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Protect PT Progress, Spring '21 Edition

Legal Updates

Metis and Gaia: The Pennsylvania Supreme Court accepted Protect PT's appeals 2 WAP 2021 and 3 WAP 2021 regarding the Metis and Gaia well pads in Penn Township, Westmoreland County. The appeal was accepted and will be heard on two issues. First, Protect PT asserts that the Commonwealth Court ignored the testimony of expert witnesses regarding the precautionary principle, a principle which indicates that if there is a chance an activity could have harmful impacts to public health, that activity should be stopped until scientific evidence proves that it is safe. Secondly, Protect PT questions whether the Commonwealth Court failed to evaluate the cumulative impacts of developing multiple unconventional natural gas wells in close proximity to residential neighborhoods that could alter the character of the community and jeopardize public health and safety. **We are currently waiting on a date for the hearing before the PA Supreme Court.**

Drakulic: We are still waiting on a date for our argument before the Environmental Hearing Board. We are arguing that the PA DEP abused its discretion by granting the drilling permit and failed to meet its obligations under Article I, Section 27 of the Pennsylvania Constitution. Section 27 guarantees all Pennsylvanians the "right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and aesthetic values of the environment." The DEP failed to meet Section 27 requirements when they issued Apex two new well permits despite the fact that Apex did not have a complete and accurate emergency response plan (ERP) in place. Apex failed to identify risks and hazards within half a mile of the well site, risking residents' health, safety, livelihood, and home in the situation of an evacuation. Additionally, DEP issued these permits with full knowledge of Apex's ongoing violations at other unconventional well sites, including the Fatur well site in Salem Township.



Pictured: Laura Dagley, RN (left) and Dr. Walter Tsou, MD, MPH (right) testified at the Penn Twp Zoning Hearing Board for Metis and Gaia in 2018. Standing with them are Gillian Graber, Executive Director PPT (middle left) and Beth Jamison, PPT Board Member (middle right).

Radioactive Waste Impacts Residents Near Local Landfills

The waste materials generated from fracking contain radioactive elements and pose significant risks. In Pennsylvania, fracking waste has been disposed of in municipal landfills for more than a decade. In Rostraver Township, the Westmoreland Sanitary Landfill has plagued local residents for years. Last fall, Protect PT mailed a survey to 7,000 residents around the landfill and over 170 responded. Their responses highlighted impacts like health problems, sludge on roadways and vehicles, horrible smells, concerns about air and water quality, and more. Even more alarming, the Westmoreland Sanitary Landfill applied for a permit with the Department of Environmental Protection to evaporate the leachate (landfill tea or liquid runoff) from their site. This would propel harmful constituents into the air, further impacting the surrounding community! **Protect PT is hosting a Community Meeting for neighbors of the landfill March 25 @ 6:30 pm.** This meeting will give residents the opportunity to voice their concerns directly with PA DEP and discuss next steps in establishing better protections for residents.

"This landfill is a disgusting obstacle in my life. It has ruined the quality of my life." Rebecca

"We have a right to quality of life and that is being taken away from us each and every day that this landfill is allowed to continue to operate." James

Community Educational Workshops

In order to protect yourself from the harms of fossil fuels, it is crucial to understand complaint and compliance issues, emergency preparedness, and how development impacts air and water quality. This year, we will be offering quarterly classes. You can register for classes and find a list of the libraries carrying the Home Resource Guides on our registration page: www.protectpt.org/hrg-workshops.



Protect PT Featured In Environmental Health News

Protect PT was featured in the article series "**Fractured: The Body Burden of Living Near Fracking**" released March 1, 2021 by Environmental Health News (EHN). These four articles feature the results of the study conducted by reporter Kristina Marusic on health impacts to several families in the Southwestern PA region. These articles have brought national attention to the health issues surrounding oil and gas development. Watch a replay of our **Community Lunch and Learn March 23** with Kristina Marusic and Lois Bower-Bjornson on Protect PT's YouTube and check out the articles on social media (or by visiting www.ehn.org).



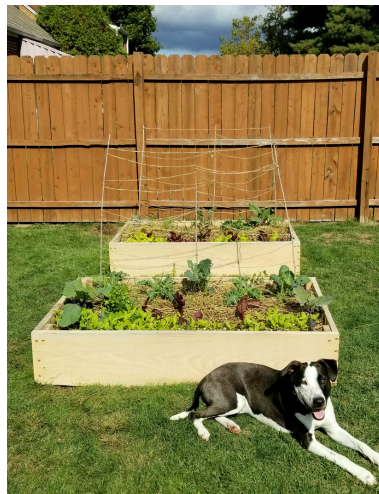
Youth Launch Initiative

The Team Building for Climate Action Youth Program launched in February with youth of multiple ages brainstorming projects. These youth come from different school districts and are working together to promote climate education and increase awareness among their peers. If you know any youth interested in working on climate activism, they can sign up anytime on our website at protectpt.org/youth.

Interested college students: Internship positions for Summer 2021 just posted. Visit www.protectpt.org/joinus for more information.

Reimagining the Turtle Creek Watershed and Airshed Communities

If you reside in the Turtle Creek Watershed or nearby, you are invited to be part of reimagining your community to be more sustainable and equitable. Reimagine TCWAC+ hosts programs every first Monday on sustainable development practices. **On April 5th, Hazelwood Initiative is presenting on revitalizing greenspace and increasing access to urban forest.** We also undertake community projects pertaining to our five working groups: Reimagine Food Systems; Landscaping, Land Management; Buildings, Renewables, & Infrastructure; Single-Use Plastic Diversion; and Health & Wellness. If you would like to learn more about the Reimagine TCWAC+ initiative or join a monthly program, visit reimaginetcwac.org



Reimagine Food Systems Backyard Garden Program

Waste Injection Well Threatens Region's Drinking Water

Municipal landfills are not the only dumping grounds for radioactive fracking waste. Fracking waste is also being pumped into the ground with injection wells like the Sedat 3A Injection Well in Plum, scheduled to begin operation in March. The Plum well was originally designed in the 1980s as a conventional gas well but remained unused until Pennoco applied for the permits to use it as an injection well. **Injecting waste at this particular site poses significant concerns of water contamination since the well is located very close to the Allegheny River, upstream from the water intake for the Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority (which provides drinking water for the City of Pittsburgh and surrounding areas).** Protect PT, along with Citizens 4 Plum, and the Breathe Project, wrote a letter to Governor Wolf, asking him to revoke the permit. Several organizations and community groups signed the letter.

"Fracking cannot be done without directly threatening public health and that includes the waste stream."
Dr. Ned Ketyer



Watch the press conference on Protect PT's YouTube

New Team Members

We are excited to introduce our new team members. Annie Deely is our Community Organizer for Reimagine Turtle Creek Watershed and Airshed Communities Plus (TCWAC+). You can email her at annie@protectpt.org. Mary Jo Ronco is our new Bookkeeping Administrator. You can email her at admin@protectpt.org.



Annie Deely
Community Organizer



Mary Jo Ronco
Bookkeeping Administrator

Contact Us:

Gillian Graber Executive Director gillian@protectpt.org	Mary Obringer Outreach Assistant mary@protectpt.org
Patrick Campbell Project & Outreach Coordinator patrick@protectpt.org	Kathleen Brosseau Environmental Scientist kathleen@protectpt.org

Mark your calendar:

April 5 Reimagine TCWAC Program
www.reimaginetcwac.org/events

April 6-15 HRG Workshops

April 27 Protect PT Anniversary Celebration
www.protectpt.org/actions-events

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