
RDA Newsletter - Forest fragmentation, Ban gas drilling in our National Forests

Dear RDA Members,

Through your shared comments and feedback, we came to realize that the intended tone of last week's newsletter was misinterpreted by some of our readers. We apologize if you were one. That said, we continue to believe the rig tour was a valuable experience in RDA's ongoing endeavors to learn all we can about how the gas industry is operating. That knowledge is crucial if we are going to be effective in helping to advance the adoption of better practices. Please understand, RDA is still deeply concerned about all aspects of the industrialization occurring throughout our beautiful region.

For a good look at the perspective of one of our Working Group members, we invite you to take 27 minutes to watch restoration ecologist Kevin Heatley speak on the impact of gas development in our forests. Kevin lives in Lycoming County, but his work takes him around the nation as he helps to remediate the effects of human industrial activity on the natural world. Kevin gave this videotaped Power Point talk last month at a gathering in Hammondsport, NY. Check Kevin out on Youtube at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=21Jxw-HiEXE> RDA can also provide you with a DVD for group presentations; please e-mail us if your organization would like one.

And speaking of industrial impacts on forests - a petition is currently circulating regarding shale gas exploration in our National Forests. If you haven't seen it, please take a look and consider signing on at: http://signon.org/sign/stop-fracking-in-national?source=s.em.mt&rb_y=1224447

The petition urges both houses of Congress and the President to stop oil and natural gas drilling in our National Forests. The petition's author's state, "A federal appeals court ruled last month that oil and gas companies can begin drilling in the Allegheny National Forest in Pennsylvania. The ruling says that the government only controls the surface rights in the national forest, not the mineral rights under the surface. While the ruling only affects the Allegheny National Forest, this could set the stage for opening up drilling in ALL National Forests. This means they start drilling immediately unless we act now. There are two ways we can stop this: 1) The Obama Justice Department must appeal this ruling and ask for an injunction to halt drilling; and 2) Congress must pass legislation to stop drilling in all National Forests."

Given the scope of gas development on both private and state lands in Pennsylvania, RDA supports this petition and a ban on any further drilling in the Allegheny National Forest. In addition to the arguments Kevin Heatley makes so passionately in his videotaped presentation, we believe sound conservation principles call for leaving shale gas in the ground in the national forests and all the remaining un-leased PA state lands. RDA's position is that future generations should have the right to choose how their common wealth should be managed.

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