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## Green Dream Team!



Pictured: Protect PT's Staff! Front: Gillian, Yvonne, May, Brendan, Laura; Back: Fabi, Emily, Tom, and Jim



*Congratulations, Kiara!* 🎉

Our Communications Manager, Kiara Jimenez, will be leaving us this summer to attend the University of Virginia School of Law—a top 5 law school—with a very generous scholarship! Read a personal note from her about her time at PPT at [www.protectpt.org/careers](http://www.protectpt.org/careers).

## Upcoming Events

- **May 4th:** Municipal Sustainability Grant Writing Workshop @ Protect PT, 3344 Rt. 130, Harrison City, 10 - 11am. For more info, go to: [www.protectpt.org/msp](http://www.protectpt.org/msp)
- **May 2nd:** Reimagine Turtle Creek Communities Vision Session 6-8pm @ St. John's Lutheran Church, 715 Lincoln Highway, North Versailles
- **May 8th:** Hike through Duff Park @ 10am
- **May 28th:** Lunch and Learn @ 12pm with Dr. Todd Potts, Economics Professor
- **May 30th:** Compressor Station Public Comment Prep @ PPT, 3344 Rt. 130 7pm
- **June 1st:** Book Discussion w/ Justin Nobel at Patagonia PGH, 6-9pm
- **June 13th:** Guardian Compressor Station Hearing Cont. 7pm @ 2001 Municipal Ct.

**For a list of all upcoming events, please visit [www.protectpt.org/events](http://www.protectpt.org/events).**





# Wins Against Radioactive Fracking Waste

## Making Headway in the Courts for the Residents of Plum

Residents of Plum Borough, Allegheny Co., have been dealing with the impacts of a fracking waste injection well for years now, but Protect PT is making headway in the courts. Two big wins have happened recently that may impact the future of this site. First, in a decision in late January, the Commonwealth Court noted in their opinion that members of the Plum Zoning Hearing Board (ZHB) do indeed have the power to stop Penneco from expanding their injection well, despite originally believing otherwise. Furthermore, the court stated that a municipality **can condition the expansion on certain prerequisites and standards** necessary for the preservation of the health, safety, and welfare of the community. As for this injection well, they found that the ZHB made **no findings** with respect to traffic or **health, safety, and general welfare**. Now, the ZHB will have to make additional findings of fact or conduct further hearings to establish such facts prior to granting Penneco's request to expand its injection well operations.

Then, in March, the Environmental Appeals Board (the board that hears challenges to federal permits) found that EPA never served adequate notice of its final permit decision for the Sedat 4a well; therefore, the time for appeal never began. This left the door open for other parties to appeal, in addition to Protect PT's appeal with our partner, Three Rivers Waterkeeper. In a letter to EPA last year, Protect PT notified EPA that they

failed to follow proper hearing protocol as outlined in Code of Federal Regulations 40 CFR 25.5 or 124.10. "We see this conduct by the EPA happening in several communities around the state," said Gillian Graber, Executive Director. Local and state officials should be on the lookout for new permits in their area. Public participation is an essential part of this permitting process, and communities should not be left out of this process.

## No More Toxic Roads!

Protect PT joined partners at Earthworks in calling for a moratorium on road spreading of gas industry waste. Right now, conventional gas waste is regularly spread on our roads as a dust suppressant and de-icing agent. This exposes residents to the toxins in the waste.

We have used a series of meetings with the PA Department of Environmental Protection to urge them to close the loophole that makes road spreading of waste possible, and the DEP Citizen's Advisory Council directed their staff to report back about the severity of the issue as well as potential solutions. Continued public pressure could result in a new regulation that could protect residents from this dangerous disposal method. Stay tuned for another update in the next newsletter!

## County-wide Protection from Fracking Waste

In March 2024, Fayette County passed a state-of-the-art ordinance regulating fracking waste injection wells. It included text originally drafted by Protect PT's Community Advocate, Jim Cirilano, which will

ensure that any injection wells in the county carry liability insurance and set aside bonds for the capping of the wells. The ordinance also requires they be located in non-residential zones and at least 2,500 feet away from any structure. This caps almost a year of work by Mountain Watershed Association, Protect PT, local residents, and diligent local elected officials, and it represents one of the largest jurisdictions in PA to restrict injection wells. Protect PT will continue to educate lawmakers on how they can protect their community against radioactive, toxic fracking waste.

## Sustainability TCWAC and Pitt Grad Students Visit Garden

Earlier this year, Dr. Kay Shimizu, a professor at the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public and International Affairs (GSPIA) invited our Communications Manager, Kiara, to serve as a guest lecturer in her Politics of Food, Land, and Sustainability graduate course. In it, Kiara led a grant writing workshop for the grad students. May, Protect PT's Sustainability Coordinator, and Laura, Protect PT's Municipal Sustainability Outreach Manager, worked with the students, who provided wonderful insights from an academic perspective, to produce a grant application for Protect PT's ReImagine TCWAC initiative. In April, the class capped the semester off on a very sustainable note!



Photo Credit: Kiara Jimenez

The ever impressive Maren Cooke graciously invited Kiara and May along with Dr. Shimizu and the students to her home, an architectural and sustainable marvel that is nestled in beautiful Frick Park, that she has rebuilt as a demonstration site for green building and green living. Maren is a planetary scientist by training who commits her time to environmental education and activism in Southwestern Pennsylvania around climate, air quality, plastics, food, and justice. She is an active participant in the ReImagine TCWAC program. On top of Maren's home is a roof garden with a solar installation and apiary along with an abundance of plants. Her backyard has its own myriad of other plants (that she was generous enough to share with us), and the interior of her home is marked by beautiful tree parts and eclectic, environmental spectacles (including many, many dragons). Dr. Shimizu is looking forward to continuing her relationship with Protect PT and TCWAC next year, when she'll be introducing a new cohort of students.



Photo Credit: Kiara Jimenez

## Compressor Station Hearing

Protect PT called expert witnesses at both the March 14 and April 11 hearings for the first proposed Compressor Station in Penn Township. Protect PT called expert witnesses at both the March 14 and April 11 hearings.



Pictured: Marc Glass Photo Credit: Kiara Jimenez

Marc Glass, an expert from Downstream Strategies, LLC, informed the Zoning Hearing Board that radioactive particulate matter will be released from both the Guardian Compressor Station and the two nearby fracking well pads, Aphrodite and Poseidon.

He further informed the panel that the incidence of childhood leukemia nearly doubled in households living within a mile of well pads and compressor stations and there was a noticeable reduction in childhood birthweight in those same households. William Thornton, of Thornton Acoustics testified that the low-frequency noise and vibrations coming from compressor stations are notorious for their ability to travel great distances, as well as their ability to penetrate walls and structures. He stated that the current Penn Township Ordinance is completely ineffective when it comes to controlling harmful noise. The next compressor station hearing will be June 13th. Protect PT will call additional witnesses in public health and safety. We anticipate that the public will be invited to comment at the July 11 hearing. See our events list if you are interested in making a public comment at the hearing; we can help!



Pictured: Jim Cirilano, Gillian Graber, Lisa Johnson, Esq., and Sil Caggiano Glass Photo Credit: Kiara Jimenez

## MAWC Listens!

After several meetings hosted by Protect PT and partners, where residents could speak up about our public water supply being wasted on fracking, the Municipal Authority of Westmoreland County (MAWC) met Protect PT halfway on proposed policy changes. MAWC heard loud and clear from community members that fracking should be seen differently from residential water consumption because fracking uses up the water permanently: Fracking wastewater cannot re-enter any watershed in a treatable condition. Based on this, we argued—and MAWC agreed—that fracking corporations should pay more per gallon they consume. The price was nearly doubled, starting April 1. While some headway was made, this issue still needs to be resolved. Important policies still need to be enacted to ensure our public water is not used for private corporate interests. On April 17, our Environmental Policy Advocate, Tom Pike, presented 238 petition signatures to the MAWC board in support of water conservation. We will continue to advocate for three additional policies: limiting the total amount of water that can be used for fracking, coming up with a long-term conservation plan, and pausing fracking withdrawals automatically when the State declares a drought.



Pictured: James Cato from MWA; Gillian Graber and Tom Pike from PPT; and Hannah Hohman and Koa Reitz from 3RWK