

Is Gas Drilling Occurring Near You? Concerned about water? Here's what you need to know.

In the next few years, several thousand wells will likely be drilled into the Marcellus shale formation here in Pennsylvania.

This drilling could be an economic boom, but it could also be a nightmare for our communities and our environment, particularly our streams, rivers and drinking water sources.

- Each Marcellus well uses between three and five million gallons for hydraulic fracturing. Each well can be fractured several times.
- Each well produces a million or more gallons each of heavily polluted wastewater, often containing more salt than seawater. Few treatment plants are equipped to treat this water. By 2011, the state projects that gas wells will be generating 19 million gallons of wastewater per day.
- Well pads are up to 5 acres each, and roads and pipelines will be needed to serve the wells. The resulting stormwater runoff and erosion and sedimentation could heavily damage our streams.

Significant damage has already occurred as a result of drilling in the Marcellus shale.

- Several small streams in Western Pennsylvania were dewatered by drilling companies withdrawing water for fracturing.
- In 2008, the Monongahela River became too polluted, partially because of Marcellus shale wastewater, to serve as a water source for industrial users and drinking water consumers.
- Dunkard Creek in Greene County recently experienced a massive fish kill as a result of a bloom of golden algae. While the salty water conditions needed for the algae to survive are being blamed on mine discharges, it is likely the algae 'hitchhiked' to the region on drilling equipment.
- Residents in Dimock Township in northeast Pennsylvania have had their drinking water wells so contaminated by drilling that at least one well has exploded from methane migration.

So what can you do?

- Be aware of the possible negative impacts of drilling. Keep these in mind if you are considering negotiating a lease. If you decide to lease, consult an attorney to assist in writing protections for your land, streams, and water supplies into the lease. PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) does not require companies to test your water supply for some important components. Part of any lease agreement could include having the company test for more than DEP requires.

Contact MWA for a list of attorneys working to assist landowners with leasing issues.

- Have your water sampled. DEP requires drilling companies to sample water supplies within 1000' of the well head. If you are within 1000', you may consider also having your water sampled by an independent company at your expense.
- Even if you are not within 1000' of the well but drilling is occurring in your area, it may be beneficial to have your water tested. Contamination has been reported further than 1000' from the well head.

Contact MWA for general information on water testing as well as a list of DEP certified labs providing testing.

- Testing parameters should include chloride, bromide, sulfate, strontium, barium, manganese and magnesium at the very least. Ask the sampling company to send a representative to your home to conduct the testing.

Contact MWA for a more extensive list of possible contaminants that you may consider testing for.

- Visit our website, www.mtwatershed.com. We have many resources available online to assist you, and we also have information on how to get involved in advocating for better laws and enforcement to protect our waters.



Mountain Watershed Association
PO Box 408/ 1414-B Indian Creek Valley Road
Melcroft, PA 15462



Mountain Watershed Association
working toward a fishable
swimmable Indian Creek

(724) 455-4200
www.mtwatershed.com