

MARCELLUS MONTHLY

“All the Fracking
News that Fits”

OCTOBER 2013

Protecting Our Parks

RUSSELLTON: A group of concerned Allegheny County residents first approached County Council at its August 20 meeting, urging them to stand against fracking (and its related processes) in our County parks. Some Council members dismissed the citizens' concern as being premature, saying 'Drilling hasn't even come up for deliberation, let alone a vote.' But the people knew that unless the alarm was sounded early, a lease would be presented as a "done deal," just like the decision to frack at the airports. The county residents have joined forces in a grassroots campaign to **Protect Our Parks** ("POP").

Make no mistake: The people are responsible for the parks issue getting onto Council's radar. Just one week after that August 20th meeting, Councilwoman Barbara Daly Danko introduced legislation for a three-year moratorium on fracking in County Parks.

Call to action: Time is of the essence: we don't know when

Other News and Updates:

- The Huffington Post [reports](#) that Range Resources [*the most likely winner, and potentially the ONLY contender, for a lease on Deer Lakes Park*] now **claims not to know** the composition of some of their fracking fluids. Range made the surprising statement as part of its legal defense in a water-contamination lawsuit in Washington County.
- The Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), a member of the so-called "Center for Sustainable Shale Development," got another lesson in the ethics of gas industry public relations. EDF had coordinated a University of Texas air pollution study, which the American Petroleum Institute recently cited as "proving" that fracking is safe. Now EDF [complains](#) "API is deliberately twisting the science to support its agenda. That's irresponsible and misleading to the public." Uh-huh. (The study itself has been criticized for pro-industry bias.)
- In Balcombe (Sussex, UK), Cuadrilla has [applied](#) for permission to "flow test" the well which it drilled in defiance of citizen protests. Apparently reneging on prior assurances, Cuadrilla (headed by the former CEO of BP, who resigned in the wake of its Gulf of Mexico disaster) now seems poised to frack what it had tried to characterize as an "exploratory" site. [See our August newsletter.]

the vote on Ms. Daly Danko's proposal and/or a vote on leasing Deer Lakes Park will come before the Council. And, keep in mind that, although Deer Lakes Park is the first to be offered up for fracking, Round Hill and White Oak are likely to be next. **None of our parks are safe.** Here are some ways to help:

1. **Attend County Council meetings** (and, if you can, speak up). Council meets on alternate Tuesdays at 5 p.m. In order to address the Council, you will need to sign-up a day in advance.
2. **Communicate** with your Council members by phone or letter. Our message is simple: "No fracking in, on, under our parks; support Councilwoman Danko's moratorium."

Remember to say where in the County you live, since **some** Council members have said that they're not hearing from constituents in their own districts. And be sure to contact your "at large" Council members, too.

3. **Engage with other residents** in your area. POP is distributing information on this issue in County Parks and communities throughout the County. More folks are needed to help, please call: 724.485.9835, to help with outreach in your community or at the County park nearest you.

4. **Be seen and heard.** Join the march and rally, Saturday, October 19, during the Power Shift conference, to stand against Rich Fitzgerald's reckless plans to frack our parks. Plan to bring your recreational gear (Frisbees, beach balls, badminton rackets, etc.) Contact the [Shadbrush Collective](#) for details.

[On September 27, as we went to press, County Executive Rich Fitzgerald released a Request for Proposals: [RFP for Off-Site Extraction of Gas Under Deer Lakes Park](#). Proposals from would-be drillers are due on Friday, Oct. 25.]



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.

Caught in the Web

HARRISBURG: Political favors to the fracking industry didn't end with enactment of Pennsylvania's notorious Act 13. That law ripped our communities open for the drillers; now a new batch of legislation is being drawn up, aimed at turning our state into a captive market for fracked gas.

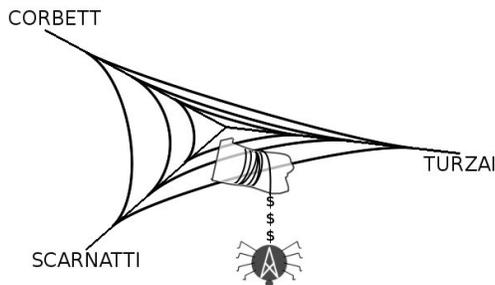
Under the Orwellian banner of [Marcellus Works](#), Republicans propose to wrap layer upon layer of natural gas give-aways into state law, inviting the gas industry to feast upon Pennsylvanians for years to come. Nine special-interest bills will be on the docket this fall. If adopted, they will suck up to \$100 million per year from the state budget, using it to guarantee future consumption of natural gas across the state.

Ironically, Act 13 itself contains earmarks for "natural gas development." In the first year of gas "impact fees", more than 5% of such payments were plowed back into building markets for fracked gas. But the GOP now proposes to tap directly into the state's General Fund, for *ten times as much more money*, while leaving Act 13's handouts in place. The new bills include:

HB 301 (Saylor, R—York) Tax credits to fleet owners for purchase of natural gas-powered trucks. \$25 million per year.

HB 302 (Moul, R—Adams) and **HB 303** (Watson, R—Bucks) Grants and loans to transit agencies for natural gas vehicles and generation for electric rail service. \$12.5 million per year.

HB 304 (Marshall, R—Beaver) *Statutory mandate* on transit agencies to buy natural gas buses. (Unspecified cost, which



Republicans are trussing up Pennsylvania for the fracking industry to devour.

will fall on local transit authorities.)

HB 305 (Denlinger, R—Lancaster) Tax credits to build vehicle refueling infrastructure. \$5 million per year.

HB 306 (Pickett, R—Bradford) Redirecting "Alternative Fuel" incentive funds to natural gas vehicles. (Cost not determined.)

HB 307 (Evankovich, R—Westmoreland) Exempt natural gas vehicles from air pollution standards. (Cost not determined.)

HB 308 (Saylor, R—York) Tapping the Clean Air Fund for additional grants for natural gas vehicles. \$6 million per year.

HB 309 (Grove, R—York) Establishing a "Natural Gas Vehicle Credit" program for businesses to invest in natural gas vehicles. \$30 million per year.

Only vehicles using "solely ... natural gas" will qualify for these programs; thus every awardee (family, business or community) becomes locked-in to buying natural gas fuel for the life of these new capital assets, regardless of how high gas prices may rise.

The implementation of these bills would involve transferring money from other state agencies to the Dept. of Environmental Protection, who would administer the pro-fracking awards. As a result, DEP will be carried even further away from its role of safeguarding Pennsylvania's air, soil and water.

[Other, less public, legislative efforts on behalf of the fracking industry include the gutting of protection for endangered species. See [our on-line article](#) for details.]

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:

[Social Costs of Fracking](#): A data-driven analysis of the social impact of fracking upon Pennsylvania, demonstrating increases in road accidents, in arrests for "social disorder" offenses and in sexually transmitted disease.

[FrackSwarm](#): An information clearinghouse for the worldwide citizens' movement to address the impacts of fracking. This on-line resource is searchable by location, topic, or keywords.

NOTE: Marcellus Protest is working on a catalog of neighborhood and regional fractivist groups. You are welcome to contact us at info@marcellusprotest.org for your suggestions to be included in our list.

Upcoming Events in October:

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

October 9 (Pittsburgh—Lawrenceville): "[Fracking and Health](#)," a continuing series. At this first presentation, former gas-field workers will talk about the job-related health effects of fracking. At the Lawrenceville Moose Lodge, 120 51st Street, 7:00pm.

October 16 (Pittsburgh—Oakland): "[Wild and Scenic Film Festival](#)." An evening of films and a celebration of local efforts to combat climate change, presented by the Allegheny Defense Project. At Phipps Conservatory, Schenley Park, 6:00pm.

October 18-21 (Pittsburgh—Convention Center): [Power Shift](#) brings 10,000 activists to Pittsburgh to organize and fight for a clean and just energy future.

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.