

MARCELLUS MONTHLY

“All the Fracking
News that Fits”

MARCH 2013



Can Anyone Stop a Pipeline?

PIKE COUNTY, PA: The Tennessee Gas Pipeline Northeast Upgrade (NEUP) is planning to clear 450 acres of land, cross 90 streams and affect 136 wetlands. For two years, concerned citizens and the Delaware Riverkeepers Network have made public comments, filed state and Federal legal appeals, and lobbied public officials; they've attended hearings, vigils, rallies, marches and other channels for advocacy.

As of this week, the project has received approval from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), and trees are being felled, although the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has not issued permits for construction in the wetlands.

FERC, in ruling that the project 'is in the public interest and necessity', passed the buck to other agencies — in particular, to the Pa.DEP—as having responsibility for any environmental impact of Marcellus drilling. FERC, for its part, was satisfied merely to see that Tennessee Gas Pipeline (TGP) can 'financially support the project' and that its proposed rates and tariffs are reasonable and that TGP 'has *taken steps to minimize* adverse impacts on landowners and surrounding communities' [our emphasis]. In other words, for FERC, it's

enough just to say that you're *trying*.

FERC decided not to require an Environmental Impact Statement (over the objections of citizens), deeming the NEUP not to be a 'major' construction project—and acknowledging that they had no definition for what constitutes a 'major' project.

With our legal and regulatory systems operating to distract and frustrate the project's opponents, some have begun 'direct action' to take responsibility for the environment into their own hands.

Demonstrators have chained themselves to gates, and taken up places in the trees. They are asking for volunteers to come to the area to deliver food and water, and to help protect them from harassment.

[Check our Facebook page for updates.]

Why Does County Council Cave In to Rich Fitzgerald?

by Joni Rabinowitz

Do you wonder why eight Allegheny County Council members, at their February 19 meeting, voted to sign away 9,000 acres of County-owned land at Pittsburgh International Airport, to Consol Energy for fracking, without studying the provisions of the lease they were approving? without calling in independent experts to explain the complicated provisions in the lease? Ask them.

Council member Barbara Danko did review the *draft* lease, as did Amanda Green Hawkins, and both of them voted No. Council members Robinson and Burn also voted No. But we don't know if any of them lobbied their fellow council members to take another look.

At the meeting, Ms. Danko expressed serious questions about the draft, including many stipulations on the royalties-- an "expected" \$450 million. Council's legislative director, Jared Barker, also raised serious questions a few days before the vote, including the length of the lease, who would control the contract and how the land would be taxed.

County Executive Rich Fitzgerald refused throughout the entire process to hear any of the warnings about the dangers of

fracking at the airport, or to slow down the process. He is obsessed with MONEY, MONEY, MONEY and JOBS, JOBS, JOBS. And he has Council in the palm of his hand, blinded by false glitter.

Advocates spent hours over several months testifying about all the dangers involved here. On Feb. 7, at the only "public hearing," attendees had to listen to an unexpected hour-long insulting and disgusting propaganda performance from Consol Energy, the Airport Authority and politicians from other counties ---all organized by Mr. Fitzgerald. Eventually, seventy of those who had signed up were given their turn to speak.

One of the most worrisome presentations there was from Peter Eichenlaub, a US Airways pilot and Director of Flight Safety for seven years. "The very nature of aviation is hazardous," he said. He described the disaster which could occur by mixing accidents and incidents which already occur on airport property with well heads, pumping stations and pipelines as obstacles. "It's an airport, not a gas field," he said. Eichenlaub asked to see a risk assessment (which hasn't been done.)

Since Council's vote, people trying to get a copy of the lease from the County have been stonewalled at every point. Rumors are circulating now that our land has been signed over in perpetuity to Consol Energy. We'll keep you posted.

'Marcellus Protest' is a project of the Thomas Merton Center (Pittsburgh, PA): www.thomasmertoncenter.org

We encourage you to print copies of this newsletter and to distribute it freely. You can download it from our website: www.marcellusprotest.org/news.

Overwhelming Power

by John Detwiler

I've been learning about Paris under German occupation during World War II. Although the Nazis showed no mercy toward Jews and dissidents, the German high command wanted Parisian theaters, galleries and nightclubs open – for their own pleasure, and for propaganda value. So I found my readings about the cultural life of occupied Paris to be quite compelling.

Performers, painters and writers (those who weren't Jewish, at least) had to decide how – and whether – to practice their arts. There was no escaping this choice, and no putting it off. Each artist literally staked his or her life upon the dictates of their own soul. But, in retrospect, we see their individual choices clustering around four broad options.

Opportunism: Although a few French Fascists supported the Nazis out of philosophical conviction, many less ideological artists simply saw an opening for advancing their own careers. With Jews forbidden to work (or worse), and the German *Propaganda Staffel* in need of friendly “French” content, even a second-rate talent or administrator could hope for a prestigious position. These ‘collaborationist’ artists saw the occupation as a “boom time” for their personal advantage.

Acceptance: Many other artists just “needed to work.” Seeing no better option, they aimed to produce something inoffensive to the censors (although inevitably involving *self-censorship*) and to derive whatever income they could, while claiming to “stay out of politics.” These ‘neutral’ artists simply adjusted to the new realities, hoping to protect their standard of living.

Defiance: At great cost, some artists refused to yield to the oppressor's power. They published anti-Nazi pamphlets, songs and books; their paintings portrayed “freedom” and “honor” from a patriotic, French perspective. They saw themselves as enemies of the Nazis— and the Nazis agreed. Many were imprisoned, not a few were executed, most were driven underground. Some were pacifists; and none expected their own efforts to win the war. But these ‘anti-authoritarian’ artists committed themselves to ensuring that the ideal of France, restored to its best self, would not be extinguished.

Struggle: A few artists were found among those Frenchmen and -women of the active *résistants* – as saboteurs, spies, or fighters. Some left France to join the Allied forces, others operated behind the lines in the *maquis*. These ‘activist’ artists were determined to bring down the Nazi regime or to die trying.

History does not repeat itself, but it rhymes.

Mark Twain

Now we know, of course, what no one knew then: that the Third Reich could be – and would be – defeated. But to those in occupied France, the Nazis were demonstrably invincible. Whether one shared their social theories, or simply recognized their inescapable might, it wasn't safe to bet against them.

Yet some people did.

At the end of the war, some of the resistance were honored, while many lay among the anonymous dead. Some French collaborators were put on trial, while many escaped unscathed. The France that emerged from World War II is still not perfect, but it has come through its ordeal, as did its artist heroes.

A Range of Resources

Some of the publications and presentations that we recommend: (Click the links or see our [Resource page](#).)

Strategic Messaging Toolkit: A guide for writing and presenting effectively about fracking (updated for 2013).

The **FracTracker Alliance**: A new name and an updated mission for FracTracker, after moving out of the University of Pittsburgh. If you haven't looked at FracTracker lately, check out their new mapping technology.

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

Upcoming Events in March (and beyond):

(Full details, with latest updates, and a more extensive list of events, on-line at www.marcellusprotest.org/event_calendar.)

March 9 (Pittsburgh, PA): Frack Forum (1:00 pm). Our third bimonthly Frack Forum, at the Friends Meeting House in Shadyside (Pittsburgh). Updates and strategizing about upcoming campaigns, sharing information and ways to work together.

March 19 (Latrobe, PA): Fracking and Your Health (7:00 pm). ‘Public Health Perspectives’ Practical information from medical professionals for those who are, or may be, at risk of health problems from exposure to fracking.

April 22 (all over the world): Earth Day. **Last year**, a Pittsburgh delegation from Marcellus Protest joined our ‘sister city,’ Mont Saint-Hilaire, among 300,000 people in Montreal. This year, watch our [calendar](#) and “Save-the-Date” for events here at home.

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.