

NOVEMBER 2014

“Pay No Attention ... !”

Taking a hard look at what we're not meant to see, the Post Carbon Institute reports that the shale gas “boom” may end long before we've been told to expect.

In [Drilling Deeper](#), J. David Hughes challenges the US Energy Information Agency. This agency's data and estimates are the feedstock for public policy and corporate financial projections. [*The EIA is a part of the Dept. of Energy, at the head of which is Dr. Ernest Moniz, a top-tier “[fracademic](#),” and founding guru of the lucrative [MIT Energy Institute](#).*]

Drilling Deeper puts the environmental and health effects of fracking in the background, in order to focus on plain, unrelenting economics. The report notes that the EIA relies heavily on industry's numbers (and points to past “revisions” by which the EIA [cut some forecasts](#) by up to 90%). Based on such “false premises,” Hughes says, the EIA then makes “false promises,” which in turn become imbedded in policy choices. Instead, this report analyzes actual production data and financial results.

Impossibly optimistic estimates of future extraction have led to strategic blunders such as fast-track approval of gas exports, new gas-fired electric plants, and a low priority on renewable energy. On the contrary, Hughes predicts, simply maintaining the [current \(2014\)](#) levels of gas recovery “*let alone increasing ... at rates forecast by the EIA through 2040, will be problematic.*”

This sobering picture is driven by

- “Decline curves” for shale gas wells, falling by 60-90% within three years;
- Insatiable hunger for capital, simply to replace existing wells as they fail;

- Diminishing returns, as drilling moves to lower-quality geologies.

As this report came out, news from Wall Street was pointing in the same direction. Capital spending has burned corporate cash without boosting income. Acreage and other assets are being sold and spun-off, and a shakeout looms on the horizon.

As we have to learn again in every cycle, business optimism is self-reinforcing: rising on its own wind, and falling back

**“If something cannot go on forever,
it will stop.” Herbert Stein**

(Chair, Council of Economic Advisors, 1971-1974)

to earth with a thud. In the case of shale gas, the EIA's ‘supply’ numbers have been driving planned consumption, while its ‘demand’ forecasts attract fresh capital. So it's understandable that none of our corporate/government myth-makers want to pull back the curtain. Reality, when it breaks through, is going to be brutal. But we can't deny it forever.

Global Frackdown Report



*Demonstrators in Paris on the 2014
Global Frackdown.*

Photo credit: stopgazdeschiste.org

Whether it goes by *Gaz de schiste*, or *Fracking*, or *Ffracio* or some other name, the backlash against extreme gas extraction has spread around the world. This year's Global Frackdown (organized by [Food and Water Watch](#)) featured rallies from Australia to Wales, adding up to over 400 events in 34 countries.

Locally, Frackdown day coincided with the arrival of the Climate Marchers in Butler, en route to Washington DC by way of Pittsburgh. A Frackdown rally, and dinner for the marchers, were hosted by [Marcellus Outreach Butler](#).

Actions Against Fracking: Harrisburg & Washington DC

NOVEMBER 1-7: The group *Beyond Extreme Energy* has called for a week-long action in Washington DC, with the goal of stopping business-as-usual at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). [*See p.2 for links to details.*]

FERC is “where the buck [should] stop” on energy policy at the Federal level, but has been the designated push-over for the fossil fuel industry. No matter what lukewarm “findings” come from other agencies, FERC has the last word — and the pipelines and LNG exports roll on.

NOVEMBER 18: *Pennsylvanians Against Fracking* will hold a rally at noon on the steps of the State Capitol.

Whoever wins the November 4 election races, our state government will keep on working for the gas industry, as long as we let them get away with it. This rally will deliver our first public message to the incoming Governor and Legislators.

Contact *Marcellus Outreach Butler* to be included in the headcount for sharing transportation to Harrisburg.

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.



Gavin U'Prichard, a Climate Marcher from Edina MO, with one of their human-powered vehicles.

Photo credit: ClimateMarch.org

Actions and Witnesses

Here's how our neighbors, near and far, have been speaking out —and acting out—to push back against fracking.

- Pittsburgh families hosted the Climate March on October 14-16, sharing their homes and hosting a community meal for those who have been walking from Los Angeles to Washington, DC. (Wanda Guthrie led the organizing.)
- A rally at a Steelers game shamed the “pinkwashing” of big energy, after Baker Hughes announced that it would deliver a check to the Susan G. Komen Foundation at halftime. The company, who sells equipment and services to drillers, has also taken credit for shipping pink drill bits to

the shale fields to show their “breast cancer awareness.” Their PR stunt at halftime was [called off](#), but the Komen Foundation is still featuring Baker Hughes on its [website](#). (Briget Shields was a local rally organizer.)

- When Royal Dutch Shell brought a delegation to Wellsboro PA, from the Parliament of the Netherlands, the MPs took time to listen to local residents before leaving town — at the insistence of women in the delegation. The delegates took copies of *Shalefield Stories* and *Triple Divide* home with them, along with the impassioned words of Carolyn Knapp and Carol French. Shell has the government concession for gas extraction, and is trying to overturn the country's ban on unconventional wells.
- In Payette, Idaho, Alma Hasse [left jail](#) on her own recognizance, a week after her arrest at a public meeting. Alma, a founding member of Idaho Residents Against Gas Extraction (**iRAGE**), had refused to be gavelled-down at a county zoning meeting regarding approval for a gas treatment plant. When one of the commissioners contradicted Alma's previous 'public' testimony, she stood in the audience to defend her position.

When she continued to speak, she was removed in handcuffs and charged with “criminal trespass.”

- Protesters near Watkins Glen (NY) [blockaded](#) a gas-storage facility where giant salt caverns under Seneca Lake are being filled with natural gas.

News from **Protect Our Parks**



PITTSBURGH: Allegheny County Executive Fitzgerald has signed the lease to frack under Deer Lakes Park.

This final lease differs from the version that the Executive had shown to Council, and looks nothing like the original RFP. In its bid (as disclosed only after the lease had been signed), Range Resources took exception to virtually every one of the 'protections' that Mr. Fitzgerald touted when he issued the RFP. Range, the lone bidder, rejected 37 different provisions of the County's specification as being, in their view, “commercially unreasonable.”

Eight other County parks still need our support. Please sign our petition to place an Ordinance on the agenda of County Council; see www.protectparks.org.

A Range of Resources

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

[Busting the Shale Hype](#) A program of [The Post Carbon Institute](#), provides detailed, technically credible reports on the shale gas bubble and its economic and environmental consequences.

[The Environmental Costs and Benefits of Fracking](#) a scientific study published in the “Annual Review of Environment and Resources.” Contributing authors include faculty and staff of seven universities and government research facilities. The study notes potential benefits [as always, if “done well”] versus coal—but questions whether shale gas actually will displace coal — and points to threats of spills, wastewater disposal and loss of well integrity.

Upcoming Events in November:

November 1: Climate March (Washington, DC) Climate marchers, who passed through Pittsburgh October 14-16, are due to arrive at Lafayette Park, accompanied by supporters who join them for the day. Details at www.climatemarch.org.

November 2—7: Week of Action at FERC (Washington, DC) Non-violent direct action at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. All are welcome; some be prepared to risk arrest. See [Beyond Extreme Energy](#) for details.

November 6, 10 and 12: Your final opportunities to talk back to the Allegheny County Health Department, and to ensure that “fracking” is among the concerns recorded at their Community Meetings. Times and locations at www.marcellusprotest.org.

November 7 “The Overnighters” (7:15 pm, Harris Theater, Pittsburgh): This prize-winning documentary opens the Three Rivers Film Festival as “a modern-day Grapes of Wrath” about working conditions in the drilling fields. Tickets at 3rff.org.

(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.