

SEPTEMBER 2013

*Parks won't be  
**FRACKED***

*... without a  
**FIGHT!***

PITTSBURGH: In our [August edition](#), we told of plans by Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald to push the County Council into leasing our publicly-owned Allegheny County Park land for toxic fracking operations.



Since then, members of Marcellus Protest, working in alliance with other area interest groups and concerned individuals, have launched the Protect Our Parks campaign. Our August 20<sup>th</sup> press conference, on the steps of the Allegheny County Courthouse, was well covered by local media outlets. (See links to press releases at [www.marcellusprotest.org/protect-our-parks](http://www.marcellusprotest.org/protect-our-parks).)

That press conference was held to coincide with the first post-recess meeting of the Allegheny County Council, where 40 citizens, from all walks of life and every corner of the County (and joined by many more attending in support), spoke up to their Council representatives with a clear, unified message. One after another, speakers demanded that Council uphold their duty to conserve, maintain, and preserve the integrity and natural environment of each of our nine Allegheny County Parks, by rejecting any proposals to allow fracking anywhere in, on, or under our parks.

The Council heard that night from teachers and physicians, researchers and recreationalists, and concerned parents who feared the future their children would inherit, if our representatives were foolish enough to allow their parks to be fracked.

Our treasured parks are, by design, places of respite, where all of us can relax, recreate, and renew amidst clean air, untainted waters, and the calm and tranquil beauty of nature. Although the adverse effects of inviting fracking into or underneath the parks may seem obvious to those of us already intimately

familiar with fracking's destructive impact, speakers responded to Council's requests that we tell them not just how the prospect of fracking in our parks makes us *feel*, but that we bring to them *facts* that demonstrate that our fears are indeed founded.

So fifteen speakers returned the following week, at the Council's August 27<sup>th</sup> meeting, and did just that – delivered to them evidence, in the form of scientific studies and investigative reports (including a [recent report](#) compiled by the National Parks Conservation Association) – all which show that indeed, the risks *are* real and there is *much* to lose.

Wouldn't you want to have a hand in deciding the fate of your County Parks, which, one-by-one, hang in the balance? The Protect Our Parks campaign invites and urges all to SPEAK UP to your Allegheny County Council Representatives! JOIN US at the Sept 10<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> County Council meetings! Tell your neighbors, friends, and fellow park-goers that NOW is the time to PROTECT OUR PARKS!

[Please check the ['Protect Our Parks'](#) web page regularly, for current news and updates.]



*Range Resources has been in "private business meetings" with the County Executive, positioning to be the first fracker into our public parks. So just what are Range's new billboards trying to tell us?*

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

## International News

BALCOMBE (Sussex, UK): The occupation here, 30 miles south of London, is now in its second month. On July 25 (quickly named “Day 1”), residents held a “Great Gas Gala” on the outskirts of town, where privately-held Cuadrilla Resources was about to drill an “exploratory” shale well. The picnic turned into a *de facto* blockade when Cuadrilla’s first rigging truck arrived and citizens refused to move aside. By Day 3, the camp of protesters had grown to 200 people; a flying wedge of 100 police pushed a few trucks through the crowd. Since then, every truck into or out of the site has been flanked by police, some taking an hour or more to pass through.

At Days 24-25, over 1000 people joined the occupation. Some speakers described fracking’s impact on Pennsylvania, and read aloud from our list of “The Harmed”. Police became aggressive, and those arrested included the UK’s only Green party Member of Parliament. Meanwhile, Cuadrilla’s CEO, Tony (now, Lord) Browne, who resigned from BP after its Gulf disaster, remains a key figure in Government. [[www.frackoff.org.uk](http://www.frackoff.org.uk)]

AIRTH (Scotland): Dart Energy (ASX: DTE) is running short of cash, and has announced “restructuring” as it tries to move into coal-bed methane development near the Firth of Forth. Over 2500 citizen objections had convinced local councils to withhold permission for drilling. Although the Scottish government has tried to supercede local authority, the project may be doomed. [[www.ft.com](http://www.ft.com) and [frackoffscotland.org.uk](http://frackoffscotland.org.uk)]

ZURAWLOW (Poland): Farmers and villagers have occupied a field since June 3, when they discovered fences being erected by Chevron Polska. The company demands access to the land as its “private property”, but citizens argue that the field is merely leased, that the lease doesn’t give Chevron the right to fence the land, and that Chevron’s activities on the land go beyond those



“Day 12” - Police escorting a Cuadrilla vehicle through massed protesters at Balcombe drilling site.

specified in the lease. Chevron describes its Polish operations as “key” to the companies plans, although Talisman Energy and Marathon Oil have already taken steps to abandon efforts there. [[www.bloomberg.com](http://www.bloomberg.com) and [occupychevron.tumblr.com](http://occupychevron.tumblr.com)]

BUENOS AIRES: Some 5000 demonstrators faced off with police, protesting a \$1.2 billion agreement between Chevron and the state-owned energy company “YPF”. Chevron has plans to frack in Vaca Muerta, which protesters said “will destroy the nation’s largest freshwater basin.” [[www.presstv.ir](http://www.presstv.ir)]

LAGOS (Nigeria): The Olokola Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) export project is collapsing as BP, Shell and Chevron have all withdrawn funding. The Nigerian government had balked at passing a “Petroleum Industry Bill” to ensure favorable terms for the export project. [[allafrica.com](http://allafrica.com)]

## 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:

**Dr. Ben Stout** (Prof. of Biology, WV Jesuit Univ.) is an outspoken expert on the water contamination effects of fracking. See his reports on [how to protect your well water](#), and an [analysis of fracking waste](#) transported by trucks.

**Non-Profit Quarterly:** News [analysis of the “shake-up” at the Heinz Endowments](#), from the perspective of other large grant-making foundations and their managements.

**United Opponents of Fracking International:** A one-stop shop for updates on community activities around the globe – and how Pennsylvania serves as a cautionary tale for the rest of the world.

### Upcoming Events in September:

(Full details, with latest updates, and a more extensive list of events, on-line at [www.marcellusprotest.org/event\\_calendar](http://www.marcellusprotest.org/event_calendar).)

September 14 (Pittsburgh’s North Shore): **Great Ohio River Relay (multi-day)** Activists will carry a baton the length of the Ohio River (Pittsburgh to Cairo, IL), walking, running, and bicycling, to bring awareness to defending our water.

September 25 (Philadelphia, PA): **Shale Gas Outrage (all day)**. The fracking industry is gathering for their annual conference, and Shale Gas Outrage will again bring together thousands of protestors tell them to *Stop Fracking!*

**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).**