overpower any ‘holdouts’. A land-man has to be a fast-talker, and know how to spread the money around, in order to win the race for leases.

**Is fracking a threat to our farms and towns?** We're seeing our worst fears come true, and the fracking of Pennsylvania is still just getting started. Not only the water, but the air and the soil are being polluted; families are falling ill, and livestock are dying. Property values drop, as banks and insurance companies declare ‘fracked’ real estate to carry unacceptable financial risk. Farmers and townspeople, who once looked forward to the ‘windfall’ money from their gas, are being left in worse shape than when the land-men arrived.

**Do citizens fight back?** Yes; and then the ‘frackers’ bring in their big legal guns. In Pennsylvania, Gov. Tom Corbett (elected with millions of dollars in gas-industry money) has spearheaded new legislation to forbid local communities from having any say at all about fracking. In Colorado, Gov. Hickenlooper – backed by the oil and gas industry – has filed a lawsuit against the first town in his state to ban fracking within its borders.

**Do land-men ever feel remorse?** Well, occasionally, they do! On our website are testimonials from former fracking-industry workers who have had a change of heart.

You can find more details, along with scientific research and true stories as dramatic as *Promised Land*, on our website: [www.marcellusprotest.org](http://www.marcellusprotest.org), or call us: (724) 485-9835.

We hope you enjoy the movie. Thanks for your interest in this story, which is so important to our region.

The Department of Environmental Protection has lost 22% of its staff positions in the past 10 years (i.e., since *before* fracking).

State Senator Gene Yaw (R-Bradford) is the new Chair of the Environmental Committee. He immediately announced new initiatives to use state money to underwrite natural gas usage.

**Academia:** The State University of New York, Buffalo, and the University of Texas took action against ‘Institutes’ which published pro-fracking ‘research’ without disclosing industry funding.

Faculty at the Community College of Philadelphia are refusing

(Continued on page 2)

We encourage you to print copies of this newsletter and to distribute it freely. You can download it – and share your comments or suggestions – at [www.marcellusprotest.org/news](http://www.marcellusprotest.org/news).

## ***From the Archives: Seabrook Nuclear Power Plant Occupation, 1976-78***

BY JENNIFER THOMSON: In the summer of 1976, a group calling itself the Clamshell Alliance formed to oppose the newly licensed Seabrook Nuclear Power Plant on the New Hampshire coast. Inspired by successful citizen occupations of nuclear power facilities in West Germany, the Clamshell Alliance organized a series of plant occupations, which escalated to the 24-hour occupation of the plant by 2000 activists in May of 1977, and an 18,000 person rally in the summer of 1978.

Although two reactors were initially planned for the site, only one was constructed; moreover, that one did not go into operation until 1990. The Seabrook occupations helped to turn the anti-nuclear movement towards a much more interventionist and direct action based approach.

Around the country, nuclear plant occupations and sit-ins became an increasingly regular tool of protest, and the anti-nuclear movement began to experience greater success in halting and delaying new reactors.

Since the 1970s, the environmental movement has incorporated many forms of nonviolent direct action (NVDA) – from sit-ins and occupations, to picket lines and theatrical stunts. These types of protest were in many cases taken from earlier civil rights, student, and labor activists.

Although the Bush and Obama administrations have worked hard to criminalize even the most benign forms of protest, we can see that NVDA is still alive, well, and useful.

Keystone XL pipeline opponents, mountaintop removal mining

activists, and tar sands opponents have each staged lock-downs, sit-ins, and occupations over the past few months. While these actions have resulted in arrests, they have also temporarily brought each of the destructive projects to a halt.

*Jennifer Thomson is a Ph.D. candidate at Harvard University, and is completing a dissertation on the history of environmental activism.*

*(Continued from page 1)*

support for a training program for gas industry jobs, citing ‘unacceptable dangers [to workers] and risks to public health.

**Local:** The Allegheny County Airport Authority is evaluating a lease offer for fracking at Pittsburgh’s Airport.

The Coast Guard is skeptical about industry plans to ship fracking waste by barge on Pittsburgh’s waterways.

EQT is selling its retail operations so as to raise cash to cover its ‘upstream’ losses on shale drilling— thereby mimicking Chesapeake Energy’s strategy for destroying shareholder value.

**Elsewhere:** The governing coalition in the United Kingdom is split over Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron’s plans to expand the development of shale gas in the U.K.

The International Energy Agency says that two-thirds of the fossil fuel already under development must remain unburned if the world is to avoid almost certain climate catastrophe.

Meanwhile, a consultant on corporate security has published a ‘white paper’ on [\*\*The Global Anti-Fracking Movement\*\*](#), advising the fossil-fuel industry on how to manage the business risk presented by ... *US!*

See our website for details on all these and other breaking stories.

## **A Range of Resources**

**Just a few publications and presentations that we commend to you: (Click the links or see our Resources page.)**

**[Marcellus Shale Reality Tours](#):** The [Gas Drilling Awareness Coalition](#) series on YouTube—now up to ‘Part 10’.

**[Database of Tax Incentives to Industry](#):** Interactive database from the New York Times. See who’s getting what.

**[False Jobs Promise](#):** A 2011 study of the inaccuracies, methodological flaws, and hidden conflicts of interest behind those ballyhooed ‘jobs’ predictions that the industry like to quote.

Follow us on Facebook ([MarcellusProtest](#)) and Twitter ([@Marcellus\\_SWPA](#)).

## **Upcoming Events in January:**

*(Full details, with latest updates, and a more extensive list of events, on-line at [www.marcellusprotest.org/event\\_calendar](http://www.marcellusprotest.org/event_calendar).)*

**January 9 (Albany, NY): [Rally at Annual ‘State of the State’ \[New York\]](#).** Gov. Cuomo delivers his annual address, and [New Yorkers Against Fracking](#) will be turning out in force to greet him. (all day)

**January 19 (Pittsburgh): [Frack Forum](#).** Join Marcellus Protest to watch the new documentary *Triple Divide*, and to help plan our activities for the New Year. (1:00pm)

**January 29-31 (Pittsburgh): [4th Annual Marcellus-Utica Midstream Conference](#).** This is a gas industry event at the Pittsburgh Convention Center. All the fracking bigwigs will be there, discussing ‘... yet another phase of resource monetization’ [their words] of life’s resources. Of course, Governor Tom Corbett will be their keynote speaker.

***Updated information on these topics (with links to original sources), along with our calendar of upcoming events, and other resources, can be found at [www.marcellusprotest.org](http://www.marcellusprotest.org).***