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Local epicenter of shale drilling likely site for EPA fracking study

BY LAURA LEGERE (TIMES-SHAMROCK WRITER)

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Susquehanna and Bradford counties have been selected as one among five areas across the country that might be chosen by the Environmental Protection Agency for case studies of oil and gas drilling's impact on drinking water. The case study finalists are all places where oil or gas wells have been hydraulically fractured and where drinking water contamination has been reported.

The finalists were included in the draft study plan the EPA released last week for its multiyear investigation of the possible link between groundwater contamination and hydraulic fracturing or fracking, the process of injecting a mixture of water, sand and chemicals into underground rock formations to crack the rock and release the oil or gas trapped there.

The EPA plans to investigate the full life cycle of the hydraulic fracturing process, from the moment water for fracking is withdrawn from waterways through the mixing of chemicals and the fracturing of wells to the disposal of the wastewater that returns to the surface.

The agency selected five areas - two in Pennsylvania and one each in Colorado, Texas and North Dakota - as case study finalists. It may choose three to five of them as retrospective case studies, or studies of areas already reporting impacts from drilling. Other areas, including Greene County, Pa., are proposed as prospective case studies where the agency will seek to measure any impact from fracking as it happens.

Marcellus Shale drilling areas in Bradford and Susquehanna were chosen as case study finalists so the agency can investigate contamination in groundwater and drinking water wells, as well as suspected surface-water contamination from a fracturing fluid spill and methane contamination in water wells, according to the draft study plan. The agency will use both existing data and information gathered through its own testing and modeling to determine if any contamination is linked to fracking activities.

A panel of scientists will review the draft study plan on March 7 and 8. The EPA will begin the study as soon as it incorporates the panel's recommendations. The agency plans to release initial research results by the end of 2012 and may issue an additional report in 2014 after further research.

Contact the writer: lleger@timeshamrock.com

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ConcernedBC Yesterday 11:43 AM

A drilling rig falls off a transport truck and the state police don't investigate it? This is a big piece of equipment to have fallen off a truck and caused no damage. Some kind of miracle! These accidents without police investigation seem to be a common thing. I hear the fire departments don't get called out in many cases, it's all taken care of "privately." If a private citizen handled things in this manner, would we be called to task? Why is it important that this go thru official channels? Because it is important to have an accurate accounting of the true safety record / risks associated with this development.

CamptownGal and 2 more liked this [checkbox] [checkbox]

Guest Yesterday 05:48 AM

Ahhh, now they want to study the effect. Why didn't they do that in Texas?

3 people liked this. [checkbox] [checkbox]

Wodewarrior Yesterday 10:14 AM

Since the gas companies don't have to disclose the contents of the fracing fluid - due to the "Halliburton Loophole", to the Clean Water Act, how will the EPA know if the chemicals they find come from the hydrofracturing? I would love to see the state or county put an ordinance in place stating that if you want to hydrofracture in our area, you must disclose the contents of the fluid as well as provide a sample for independent testing. Every time I see the Halliburton tankers on the road, I get a creepy feeling, knowing that if one of them has an accident and dumps their cargo in a creek, every thing downstream is doomed.

CamptownGal and 1 more liked this [checkbox] [checkbox]

CamptownGal Yesterday 12:34 PM

Because Texas has a long history of being an Oil and Gas state, with a bought and paid for legal "protection" for Oil and Gas over the people. PA hasn't finished being bought and paid for yet... but it is almost done now.

1 person liked this. [checkbox] [checkbox]

Notafanofdrilling Yesterday 05:49 AM

Does anyone know what "suspected surface-water contamination from a fracturing fluid spill" is being referred to above?

[checkbox] [checkbox]

CamptownGal Yesterday 12:31 PM

If you go to CO and find the dead spots in the prairie that's from frac fluid spills. It takes more than 1 million gallons of frack-fluid (450 tanker trucks) to frack a single well - 6 wells permitted on a single pad. For a listing by NY state on what is in frac fluid go here <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/H...>

[checkbox] [checkbox]

ConcernedBC Yesterday 11:37 AM

I think this was one of Cabot's many "uh-oh's" over in Susquehanna County. They had a series of spills on the same wellpad, one of which got into a wetland.

[checkbox] [checkbox]

granmarocks Yesterday 11:05 AM

No, I know there was an accident over on Leraysville Road a few weeks ago that was not reported in the paper. This is what causes distrust

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between the tax payers and the natural gas companies. We should be informed of all spills.



Notafanofdrilling Yesterday 06:09 PM

Granma, see what additional data you can dig up and post it here. Does it sound like the same incident that Hosie is referring to near Warren Center? Or were there two incidents?



Ron Hosie ★ Yesterday 11:36 AM

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Review is aware of an accident, apparently involving a drilling rig coming off of a transport truck, in the vicinity of Warren Center. The Review was not aware of it at the time it occurred and we have not published anything about it. The reason is that it apparently was not investigated by the state police and so there is no official report on it. We understand that the fire department was summoned but repeated attempts to reach the fire chief for comment have been ignored.



Notafanofdrilling Yesterday 06:17 PM

Since you have some data on this one, keep on digging! We can't let them get away with unreported accidents. Get what data you can, compare to granma's data, contact PennDOT with any info, and get ahold of the fire chief even if you have to catch him personally outside the firehouse. Go interview the neighbors in the area that the accident supposedly happened, link into the gossip at any local watering holes, or put an editorial in the paper about it asking for community information. If the state police didn't investigate, it was probably because they weren't informed at the time. Inform them now and they may still investigate. A CDL driver must report accidents!

1 person liked this.



Guest Yesterday 05:48 AM

It sounds like pollution of our streams and river.



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