

MARCELLUS MONTHLY

“All the Fracking
News that Fits”

MAY 2014



The “Hellbender” (giant salamander) arrives from the depths of the Monongahela, to lead marchers around Deer Lakes Park.

‘G2 Health Impact Series’ Holds its Third Event

MONACA, PA: Beaver County is the site for the third presentation in the *G2 Health Impacts Series*, sponsored by the G2 Health Impact Coalition. Created after the showing of Gasland II, the purpose of the G2 Series is to increase awareness of the health consequences of gas drilling.

The G2 team is focusing on southwestern Pennsylvania counties: Allegheny, Butler and now Beaver, to ensure that those communities, where health impacts usually receive less coverage, have access to this important information.

On Saturday, May 10th from 1:30-3:30 the G 2 Coalition and the Beaver County Marcellus Shale Awareness Committee present a panel discussion on the question: *Will Beaver County Become a Sacrifice Zone to Supply the World With Gas? A Free Public Forum on the Risks to our Water, Air, Food and our Children’s Health.*

Presenters are: Bill Hughes, Wetzel County Solid Waste Authority and Wetzel County Action Group; Yuri Gorby, PhD: Geomicrobiologist, Dept of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Rensselaer Institute; and Jill Kreisky, PhD, Associate Director, Southwest PA Environmental Health Project. Beaver County resident Debbie Lambert will serve as moderator.

The forum, free and open to the public, will be at the Community College of Beaver County, Learning Resources Center, Room 9103, Monaca, PA. Mark your calendars and join the discussion.

by Gloria Forouzan and Claudia Detwiler
for the G2 Health Impact Coalition

“Hands Around the Park”: Protect Our Parks Brings Families to Deer Lakes

WEST DEER TOWNSHIP (PA): It was a beautiful day to celebrate Deer Lakes Park, and to show the truth about this unfairly maligned County asset. Our experience was the opposite of the negativity being spread by County Executive Rich Fitzgerald (“no toilets,” “polluted lake”).

We arrived to find fishermen already enjoying the lakes, taking advantage of its recent stocking with trout, families using the playgrounds, and everyone appreciating the bright solidly-constructed ‘composting toilets’ (which the previous County administration had installed to save on water and provide year-round functionality).

The program of events included testimony from the “Earth Kids” club of Deer Lakes schools, music (Woody Guthrie updated to “This land was made to be frack-free”) and a march around the lakes, led by a educational salamander puppet.

Particular thanks to Terri for organizing the event, and Jessica as the voice of the Hellbender.

Committee Votes to Frack Deer Lakes Park: Proposal Heads to County Council

PITTSBURGH: The outcome was never in doubt, but Parks Committee Chairman Nick Futules was making up for lost time on April 30. After convening the committee for its third and final “public hearing” at 5:10pm, Mr. Futules had scarcely thanked the invited speakers before moving the matter to his “Out” basket at 5:45. This meeting contrasted with the committee’s second “hearing” which ran for nearly ten hours, recessing near midnight on April 23, and resuming on the 29th.

Voting “Yes” with Mr. Futules were committee members James Ellenbogen, Michael Finnerty, and Bob Macey; the only “No” vote was cast by Sue Means. (By an identical vote, the committee adopted an amendment meant to blunt the “blank check” criticism of the bill’s opponents, drafted by Council President John DeFazio and offered in committee by Mr. Macey.) Ms. Means was permitted to ask her questions of the presenters, but only after the vote had been taken.

The proposal now advances to a full and final County Council vote, on the agenda for Tuesday, May 6. Expect a marathon of public comment, with fracking advocates putting on a show of strength in support of County Executive Rich Fitzgerald.

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. Source citations for all articles are available upon request.

GARFIELD (PITTSBURGH): On April 4, Penn Avenue's monthly "first Friday" gallery night included a special installation by *Pittsburgh Artists Against Fracking*. Over 100 works were on display, and the artists donated a substantial portion of their sales to *Protect Our Parks*. Thanks to Bob and the artist community (and the POP volunteers who helped prepare and staff the space), for sharing their talents and supporting our parks and our environment.



Fracking in North Braddock?

NORTH BRADDOCK (PITTSBURGH): Property owners in this municipality (overlooking the Edgar Thompson Works of US Steel) have been receiving [letters](#) from an obscure land company, inviting them to join a leasing consortium. The landman doesn't disclose who their client is, but the Grandview Golf Course has been identified as the "anchor" property and is expected to be the site of any surface activity for drilling the leased acreage. The golf course itself is within 1.5 miles of the City of Pittsburgh, where natural gas development has been banned since 2010.

"Upon Reflection" on the Deer Lakes Park Struggle

PITTSBURGH: By the time you read this, the final vote on Deer Lakes Park may have been recorded. But, as of this writing, we can already see the shape and size of a transformation that won't be undone, regardless of which way the vote falls.

We began our efforts for the park with a simple, compelling rationale: Fracking must be stopped; and, before we can stop it, we must begin to slow its spread. So, what better start than to agree that *some* part of our land—just *one* piece of property—could be set aside as "off limits" for fracking?

We expected the effort to be hard, though we may not have realized just how hard it would become. We've come a long way in sharing knowledge and awareness of the fracking process and its consequences. Many members of Council have amazed

us with their diligence and perseverance. They've pursued technical and moral questions that no one told them to expect when they took office. And several have become personal friends.

At the same time, the economic exploitation of our communities has left our neighborhoods vulnerable to all sorts of false promises. And the political forces that have been unmasked, the pressures brought to bear on elected officials (and some private citizens) have sobered us with the breadth and depth of the power that we dared to challenge when we took on this task.

Within *Protect Our Parks*, the transformation has been impressive. Starting with a handful of people, we've been joined by dozens of others from across the County, many of whom "have never done anything like this before." Who can count the hours spent in community meetings, leafleting, writing, one-on-one

conversations—and in the Gold Room of the Courthouse?

The different skills, backgrounds and temperaments of citizens of all ages, working together, experiencing and overcoming the clashes that arise in any group where people are honest with each other, merged into a foundation for whatever we need to become for the next chapters of this story. We see and share the astonishing warmth and wisdom that our species is capable of demonstrating.

Humankind is just now awakening to an existential emergency, and—far from taking effective action—we are barely beginning to organize our response. In this context, Allegheny County Council has been our "learning lab." If we succeed—*when* we succeed, *wherever* we succeed—in pulling our world back from the brink, we may finally look back to realize that we didn't save the park; the park saved us.

A Range of Resources

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

[Marcellus-Shale.us](#): An amazing compendium of documents, videos, pictures and commentary, featuring Washington County (PA), but reaching out to other states and even other countries. Bob Donnan has been in (and over) the gas fields since the frackers arrived, and if what you're looking for isn't on his site, then it probably doesn't exist.

Upcoming Events in May:

May 10 (Beaver, PA), 1:30—2:30pm: "*Will Beaver County Become a Sacrifice Zone to Supply the World With Gas? A Free Public Forum on the Risks to our Water, Air, Food and our Children's Health.*" [See our story on p.1.]

May 18 (West Milton, Union County, PA), 4:00pm: "[Songs from the Sacrifice Zone.](#)" Celebrate the splendor of Central Pennsylvania, and witness to its vulnerability. Local musicians, help us work to think about it without plunging into despair.

(Updated details and a more extensive list of events at 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.