

# MARCELLUS MONTHLY

“All the Fracking  
News that Fits”

## JULY 2014

# Energy Independence Day

### **The Frackers Are Coming, The Frackers Are Coming!**

WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA: In local communities where “fracking” hadn’t been an issue, residents are waking up to find that the drillers are on their doorstep — sometimes quite literally. And those citizens are rising to spread the alarm.

When an overflow crowd attended a North Braddock council meeting, that body passed a new zoning ordinance, which

limits drilling to “industrial zones” (such as the site of US Steel’s Edgar Thompson Works). But some

### **Testify to the EPA on July 31**

PITTSBURGH: The proposed EPA regulations on CO2 emissions will be the subject of an all-day “public hearing” in Pittsburgh on July 31 — one of only four locations across the nation. To register, or to send written comment, see the EPA website: [www2.dep.gov/carbon-pollution-standards](http://www2.dep.gov/carbon-pollution-standards).

*Marcellus Protest* has not taken a position on EPA’s standards, *per se*. But we are committed to ending fracking, worldwide; and we see the United States falling behind as other countries move to more sensible policies. So here are just some of our misgivings over the Obama Administration’s proposal:

1. **It trivializes the urgency of our situation.** Whether to avoid alarming the electorate, or in hopes of placating industry, this proposal is soothingly understated. As just one example,

non-resident landowners are still trying to assemble a leasing consortium, perhaps intending to follow Allegheny County’s “non-surface” lease concept.

Elsewhere, the Butler Township Board of Commissioners only listened non-committally, as residents complained about plans for drilling in residential areas. Following the passage of Act 13, the Township had designated drilling as a “permitted use” anywhere in the township. But the Supreme Court’s ruling, in

*Robinson v Commonwealth*, declared Act 13’s zoning provisions unconstitutional. So residents are organizing to require the township to update its zoning accordingly.

Other Butler County residents are fighting to keep drilling away from Moraine State Park. But County Commissioner William McCarrier (founder of a business in the gas industry) [denies](#) that any citizens are worried. And in Muddy Creek Twp., which overlaps the Park, Commissioner Eric Saunders has said he doesn’t know of

anyone who “has issues with it.” He predicts, “It doesn’t matter, though. They’re going to take the gas.”

EPA’s choice of “carbon pollution” as its name for CO2 emissions works to place the climate crisis on a par with older, familiar concerns for “public health.”

### **Take Our Quiz**

#### **Complete this sentence:**

“The expression *American energy independence* means ...

- A. ... that [Americans can stop ‘buying oil from people who hate us’.](#)”
- B. ... that [America’s gas exports become as large as our oil imports, so that both can then grow exponentially, forever.](#)”
- C. ... that [America’s citizens are free to decide how much energy their communities will consume, and how much energy will be extracted from them.](#)”
- D. ... that [America’s energy corporations are endowed with inalienable rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.](#)”

[Click on your choice to see your score on our website.]

2. **It does too little, too slowly.** Even before the inevitable political compromises, the proposal addresses only one source of CO2 (albeit a large one). Nor does it put this action in context of the real challenge, which would show how far it falls short.

3. **It addresses consumption, but not extraction.** The most intractable political opposition to dealing with emissions has come from the extractive industries. So this proposal tries to duck that fight, although it is already being attacked as proof of “Obama’s war on coal.” Yet, if the Administration gives in on approving exports — as it has been doing — as a trade-off for tightening domestic emissions, we end up with the worst impact of each: fracking at home, and ever-increasing global CO2.

**Marcellus Protest is a project of the Thomas Merton Center (Pittsburgh, PA): [www.thomasmertoncenter.org](http://www.thomasmertoncenter.org)**

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## What's Next for "Protect Our Parks"?

ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PA: Almost two months after County Council authorized leasing at Deer Lakes Park, the County Executive, Rich Fitzgerald, has still not signed a final lease from his private deal with Range Resources. So neither the public nor Council knows what those lease terms will actually be. But Protect Our Parks has reiterated its commitment to preserve all nine Allegheny County Parks. And, while continuing to gather citizen petitions and speak with County Council, POP is now exploring further legal actions.

First, POP won't give up on Deer Lakes Park. It's shamefully clear that County Council did not merely fall short on "due diligence," but that its leaders worked closely with the Executive to subvert that process. POP would like to see the Deer Lakes Park decision overturned.

Further, even if drilling at Deer Lakes were to go forward, POP wants to establish that the County's decision-making was irresponsible and illegitimate. With eight more County parks at risk after Deer Lakes, this first vote must not be used to justify rubber-stamping future leases.

Recently, Executive Fitzgerald has tried to



*Armadillos, Shelf Life, and Moran & Masudi— at the "Weather Permitting" Summer Concert Series, with Pandemic Pgh, benefitting Protect Our Parks (June 22).*

[Photo: Ray Gerard]

obfuscate (and EQT has tried to 'reinterpret') a public presentation by that company which revealed plans to frack under Round Hill Park. But they were careful to leave the door open.

So POP has engaged an attorney and is evaluating legal options. A decision has yet to be made as to possible lawsuits, but POP is launching an appeal for donations to cover attorney's fees and other legal expenses. Already, POP has received financial support from the organizers and audiences of the "Weather Permitting" concerts in June [pictured, above].

You can contribute to the legal fund, and find more ways to support POP's effort, at their website, [www.protectparks.org](http://www.protectparks.org).

## Straws in the Wind

- **New York:** The State Assembly passed a 3-year moratorium on fracking, but no action has been taken in the upper house. Separately, the New York Court of Appeals is considering two lawsuits over local zoning of gas activity.
- **Colorado:** The Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission (COGCC) placed a temporary hold on deep-well injection of fracking waste, after seismologists detected an earthquake near a the Weld County injection site.
- **Harrisburg (PA):** Employees (now retired) of PA DEP testified that their managers directed them "absolutely not to talk to" residents who called the agency to report fracking-related health concerns.
- **Pittsburgh:** The Allegheny County Health Dept. held a session at Pitt on *Climate and Health: Let's Get Prepared*. Suggestions from participants about preventing climate change were stifled. (Executive Rich Fitzgerald dropped by, to ensure that ACHD was "on message." And Dr. Karen Hacker, his newly appointed head of ACHD, has said that she is unaware of any research that shows health impacts of fracking.)

## A Range of Resources

Please check out our 'Resources' page at [www.marcellusprotest.org/resources](http://www.marcellusprotest.org/resources), and follow us on Facebook ([MarcellusProtest](https://www.facebook.com/MarcellusProtest)) and Twitter ([@Marcellus\\_SWPA](https://twitter.com/Marcellus_SWPA)). Here is a sampling of our recent recommendations:

**Post Supreme Court Gas Drilling Workshop:** A PowerPoint presentation, prepared for Peters Twp. (PA) by Atty. John Smith, on the Court's legal reasoning for its *Robinson Twp* decision. Rigorous, but suitable for a lay audience.

**Active Hope:** Subtitled "How to face the mess we're in without going crazy," this book lays out an approach for finding hope in the midst of climate crisis. Their "answer" is a bit formulaic, but at least the authors are asking the right question. ISBN 978-1-57731-972-6.

## Upcoming Events in July:

**July 13 (Washington, DC):** Demonstration to "Stop Fracked Gas Exports at Cove Point and beyond." National [rally against LNG exports](#). Family-friendly on Sunday, speakers to include Tim DeChristopher and Sandra Steingraber; peaceful direct actions planned on Monday, for those prepared to risk arrest.

**July 26 (Slippery Rock University, Butler County PA) all day:** Second annual "Fossil-free Energy Fair," co-sponsored by Marcellus Outreach Butler and the Slippery Rock University Sustainable Enterprise Accelerator. [Details on [MOB website](#).]

**July 31 (Federal Bldg, Pittsburgh) 9:00 am—8:00 pm:** EPA Public Hearing on proposed "Clean Power Plan" for reducing carbon emissions from electric generation. You must [register on the EPA website](#) in order to speak at this hearing. [Story, p.1] (Updated details and a more extensive list of events at [www.marcellusprotest.org/event\\_calendar](http://www.marcellusprotest.org/event_calendar).)

**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).**