

MARCELLUS MONTHLY

“All the Fracking News that Fits”

OCTOBER 2014

Tom, Tom: The Beat Goes On

In their debates, Governor Tom Corbett and would-be-Governor Tom Wolf are in sharp disagreement over just how much money it should take to buy Pennsylvania.

Mr. Corbett could be the first governor to lose a reelection campaign in this state; and he deserves that place in history. But Mr. Wolf's own candidacy is nothing to cheer about, either.

[NOTE: Under 501(c)3 tax regulations, Marcellus Protest couldn't endorse either candidate, even if we wanted to.]

On the one hand, Tom (Corbett) has made state government into a wholly-owned subsidiary of the gas industry, retooling DEP into the “Department of Expedited Permitting,” and pushing the disgraceful *Act 13* through the legislature.

On the other hand, Tom (Wolf) promises to tap the wealth of the Marcellus Shale and to fuel the state's budget by natural gas. As for any difference between their core values, his critique of Tom (Corbett) comes down to leaving money on the table.

Yet, despite the disappointing choice that this election has to offer, opponents of fracking can take satisfaction from seeing the issue move onto the electoral agenda at all.

It's striking that, late in the race and dropping in the polls, Tom (Corbett) had his DEP release its first-ever report on fracking and drinking water — if only to appear less brazenly on the make for the drillers.

The DEP also announced its largest fine “in the state's shale drilling era” against



Range Resources hopes its billboards will help Tom Corbett, friend of fracking, to come from behind in his fight for reelection as Governor.

Range Resources, for flagrant violations and toxic waste discharges from water impoundments in Western Pennsylvania.

(Having settled with DEP, however, Range Resources is still stonewalling the affected residents, who continue to seek relief through the courts. And, per its consent order, DEP states for the record that the violations had “no impact on drinking water.” So the industry's fiction will be intact, that no harm has ever been proven from fracking.)

Range Resources can explain a \$4 million fine to its shareholders as an acceptable risk, in the speculative business of fracking.

And, if precedent holds, the company may pay out far less cash than that, once the

heat is off and further deals are done in Harrisburg. So Range Resources will “take one for the team” for the sake of keeping the frackers' best friend in office.

But Big Business always hedges its friendships on both sides of the aisle. The shale industry's support for Tom (Corbett) is carefully indirect, so they

won't need to eat crow in public if Tom (Wolf) wins.

Thus, at the industry's recent show in Pittsburgh, their Marcellus Shale Coalition kicked-off a new public relations campaign to “educate the public in advance of the election” on the alleged benefits of fracking. (They also pledged to “take back” that word *fracking*, to rehabilitate it from its associations with social and environmental disruption.)

Chevron also chose this past month to step forward as the first signatory to the “best practice” standards issued a year ago (to great self-acclaim) by the now-moribund Center for Sustainable Shale Development. Range Resources is also doing its part with a blitz of billboards touting gas as good for the economy.

Whichever “Tom” is Governor, we'll have no champion in the statehouse. But such election-season fatalism needn't spoil the satisfaction of hearing truth finally being told — even if that's only from political self-interest. And we can take heart whenever DEP finally admits to realities that ordinary citizens have seen all along.

Harry Truman was quoted as saying, “It's amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit.” We accomplish nothing by sulking when the news media cite new, more “respectable” sources for the same stories that they ignored when coming from us.

There's still plenty of work to be done, and latecomers to the movement are to be welcomed. We'd speculate in vain about which contribution, by whom, was the one that turned the tide; there's no way to know, and it really doesn't matter. When any effort bears fruit, we can all celebrate—then go back out and do more.

*“I don't think it's been horrible.
The sun still comes up.”*

Patrick Henderson

Governor Tom Corbett's “Energy Executive” describing fracking's impact on Pennsylvania

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.

The Peoples Climate March

NEW YORK: Far back in the line-of-march, the delegation from Pittsburgh stood for hours before beginning to creep ahead, and had barely reached the official starting point when it was time to find buses for home. Then they sat for more hours as traffic inched out of Manhattan, finally leaving their buses at 3:00 a.m., 24 hours after starting out.

It was a great day.

New York was one of many venues around the world where families, unions, non-profits, and a few elected officials



Fracking was high on the agenda of some 400,000 marchers. (AP Photo/Jason DeCrow)

appealed for action on climate change. We hope that the world leaders have heard their message.

The County Health Department can spell S-H-A-L-E!

PITTSBURGH: Dr. Karen Hacker was chosen to head the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) after Dr. Bruce Dixon was forced out by County Executive Fitzgerald. Then, asked to speak at County Council about leasing public parks, she denied any awareness of studies on health impacts of fracking.

But ACHD now has a new section of its website [see Resources, below] with a full page of scientific surveys and primary research on fracking and health. We congratulate Dr. Hacker's department for

its inquisitiveness, and hope that this new awareness will be reflected in the performance of its responsibilities.

The website (www.achd.net/shale) promises updates on air quality monitoring of the fracking (under County leases) occurring at Pittsburgh International Airport and at Deer Lakes Park.

ACHD is also holding public meetings across the County [see below], which — if residents are able to be heard — offer Dr. Hacker an opportunity to learn even more about this growing health concern.

News from Protect Our Parks



FRAZER TWP: The DEP re-issued drilling permits for the three "original" Marcellus wells on the Gulick farm, across the road from Deer Lakes Park. (These are wells that Range Resources either was or wasn't "going to drill anyway" — depending on who was asking — when Allegheny County Council debated leasing the park itself.) Range Resources first received permits in 2013, but had allowed them to expire while it pursued its exclusive deal with County Executive Rich Fitzgerald. Construction of a well pad will begin soon, from which drilling can eventually reach the County's park.

Meanwhile, Mr. Fitzgerald has still not unveiled the actual terms of the lease which Council authorized him to sign last May. It seems that he and the company share an interest in keeping the lease out of sight for as long as they can: perhaps until after drilling has actually begun.

Although Mr. Fitzgerald denies any plans of his own for more leasing, Councilman Macey is fronting for the Executive at the County Airport, and seismic testing is happening near Round Hill Park.

A Range of Resources

Please check out our 'Resources' page at 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:

Public Herald From the people who made "Triple Divide," Public Herald is an independent, non-profit group of journalists and artist, performing investigative journalism in the public interest. They run many fracking stories.

Unconventional Natural Gas Well Projects: Scientific Research Part of the Allegheny County Health Dept. website, compiling scientific research and reviews on gas operations and public health. The referenced studies include some unequivocal conclusions about the negative impact of drilling on neonatal health and development, as well as the release of known toxins by drilling activity. (Links are provided to even more extensive bibliographies.)

Upcoming Events in October and Beyond:

Throughout October: "Community Meetings" held by the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD), at venues across the County. An opportunity to encourage ACHD to address the threat that fracking poses to public health. For dates and locations, see www.marcellusprotest.org.

October 26-27 (University of Pittsburgh): "Shale and Public Health." Sunday afternoon and Monday, sponsored by the Pennsylvania League of Women Voters. Free (but registration is required). Speakers from schools of public health and medicine. Details at shale.palwv.org.

November 4: ELECTION DAY Fracking has made it into the top rank of talking-points in Pennsylvania's gubernatorial contest.

(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.