



Information letter for those to whom fracking matters and updates on the website FFI

Thanks to all for your contribution

contact: ineke@frackingfreeireland.org

visit: www.frackingfreeireland.org

Fracking, Fra'cin Fraccing

We're not able to spell it so it can't go ahead
Langco and Tamboran must put it to bed
Their plans, charts and spreadsheets will go on the shelves
'Cos the people of Leitrim, their reading age is twelve
We typed, googled, twittered and the dictionary we flittered
But the spelling war remains so totally embittered
We've consulted and discussed, the academics are non-plussed
Surely, with this word we are totally cursed
The answer it seems is a countywide test
Leitrimites of all ages, please give it your best
Our next spelling test will surely send them packing
For we've just discovered that there's no 'f' in fracking.

K. Stone

St.Patrick 's no fracking message to Ireland 2012 .



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pqh1YTRSwyc>

EVENTS and other small CAMPAIGN news

Reporter Michael Cairns

Nick Blakemore from the Beeb tells me that Saturday's anti frack meeting in Manchester will feature on this **Tuesdays Newsnight [BBC2, 10:30pm]**

LEITRIM BIRDWATCH
IS HOLDING A MEETING
AT **7.00PM ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 21ST**
IN THE BUSH HOTEL
CARRICK-ON-SHANNON

THE THEME OF THE MEETING IS
BIRDS, WILDLIFE AND FRACKING
THIS MEETING INTENDS TO BE INFORMATIVE
AND INFORMAL

ALL ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND -CHILDREN
PARTICULARLY

SAVE OUR SHANNON Thursday's meeting was in Burke's. Our parent group is No Fracking Ireland, a broad-based people's group of fifty organisations from all over Ireland. Carrick SOS will host a talk on "Birdlife of Ireland", in the Bush, on Wed 21 March. We will have a float and a support group in this year's St Patrick's Day Parades in Carrick and Drumshanbo. Carrick parents are asked to bring their children to Tesco car park at 12.30. Free face-painting for children who want to take part in our entry. Those willing to help support our entry may contact Cara at 086 2575784.

We discussed how alternative energy, such as biomass, can provide plenty of new sustainable jobs. Several prominent people have promised to join our movement. Food companies, medical device companies and one large multi-national which uses nano-technology chips have expressed alarm at the prospect of fracking polluting our waters and causing earth tremors. Breeders of pedigree cattle want a complete ban on fracking. The Leitrim Farmers Association will host a lecture "The Impact of Fracking on Farmers", in Berry's of Drumshanbo, at 9pm, on Wednesday 14 March. All are welcome to attend.

St Patrick's day



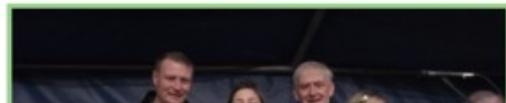
Congratulations!

17
MAR

**Saint Patrick's Day Parade
Prize awarded to "NO
FRACKING IRELAND!"**



*Happy Saint Patrick's Day to all!
If you are planning on visiting the "Land of Saints and Scholars," make sure you come before the
Fracking Starts!
This was the message today from the Saint Patrick's Day Float
which won the "Most Entertaining Float," in the Saint Patrick's
Day Parade in my local town of Drumshanbo!*



<http://permaculturecottage.wordpress.com/2012/03/17/saint-patricks-day-parade-prize-awarded-to-no-fracking-ireland/>

St. Patrick's day – Dublin

Received from: Naoise Reynolds
aodhfinn@gmail.com



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pqh1YTRSwyc>

Reporter Ross Brown

On 17th March activists from across the UK & Ireland met at a **conference in Manchester** hosted by the Campaign Against Climate Change and the Co-Op and established the Anti-Fracking Network. The purpose of our group is to better co-ordinate our efforts to put a halt to hydraulic fracturing.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/370275796336658/>

Message From France on International Day of Action against Fracking in Ireland - March 17th 2012

Dear Friends,

This Saturday March 17th, coming from around the world, thousands of people will march in Marseille under the banner "Water for life, not for profit", for the closing march of the Alternative World Water Forum which runs from 14th to 17th of March. We, activists in

France against shale gas and shale oil, against fracking, will participate in this event because we can not accept projects that generate large amounts of toxic and chemicals pollutions, that waste our water, etc. Our water is worth more than their gas. We must protect it.

In this message we want to tell you that we support with all our forces your international day of action of March 17th. Each initiative in a country helps citizen mobilizations in other countries. All together we can protect our territories. In each country, we are told "you're the only ones of the planet who are against shale gas and fracking."

This is not true! Following the civil society mobilisations, especially the protests of local people most directly concerned, fracking has been forbidden in more than dozen places on our planet.

In France, we are saying « Gaz de schiste ! Ni ici ni ailleurs. Ni aujourd'hui ni demain » that means something like « Shale gas, not here neither elsewhere. Not today neither tomorrow

French activists against fracking and shale gas gathered in Marseille this 16th of March.

2012/3/16 Maxime Combes
maxime.combes@gmail.com

Rassemblement lors du FAME Marseille 17 mars 2012

By Sand Enjésandemy (Albums) ·

<http://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.3382069838135.2152623.1461144823&type=3>

Susan Griffin was the representative from Ireland.

Presentation from BULGARIA in Marseille a video report:

<http://www.mediafire.com/?jmxuj8z9h4qgibi>

WHAT YOU CAN/MUST DO

SIGN PETITIONS

Reporter David - davidjtaylor@eircom.net

http://www.avaaz.org/en/petition/Stop_The_E_U310000000_payment_of_Anglo_Debt_due_on_31st_March/

It is a very worth petition to sign. As I type, approaching 3,500 have signed - it's going up by about five signatures a minute. It's worth remembering we have poured more cash down the throats of Anglo, INBS and NAMA than what Richard Moorman says his fantasy gas reserves in Leitrim are worth. And still this crazy government intends throwing billions away.

Sadly, another Avaaz-hosted campaign just as close to all our hearts (and started on the same day as the bail-out one) has so far (devilishly) only generated 666 signees:

https://secure.avaaz.org/en/petition/Ban_Fracking_Ireland/

while the GM spuds campaign has over 1,500: <http://www.thepetitionsite.com/1/stop-gm-potato-trials-in-ireland/>

What does this say? I've said before that petitions don't seem to really matter but these figures give a kind of poll about what does matter to people, don't they?

Do you ever get the feeling that the world is going to hell in a handbasket? 8))))

NOTE: also petitions to ban fracking in Ireland on website FFI (printables-petition), no fracking ireland and what the frack.

SUBMIT

Reminder: CER

Reporter:

Charlie Williams:

The link at the [CER web page](#) got repaired.

Please get at your keyboards and send your submissions, folk.

=> <http://www.cer.ie/en/petroleum-safety->

[current-consultations.aspx?article=57170b43-6dee-433a-b7b3-63dc68cb680f](http://www.cer.ie/en/petroleum-safety-current-consultations.aspx?article=57170b43-6dee-433a-b7b3-63dc68cb680f)

I've just been through the CER website, [High Level Design of Petroleum Safety Framework](#).

Apart from several private submissions, which seemingly are all concerned about fracking, there are some remarkable consultation responses.

My favourite one is [People's Association Watchdog response to CER-11-137 cer11203](#)

Worth to read: [Shannon and Erne Loughs Protection Alliance cer11203](#)

The [EPA response to CER-11-137 cer11203](#) links to the EPA web page, [Frequently Asked Questions on the Environment](#) (= > "Water"). Very vague.

But also:

[ABP response to CER-11-137 cer11203](#)

[IAA response to CER-11-137 cer11203](#)

[Leitrim County Council response to CER-11-137 cer11203](#)

[NSAI response to CER-11-137 cer11203](#)

[PSE Kinsale Energy response to CER-11-137 CER11203](#)

[Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland response to CER-11-137 cer11203](#)

[Shell E and P Ireland response to CER-11-137 CER11203](#)

Closing Date: 29/03/2012 !!!

Responses to: [Eamonn Murtagh](#)

Consultation is: OPEN

(emurtagh@cer.ie)

MAKE-YOU-HAPPY-NEWS

Reporter: saskia de jong saskiadj@gmail.com

Leitrim CoCo - Fracking - Amend County Development Plan? PAGE 9

<http://frackingfreeireland.org/wp->

[content/uploads/2011/07/Minutes-6th-February-2012.pdf](#)

LOBBY -NEWS

The Brussels Business – Who Runs the European Union?

Author: CEO of Brussels Sunshine - the CEO blog

Published: March 16th, 2012

A new film, released in cinemas in Austria on 16 March, puts the spotlight on the power of the lobbying industry in Brussels. Corporate Europe Observatory was approached by the filmmakers at the start of their project and our early work features prominently in the film, which tells the story of how industry lobby groups heavily influenced the EU's development from the 1980's onwards.

Since that time, the presence of industry lobbyists in Brussels has grown - as has their influence and the corporate agenda is clearly visible in the EU's policies - including in its response to the crisis. This year, CEO celebrates its 15th birthday - and in May this year we will be marking the event with a conference that highlights the corporate influence on the current crises facing the European Union.

<http://www.irishleftreview.org/2012/03/16/brussels-business-runs-european-union/>

IRISH NEWS

Press release from the The Joint Committee on Communications, Natural Resources and Agriculture on 15th of March briefing from the Commission for Energy Regulation (CER) to the Committee.

Natural Resources Committee engages with the Commission for Energy Regulation The Joint Committee on Communications, Natural Resources and Agriculture today received a detailed briefing from representatives of the Commission for Energy Regulation (CER). As the regulator for the electricity and natural gas sectors in Ireland, the CER discussed its increased responsibilities in regulating petroleum safety onshore and offshore.

Addressing the Committee were CER Chair Dermot Nolan, Commissioner Garrett Blaney and Dr Paul McGann, their Director of Safety and Consumer Affairs.

Chairman of the Oireachtas Joint Committee Andrew Doyle TD said: "The Committee thanks the CER representatives for a detailed briefing on their increased role in petroleum safety. With today's news of an oil strike off the Cork

coast, today's meeting heard the representatives explain that international best practice will be applied in regulating petroleum exploration, as their Petroleum Safety Framework is finalised.

"As well as offshore exploration, the CER will have responsibility for ensuring the safety of a potential onshore hydraulic fracturing industry, which is a source of heightened public concern. While the CER's role concerns safety with no statutory authority to permit or ban 'fracking', the issue will no doubt be a source of ongoing engagement between the Committee and the Commission in the coming years.

"The Committee are encouraged that CER intend to facilitate more renewable generation capacity, including the associated network development costs, at the least cost to the end consumer.

"Other issues raised at the meeting include CER responsibilities around consumer protection in the gas and electricity retail market, their work on regulating the key electricity interconnector between Ireland and Wales and their evaluation of a smart metering

roll-out to homes and business."

Ends

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Government still awaiting EPA preliminary report -

<http://www.leitrimobserver.ie/news/government-still-awaiting-epa-preliminary-report-on-fracking-minister-says-his-hair-is-grey-with-the-subject-1-3619396> (14 March 2012)

Urgent work authorised to fend off EU gas fines - <http://frackingfreeireland.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/CAG.jpg>

15 March

Comment by Michael Cairns
nautical_9@hotmail.com

The more i read up on fracking and the industry and sectors related, the more i feel as if deals were done and signed long ago. This isnt anything new... Fracking didnt happen to suddenly land on our doorsteps.

I mean, if the gas storage facilities being planned off the coast of Larne are about to be constructed very soon. There is no reason why Mutual Energy and many other companies and organisations would go ahead with such projects unless they knew in advance of other projects that would help support them and work in conjunction with them.

Why would gas storage facilities be built if there was no gas there to store.

Would they build gas storage facilities if there was a chance public opinion would sway the fracking debate?

It seems as if its a full on assault from all sides to try to rush through very objectional and

contraversial projects.
Most disconcerting.

Reply by Leanna Filbey foelarne@gmail.com

In my opinion, as I said before, the salt cavern projects are not linked commercially with the fracking. Gas in large quantities is already coming into Larne through the Interconnector from the continent, and has done for years. There is no shortage of gas supply in Larne. In addition one of the three salt cavern projects intends to store compressed air from wind energy.

Of more concern is that the Islandmagee storage project which you mentioned, is intending to store gas in salt caverns under Larne Lough - the firm 'Infrastrata' has also been exploring for oil and gas around the area. They have said though that if they find gas around Larne it would be extracted by conventional methods, not fracking. The geology wouldn't be suitable around Larne. However there are other areas of Antrim where there may be shale deposits but not Larne.



Commercial oil well found on Irish coast.
<http://frackingfreeireland.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/IrishNewsArticle16-3-20121.jpg> (16 March)

Beara TD focuses on issues that directly affect West Cork -

<http://www.southernstar.ie/article.php?id=3312> (17 March 2012)

Received from marilyn conway
tryentoo@yahoo.com

Providence has announced Ireland's first commercial oil discovery. It's at Barryroe off Cork. Below is a bit of background on the case.

Date: Friday, 16 March, 2012, 2:45

Background on a Cork oil discovery written by William Hederman. Probably the next area of concern. It has already been reported on the news which is what prompted William to write this. He was one of the writers of the Rosspoint Someday Independent leaflet.

In environmental terms, this project is close to the shore, so a spill will affect the Irish coast very quickly. However, in economic terms, it might as well be off the coast of Brazil.

Re the Barryroe oil discovery, it is crucial to examine each of the supposed benefits to Ireland of such a project:

- Security of supply: the idea that Ireland will get its own supply of gas or (in this case) oil. In fact, under Ireland's licensing terms, the company is not obliged to supply the Irish market.

- Onshore jobs & infrastructure: again, the company is not obliged to even land the oil in Ireland, so there might be no jobs or investment of any kind onshore in Ireland. Last year, Providence admitted to me that if it found oil at its Dalkey Prospect, it would probably ship it from the rig directly to the UK or Holland. In the case of Barryroe, I have asked Providence where the oil will go and they are being cagey about it.

- Jobs on the rig: Providence CEO Tony O'Reilly told the Irish Independent today that all the equipment, personnel and services he needs to work on a well come from Aberdeen. This is standard practice for rigs off Ireland, as they are towed here from the North Sea.

- Cheaper gas or oil in Ireland: If the company does choose to supply the Irish market, it is not obliged to sell to Irish consumers at a reduced rate. We will pay the same price as

we currently pay for resources now imported. What this means is that having our own supply will not protect us from huge surges in the international price of resources.

- That just leaves the tax take: the perception that the State gets 25% (or "up to 40%" thanks to Eamon Ryan) of revenue is far from the reality. Extraordinary tax write-offs are available before profits are declared, which effectively mean that companies can bring down apparent profits to a small fraction of actual earnings. Just how small will the State's share be? I discovered the existence of a private report for Shell by industry consultants Wood Mackenzie in 2003, which projected that the Corrib Gas field would pay just €340 million in tax over its lifetime. Bear in mind that the gas in Corrib is now said to be worth up to €13 billion (it was worth less than that in 2003, but my research suggests the €340 million could represent 7 per cent or less of the likely revenue from the field).

In summary: the oil industry and successive governments tell us we should accept a small tax take because it will encourage exploration and that will lead to the creation of an industry here, with jobs and a secure supply. However, it turns out the only guaranteed result of that exploration is the tax take itself (and the tax take is even smaller than people think).

The Woodland League

The Woodland League have now established the fact that the PEOPLE OF IRELAND are LEGAL SHAREHOLDERS in the IRISH PUBLIC FORESTS and therefore have the right to be consulted regarding the management and other potentialities regarding this Public resource. Our 32,000 strong petition strengthens this fact and contains thousands of quotes calling for reform of current Irish Forestry Policy with more community involvement and benefits, to be obtained from a different forestry model that is focused on our native tree species.

The 1.2 million certificates of ownership were granted by the late Fianna Fail Minister Seamus Brennan, leaving a positive legacy of having done the People of Ireland a great service.

The following is the full unedited version of the article printed in the Public domain by the Mail

on Sunday, written by Tom Prendiville, who is to be commended for his role in this significant phase of this campaign.

Article below is published in newsletter 60

THE GOVERNMENT'S PLANS TO SELL OFF STATE'S FORESTS COULD HIT A BRICK WALL due to the fact that OVER ONE MILLION NATIVE WOODLAND TREES ARE OWNED BY EVERY FAMILY IN IRELAND.

As part of the Year 2000 People's Millennium Forests Project, Household Tree Scheme, over 1.2 million native Oak, Ash, Birch, Alder and Scot's Pine trees -many of which are now semi-mature-were gifted to every family and planted in 16 forests throughout the country. The government later issued ownership certificates with individual plot numbers to every household.

The Certificates and covering letter which were signed by the late Seamus Brennan, who was the then Minister of Environment and Chairman of the Millennium Committee stated:

"It gives us great pleasure to enclose the certificate of authentication of your household's special tree for the millennium. This certificate gives the location of your native tree and assigned forest. Your tree is one of 1.2 million being planted for households in Ireland.."

Coillte's The People's Millennium Forests website is even clearer as to who owns the trees. It states that 16 native Irish woodlands have been designated as: "millennium forests, and are dedicated in perpetuity to the people of Ireland....."

"The project team was asked to do this so that the people of Ireland would know that each household has part-share in the restored woodlands. The message was plain - these native woodlands are for the people of Ireland."

The Woodland League has now raised the prospect of a tidal wave of lawsuits if the government tries to interfere with or sell off the native trees. According to founder Andrew St Ledger:

"Any sell-off could be open to a million lawsuits because every household in Ireland

got a tree for the Millennium woodlands planting. People were even issued with certificate of ownership of a tree accompanied by a map with a grid which shows you the plot.

"We are seriously considering a legal challenge as to the rightful ownership of the whole Public Forest Estate, as Coillte have never presented clear title in the Public Domain."

Prominent Dublin based lawyer and solicitor Damian Cassidy believes that the ultimate ownership of the millennium native woodland trees could be the government's undoing if they attempt any sell-off:

"The documents which were issued to householders during the Millennium are certificates of ownership and the people who own them must be consulted as to any interference with the trees. Some people might not want their trees cut down," he added.

The Woodlands League which is dedicated to preserving Ireland's native woodlands and fauna has been robustly campaigning to keep Coillte in public ownership and from falling into the hands of foreign investment fund managers. They are presently running a petition which has over 32,000 signatures:

"These forests are the inheritance of Irish children and managed wisely can help secure Ireland's social, environmental and economic future. The forests include some of our most valuable native woodlands and wild places and are some of the last refuges of our native flora and fauna. We are urging everyone to go out and visit their family tree, added Andrew St Ledger.

According to Coillte spokesperson, Tom Byrne, the millennium woodlands project has been deemed a huge success:

"A native tree was planted on behalf of every household in Ireland and a certificate was posted to all homes giving details as to where trees were planted under the Family Tree Scheme. The Millennium trees which are native varieties were planted in old native woodland sites, and the idea was to bring the woodlands back to life. Thirteen sites are on Coillte land, two in Northern Ireland and one in Muckcross."

"The trees were planted for the people of

Ireland as part of the Millennium celebrations. These forests are managed by Coillte in partnership with Woodlands of Ireland, OPW and Northern Ireland Forest Service."

"Not every tree that was planted would have survived, but this project has been a success and has re-established these old woodlands."

However when asked as to who has legal title to the millennium trees and what would happen in the event of a sale Coillte refused to comment:

"We would not like to comment on a hypothetical question," added Tom Byrne. ENDS.

CORRESPONDENCE – LETTERS

Letter to the Irish Independent

Green vote

Thursday March 15 2012

Should the 2012 referendum be expanded to include environmental issues, which are ultimately central to most fiscal policies? Three environmental concerns in particular should be voted on: Yes or No to the 10-year Shell Corrib Gas debacle; Yes or No to fracking, the proposed injection of chemical-laced water and sand into rock to release gas in the Lough Allen and Clare basins; and Yes or No to the Teagasc proposal, (the agriculture and food development authority in Ireland), to introduce genetically modified potatoes into this country.

A definite No vote to all three could radically change existing government policies and all future development.

Why extend our dependence on fossil fuels and continually mispend millions facilitating potentially dangerous exploration for short-term supplies rather than invest in sustainable energies for the future? Likewise, why go

down the road of genetically modified, chemically dependent foods rather than taking the organic route?

Quite simply, our Government, like most others, is not prepared to battle huge multinational companies whose money can control research and legislation. What would happen if vehicles no longer depended on oil?

Consumption would drop by 50pc and with it the price of a barrel of oil and therefore the whole interdependence and alliances of governments all over the world.

Natural resources should, of course, be exploited to create public services such as schools and hospitals, where safely possible, but why not use the resources that do not damage the environment?

The monies lost to the public coffers in the Shell to Sea campaign alone would have developed a sustainable wind and wave energy industry here in this country.

M O Gil
Aran Islands, Co Galway

THOUGHTS – OPINION

An argument against Fracking.

By Michael Cairns - nautical_9@hotmail.com

In 2001 Goran Ivanisevic beat Pat Rafter in

the final in an emotional game at Wimbledon to win the title.

Goran had been playing for years and finally won at Wimbledon after a number of attempts.

Goran was not the most technically gifted player, but he had an element to his game that helped him enormously. He had a really powerful serve and many other players found it hard to return serve. Goran played to his strength and won in the end.

Ireland must now do the same and play to its strength.

We here in Ireland live on a small island, with a small population. Ireland is known as the emerald isle.

It is seen as an island with generally clean, unpolluted rivers and lakes, the image of Ireland is of a lush green unindustrialised, under populated small island.

We are not Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Iraq or some other state that is a high producer of fossil fuels.

The Deep Water Horizon rig that exploded in April 2010 was drilling deep in the Gulf of Mexico to tap the Tiber oil field. It was heralded to be a huge oil field.

The Tiber had oil reserves of an estimated 3 Billion Barrels but it was not expected to extract the total oil 'in situ' due to geology and layout of sub basin rock formation.

Now as the world consumes around 90,000,000 barrels of oil per day, the oil reserve of the Tiber would power the globe for 30 days or a month it is estimated.

Some have said only a week, and others have even highlighted that there is only enough in the Tiber field to fulfil the worlds oil needs for just 24 hours.

The point here is that when we hear media

reports of 'Huge Oil/Gas finds' we must be careful not to be fooled into believing that all our energy problems are over.

Huge oil or gas finds are not the same as huge oil or gas finds 20, 30, 40 or 50 years ago. Our needs are great, and what reserves are undiscovered will only be a stay of execution.

Now back to Ireland

Ireland must play to its strength.

Just the same as Goran Ivanisevic did 20 years ago. Ireland's strength being Tourism and Agriculture.

We live in a beautiful land that's gathered a mystical rural green image.

Why would we want to turn this part of the world into an industrial heartland similar to that of West Germanys Rhineland region.

This is not what we want and not who we are.

We have natural Gas and Oil reserves here of course, but not in sufficient quantities so as to make any trade off beneficial. We should not sacrifice our 'Strengths' for only a meagre return.

We should not let some greedy individuals try and convince us to give up what we value most dear for what would really only benefit the few.

We should stick to what we are good at and simply persevere. The potential for tourism in a place such as Fermanagh is seriously underplayed and has vast potential.

Many other counties in Ireland stand in the same situation.

MOVIES- SONGS

St.Patrick 's no fracking message to Ireland 2012 -

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pqh1YTRSwyc>

Reporter David - davidjtaylor@eircom.net

This 10-minute YouTube snippet explains

everything:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EUS1m5MSt9k>

It's worth watching for the last two lines! Sums it all up!

CANADA - Alberta

WitNESS – Aljazeera, 2 video's and article

To the Last Drop

Residents of one Canadian town are engaged in a David and Goliath-style battle over the

dirtyest oil project ever known.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/witnes/2011/06/20116227153978324.html>

EU -NEWS

UK

British Geological Survey's shale gas groundwater study to omit Cuadrilla's fracking sites

<http://millicentmedia.com/2012/03/07/british-geological-surveys-shale-gas-groundwater-study-to-omit-cuadrillas-fracking-sites/>
(7 March 2012)

Protesters attempt to set up coalition against fracking -

South Wales, Sussex, Kent, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2012/mar/16/protesters-coalition-against-fracking/print> (16 March) (Web FFI: Irish Press/UK)

UK shale gas: an energy red herring? -

http://www.rigzone.com/news/article.asp?a_id=115800

News last September that testing by energy firm Cuadrilla Resources had found up to 200 trillion cubic feet of gas bound in shale rock in Lancashire, England, got plenty of media attention in the UK and set off a debate about the pros and cons of shale drilling in such a densely-populated European country.

A number of protest groups have been gaining support not only in opposition to drilling for shale gas at Cuadrilla's Bowland Shale operations, near the once-popular seaside resort of Blackpool, but also in West Sussex in the southeast of England as well as in Wales.

Full article at the end of the newsletter (lots of basic info)

SCOTLAND

The hunt for gas and the threat to Scotland -

<http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/home-news/the-hunt-for-gas-and-the-threat-to-scotland.16986259>

BULGARIA

Update

Dear friends,

We would like to inform you that our fight to ban shale gas extraction and exploration continues as the ban we have achieved needs to be accepted as a law by our government. On 24th of February 2012 we submitted a petition to the Bulgarian Parliament of nearly 52 000 signatures that insisted on launching a legislative procedure to prohibit hydraulic fracturing as a method of gas exploration and production in the country.

Two months after our Parliament decided to ban fracking in the country no further steps have been taken towards accepting this ban as a law. A number of laws still contain loopholes for environmental pollution that can be induced by hydrofracturing.

Last Saturday, 10th of March, we held a demonstration in the centre of Sofia to inform the public, politicians and the media that our demands are still not met. A high profile supporter of shale gas extraction came to watch the demonstration and was invited to come to the front and speak out but could not defend any of his theses. In the long conversation with him that ensued he admitted that hydraulic fracturing carries some environmental risks but stated that it is not up to the 'lay people' to decide whether this risk

is tolerable and justified - it is up to the policy-makers and expert scientists. There was a newly setup up committee that debates the possible advantages and risks of shale gas development in Bulgaria to which we have not been invited. However, it is more shocking that experts who find this method dangerous were also not invited. As citizens we continue to push for a total ban explicitly defined in a law and for all regulatory changes needed in other laws already in effect.

Meanwhile, on 7th of March, a workshop on creating "The golden rules for a golden age of unconventional gas" was held in Poland behind closed doors and with no civil society or environmental groups representation.

We believe that it is up to all of us to take the responsibility to protect our air, land and water from this pillaging technology and from those

whose greed for money suffocates the natural respect to land and nature that all humans carry in them.

Signed:

Citizens' Initiative against the exploration and extraction of shale gas through the method of hydraulic fracturing

NOTE: WHO IS WILLING/ABLE TO WRITE AN UPDATE ON THE IRISH (roi and ni) SITUATION?

Please contact ineke@frackingfreeireland.org

Report from Marseille conference

Here you can find for first time the bulgarian presentation for the event, as a video report: <http://www.mediafire.com/?jmxuj8z9h4qgibi>

GLOBAL NEWS

CANADA

WitNESS – Aljazeera, 2 video's and article
To the Last Drop

Residents of one Canadian town are engaged in a David and Goliath-style battle over the dirtiest oil project ever known.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/witnes/2011/06/20116227153978324.html>

In their report, Bamberger and Oswald wrote about several obstacles they met in trying to establish links between fracking and health problems. They cited the lack of pre-testing of well water and air before drilling. They noted that they were prevented from identifying many of the chemicals used in fracking because of confidentiality rules drillers obtained under a 2005 federal law nicknamed the "Halliburton loophole."

Cuomo and Corbett Ignore Health Concerns from Gas Fracking

<http://www.dcbureau.org/201203097069/natural-resources-news-service/cuomo-and-corbett-ignore-health-concerns-from-gas-fracking.html>

After natural gas drilling began near their rural

homes about 30 miles southwest of Pittsburgh, Carol Moten and her neighbors noticed that their well water began to smell. Then came the headaches, skin lesions, and diarrhea, in household after household. A two-year-old dog fell over dead.

"We're talking about little children that have nosebleeds, cats that fall off windowsills," she said.

Three years ago, Moten and her neighbor, Donald Allison, visited Dr. Amelia Pare in nearby McMurray for their skin infections. Allison's health continued to deteriorate and earlier this month he died from what the neighborhood understood to be bone cancer. He was 46.

More links health related at the end of the newsletter

Fracking site emissions may be unhealthy: Colorado School of Public Health

Posted on [March 19, 2012](#) by [Stone Hearth News](#)

In a new study, researchers from the Colorado School of Public Health have shown that air pollution caused by hydraulic fracturing or

fracking may contribute to acute and chronic health problems for those living near natural gas drilling sites.

"Our data show that it is important to include air pollution in the national dialogue on natural gas development that has focused largely on water exposures to hydraulic fracturing," said Lisa McKenzie, Ph.D., MPH, lead author of the study and research associate at the Colorado School of Public Health.

The study will be published in an upcoming edition of *Science of the Total Environment*.

The report, based on three years of monitoring, found a number of potentially toxic petroleum hydrocarbons in the air near the wells including benzene, ethylbenzene, toluene and xylene. Benzene has been identified by the Environmental Protection Agency as a known carcinogen. Other chemicals included heptane, octane and diethylbenzene but information on their toxicity is limited.

"Our results show that the non-cancer health impacts from air emissions due to natural gas development is greater for residents living closer to wells," the report said. "The greatest health impact corresponds to the relatively short-term, but high emission, well completion period."

That's due to exposure to trimethylbenzenes, aliaphatic hydrocarbons, and xylenes, all of which have neurological and/or respiratory effects, the study said. Those effects could include eye irritation, headaches, sore throat and difficulty breathing.

"We also calculated higher cancer risks for residents living nearer to the wells as compared to those residing further [away]," the report said. "Benzene is the major contributor to lifetime excess cancer risk from both scenarios."

The report, which looked at those living about a half-mile from the wells, comes in response to the rapid expansion of natural gas development in rural Garfield County, in western Colorado.

Typically, wells are developed in stages that include drilling followed by hydraulic fracturing , the high powered injection of water and chemicals into the drilled area to release the gas. After that, there is flowback or the return of fracking and geologic fluids, hydrocarbons and natural gas to the surface. The gas is then collected and sold.

Garfield County asked the Colorado School of

Public Health to assess the potential health impacts of these wells on the community of Battlement Mesa with a population of about 5,000.

McKenzie analyzed ambient air sample data collected from monitoring stations by the Garfield County Department of Public Health and Olsson Associates Inc. She used standard EPA methodology to estimate non-cancer health impacts and excess lifetime cancer risks for hydrocarbon exposure.

McKenzie noted that EPA standards are designed to be public health proactive and may overestimate risks.

"However, there wasn't data available on all the chemicals emitted during the well development process," she said. "If there had been, then it is entirely possible the risks would have been underestimated."

The report concludes that health risks are greater for people living closest to wells and urges a reduction in those air emissions.

McKenzie said future studies are warranted and should include collection of area, residential and personal exposure data where wells are operating. Additional studies, she said, should also examine the toxicity of other hydrocarbons associated with natural gas development.

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The study is entitled "Human Health Risk Assessment of Air Emissions from Development of Unconventional Natural Gas Resources." It was accepted for publication in March by Elsevier Science Ireland Ltd.

Nonviolent environmental activists are investigated by the FBI, new report says

An anti-fracking philosophy professor was questioned by the FBI for half an hour about eco-terrorism.
by Amy Silverstein March 12, 2012

The director of the nuclear plant in Nogent-sur-Seine, French Herve Maillart. Maillart's plant is one of the sites Greenpeace activists managed to sneak into during their mission to expose security flaws. (Francois Nascimbeni/AFP/Getty Images)
The FBI investigated a student because of his to opposition hydraulic fracturing or "fracking" for natural gas, a Washington Post investigation found. The agency was acting on

an anonymous tip.

The case isn't unusual. The FBI continues to investigate nonviolent environmental activists even as cases of genuine eco-terrorism have dropped, according to the Post.

More from GlobalPost: Germany battles over the future of solar energy

The FBI also questioned the student's philosophy professor about his own anti-fracking views for half an hour. They discussed his syllabus and the difference between civil disobedience and terrorism. "I don't know how law enforcement works, but it seemed like a total fishing expedition to me," the professor told the Post.

FBI intelligence analyst Erin Weller admitted that cases of eco-terrorism have fallen. Yet there's been little decline in "eco-terrorism" investigations under the Obama administration. "We have to respond to every threat that's been called into our office," Weller

told the Post.

The news comes as some states are also passing laws to criminalize nonviolent protest behavior. This month Iowa became the first state in the nation to pass a bill that makes it a crime to sneak into a farm and then secretly record animal abuse, the DesMoinesRegister reported. Seven other states have also considered bans on secretly recording animal abuse at farms. Utah passed a similar bill last week, the Salt Lake Tribune reported.

The Post noted that the FBI has a vague enough interpretation of terrorism in its 2002-2005 terrorism report that technically "any act aimed to intimidate an individual or corporation that has a political or social goal" could qualify.

Most oil corporations contacted by the Post would not comment, except for one company that said that eco-terrorism "is in our conversations."

REPORTS - RESEARCH

Reporter: Antoine Simon

Not a good week for us if I believe this article from Forbes:

EPA doubts its own anti fracking study - <http://www.forbes.com/sites/christopherhelman/2012/03/12/epa-doubts-its-own-anti-fracking-study-while-ohio-determines-fracking-did-not-spawn-earthquake-swarm/> (3 Dec 2012) Web FFI global press articles)

It seems like we'll have to wait before the EPA study on water contamination becomes a peer-reviewed report. Even the EPA seems to be stepping back now...

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UK shale gas: an energy red herring? - http://www.rigzone.com/news/article.asp?a_id=115800

News last September that testing by energy firm Cuadrilla Resources had found up to 200 trillion cubic feet of gas bound in shale rock in Lancashire, England, got plenty of media attention in the UK and set off a debate about the pros and cons of shale drilling in such a densely-populated European country.

A number of protest groups have been gaining support not only in opposition to drilling for

shale gas at Cuadrilla's Bowland Shale operations, near the once-popular seaside resort of Blackpool, but also in West Sussex in the southeast of England as well as in Wales.

Shale gas is natural gas (methane) that is trapped within shale rock. The controversy surrounding it is to do with the way that the gas is extracted via hydraulic fracturing or "fracking".

Fracking involves the use of water and other fluids, pumped at high pressure into shale rock in order to create narrow fractures that allow gas to flow into the well bore so that it can be captured. But environmentalists, as well as those people who live close to where fracking projects occur, have a number of issues with the practice.

Among these issues are included: the potential for groundwater pollution, the threat of air pollution, the impact that another source of hydrocarbons might have on climate change and the negative effect that a potentially cheap source of gas might have on investment in renewable energy.

Then there is the problem of fracking-related earthquakes. Cuadrilla reported last November that it found the fracking operations it conducted in Lancashire in the spring of 2011 caused minor tremors ranging in magnitude from 1.4 to 2.3 on the Richter scale. The firm had already suspended shale gas test drilling at its Lancashire sites in June 2011 following the earthquakes.

As well as the protestors, of course, there are those who welcome the prospect of a shale gas boom in the UK, which could lead to thousands of much-needed jobs for people in places such as Blackpool – a town that has been in decline for years.

Multi-Billion Pound Benefit

Not least among these are certain sections of the UK government. For example, Charles Hendry – a minister at the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) – said in November that "shale gas fits into the potential energy mix" of the UK and that by the country optimizing resources such as shale gas there would be "a multi-billion pound benefit".

A Cuadrilla Resources spokesperson told Rigzone that not only would its Bowland Shale project have a "significant effect on Britain's energy security and Lancashire's economic prosperity", but over its lifetime it could deliver to the UK government between \$7.9 billion and \$9.5 billion (GBP 5 billion and GBP 6 billion) in taxes on profits made.

However, despite showing some enthusiasm when it comes to the prospect of hundred of trillions of cubic feet of gas, not to mention the tax revenues that would come with it, the UK government could also be accused of sitting on the fence when it comes to shale gas.

In November 2011, the then Energy and Climate Change Secretary Chris Huhne, while conceding that natural gas is a "critical part" of the UK's energy mix, noted that "shale gas has not yet lit a single room in the UK, nor roasted a single Sunday lunch", pointing out that production of shale gas in the UK is, at best, years away.

And last week, on Mar. 3 2012, new Energy and Climate Change Secretary Edward Davey echoed his predecessor's point. "Shale gas may prove a worthwhile resource for the UK, but it is in its infancy," he said.

Instead, DECC has said that it intends to follow a technology-neutral policy, in which the UK encourages competitive tension between all forms of generation.

UK-based environmental pressure groups are opposed to shale gas for two reasons. The first is the fear of what fracking might mean for the local environment. The second reason is that investing in a potentially abundant source of natural gas would be a distraction from the UK's efforts to develop alternative, low-carbon energy sources such as wind, solar, wave and tidal stream.

Earthquakes 'Not a Massive Worry'

Dr. Doug Parr, Chief Scientist at Greenpeace UK, is not too concerned about the issue that grabbed the most headlines last year: the fracking-related earthquakes caused by Cuadrilla.

"I'm not inclined to think that's a massive worry. But okay, it's being investigated and that's a good thing," Parr told Rigzone.

Cuadrilla has said that it will continue to monitor seismic activity in the area of its operations, while Professor Mike Stephenson, head of energy at the British Geological Survey, told a shale gas summit in London last autumn that the tremors were far too small to cause any damage.

In fact, Parr believes that, on the local level, the ways and means exist to conduct shale gas operations safely.

"What I've seen does not suggest that it's impossible to do this perfectly safely, and it can be," said Parr. "My question would be whether it will be? And that's not a question about technology, it's a question about whether an Environment Agency that has just shed around 15 percent of its staff, and has had a substantial cut in its government grant, is going to be in the position to do the enforcement, the inspection, and have the political will behind it to make sure that corners aren't cut."

"So, that's more the question for me than whether it is technically feasible to frack safely without local environmental impact," Parr continued.

Cuadrilla told Rigzone that it is subject to visits from the UK's Environment Agency and Health and Safety Executive both on an announced and unannounced basis. During March 2011 to August 2011, the firm said, the Environment Agency visited the firm's Preese Hall site in Lancashire 10 times, with seven of those visits being unannounced.

Frack Off

In spite of such assurances, a number of UK groups – such as Ribble Estuary Against Fracking (REAF) and the colorfully-named Frack Off – have sprung up around the UK. Some protestors opposed to fracking in Lancashire took direct action in early November 2011 by attaching themselves to machinery at Cuadrilla's Hesketh Bank site.

Cuadrilla's managing director Mark Miller, a Pennsylvania oil man, reportedly received a rough reception in January this year when he tried to explain to Balcombe locals why the firm might conduct fracking operations less than a mile from their village in West Sussex in southeast England.

Next door to England, in Wales, pressure from locals played its part in councillors in the Vale of Glamorgan rejecting an application from a firm called Coastal Oil and Gas to test drill for shale gas in the county, even though Coastal's application did not include plans to use fracking. Coastal is understood to have lodged an appeal against this decision with the Welsh government.

Although it would be easy to dismiss such protests as being a version of the 'not in my back yard' opposition that is more commonly seen against the deployment of wind farms in the UK this nimbyism is about more than just the blighted views that countryside-loving Britons often complain about. So says Tony Bosworth, a senior climate campaigner for Friends of the Earth.

"This is people being concerned about potential real threats to their local environment. Being concerned about an industry that has been linked to contamination," Bosworth said. "It's a different issue."

And Greenpeace's Parr believes that there are local environmental issues that will need to have a close eye kept on them.

Certainly people will need to be reassured that there is no possibility of the exploding sinks due to methane getting into tap water that has been seen in films such as the controversial US documentary Gasland, and they will also want to be assured that drinking and bathing water cannot be contaminated during fracking.

"Then the more serious issue is what happens to all the fracking water or fracking fluid when it comes up again and it's finished with. Does that contaminate local water courses? If not, how is it used and how is it managed? And what is local environmental impact?" said Parr.

But perhaps the greater issue for environmentalists is the distraction that shale gas could become for a government that is supposed to be committed to adhering to the European Union's plan to cut carbon emissions by at least 20 percent compared to 1990 levels.

Cuadrilla told Rigzone that, as well as potentially reducing the price of natural gas and reducing the UK's dependency on expensive foreign energy sources, shale gas also has a role to play as a "transitional fuel" that would allow time for the UK's government and industry to develop renewable sources of energy more effectively. "Natural gas is, of course, a lower carbon fossil fuel than oil and coal, and a more flexible electricity generator than either of these sources or nuclear," the company said.

Environmental Threat

But Friends of the Earth's Bosworth believes a focus on developing gas reserves by the UK would be a mistake if it wants to reduce carbon emissions.

"Climate change is the biggest environmental threat that the world faces. We have to cut our emissions of climate change gases extremely quickly if we want to avoid a catastrophic impact. Key to that is de-carbonizing the UK's energy system and if we want to do that then we have to have an appropriate role for gas. We're not saying 'no gas at all.' We're saying we need a small amount of gas on the system, say, in 2030. What we can't afford is to have a second Dash for Gas predicated on the maybe illusory prospect of vast amount of shale gas beneath the UK," he said.

"Even if we assumed that shale gas got a clean bill of health at the local level, just because we can do it doesn't mean we should do it and we need to think about what is the best energy future for the UK," Bosworth continued.

Greenpeace's Parr notes that, in terms of its carbon footprint, shale gas could look more like coal than conventional natural gas because of the way that the gas is extracted, pointing to a report from Cornell University in the U.S. And fugitive methane emissions from shale gas drilling could actually mean that shale gas would be worse for the environment than coal.

"So in terms of greenhouse gas impact, if it looks more like coal than gas, then we have to treat it like coal. In which case, what's the impact on the energy system?" said Parr.

"Internationally, there are movements against coal stretching across all continents, including in Europe. So, in terms of the environmental case that [would be] the end of the story."

High Gas Prices in Spite of Shale

"I think shale gas doesn't work if you just see it as a new form of gas and don't think through all the implications on the environmental side. What I think is really dangerous, and frankly a little bit naïve and silly, is to start saying we need to tear down the existing policy framework that is driving [the UK] towards low carbon generation when we don't even know what the impact of it is going to be in Europe," added Parr, who pointed out that independent analysis of the potential for shale gas in Europe suggests that its proponents are getting ahead of themselves.

"People like Pöyry and Deutsche Bank, who are hardly tree huggers, are saying actually it's not going to be that great," he said, pointing to a couple of reports released late last year by those organisations.

Finnish engineering consultancy Pöyry, in its report published in November 2011, stated that a number of factors suggest the UK could see high gas prices in the future even if there is a 'Blackpool Boom'.

Meanwhile, analysis from Deutsche Bank published a month earlier also came to the conclusion that the impact of any shale gas production over the next couple of decades on EU gas prices should not be expected "to be anywhere near as great as has been the case with U.S. shale-gas production on Henry Hub prices".

This begs the question, said Parr, of "why on earth would you design the policy framework around it? I mean it's like designing an entire policy framework around wave power."

The voices opposed to shale gas in the UK are quite vocal and their arguments seem compelling. Whether they are compelling enough to get the UK's decision makers to prevent Cuadrilla and other companies from drilling for hundreds of trillion of cubic feet of gas is another matter.

The UK's Department of Energy and Climate Change is about to embark on a further round of onshore licensing for oil and gas projects. The details of this round, and particularly whether there are any licenses for shale gas drilling included, will provide further clues as to where the government actually stands on the issue.

INTERESTING LINKS – Environment - Health related

From: Rich Liroff--IEHN [mailto:rliroff@iehn.org]

Sent: Thursday, March 15, 2012 11:01 PM

Subject: Fracking Stories: Scotland coal-bed methane; Sand-mining; Well integrity risks; Haynesville boom/bust; U.S. tribal impacts; Health studies; Ohio Tax Debate; California; Tighter N. Dakota rules; UK;

The hunt for gas ... and the threat to Scotland. A boom in exploiting underground gas is facing mounting opposition from communities and environmentalists worried about the contamination of water supplies and climate pollution. [Glasgow Herald](#), United Kingdom.

UK Shale Gas: An Energy Red Herring? http://www.rigzone.com/news/article.asp?a_id=115800 (Note: Good overview of contending views in the UK.)

The potent mixture behind fracking fluids <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/industry-news/energy-and-resources/the-potent-mixture-behind-fracking-fluids/article2365204/> (Note: Good technical description of fracking, in plain English.)

Faulty wells, not fracking, blamed for water pollution. Some energy companies, state regulators, academics and environmentalists are reaching consensus that natural-gas drilling has led to several incidents of water pollution – but not because of fracking. [Wall Street Journal](#) (Note: Good piece emphasizing that the risks are more related to well construction than to hydraulic fracturing as technically defined.)

Energy boom's uncertain cost shows up in Winona. As the epicenter of a new Midwestern mining boom spreads, from western Wisconsin to Mankato to Shakopee, it is igniting a debate over sand mining and the larger industry it serves — the controversial oil and gas drilling practice called hydro-fracking. [Minneapolis Star Tribune](#), Minnesota.

[Ohio officials issue new drilling rules, tie fracking waste to swarm of earthquakes](http://coloradoindependent.com/115289/ohio-officials-issue-new-drilling-rules-tie-fracking-waste-to-swarm-of-earthquakes)

<http://coloradoindependent.com/115289/ohio-officials-issue-new-drilling-rules-tie-fracking-waste-to-swarm-of-earthquakes> (Note: One way to think about this is that Ohio officials that there are manageable regulatory ways to address the risks of seismic events induced by deep injection well disposal of fracking wastes.)

[Natural-gas windfall wanes.](#) The 2008 discovery of the Haynesville Shale—a layer of rock infused with natural gas 10,000 feet underground—has been a windfall for local governments. But the foundation of this wealth has started to crumble. The price of natural gas has plunged to a 10-year low, prompting a flight of energy companies from gas fields across the country. [Wall Street Journal](#)

[North Dakota Oil Boom Bringing Jobs, Wealth—and a Looming Humanitarian Crisis](http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2012/03/15/north-dakota-oil-boom-bringing-jobs-wealth-%e2%80%94and-a-looming-humanitarian-crisis-103023#ixzz1pDIRuGST)

<http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2012/03/15/north-dakota-oil-boom-bringing-jobs-wealth-%e2%80%94and-a-looming-humanitarian-crisis-103023#ixzz1pDIRuGST> (Note: A “must read”, marvelously detailed piece on the social impacts of North Dakota Bakken Shale (oil) development, and in particular on the United States’ indigenous peoples—Native American tribal communities. The tribes evidently are being either ignored or skewered by state government and the U.S. federal government.)

[Cuomo and Corbett Ignore Health Concerns from Gas Fracking](http://www.dcbureau.org/201203097069/natural-resources-news-service/cuomo-and-corbett-ignore-health-concerns-from-gas-fracking.html)

<http://www.dcbureau.org/201203097069/natural-resources-news-service/cuomo-and-corbett-ignore-health-concerns-from-gas-fracking.html> (Note: Useful review and commentary on recently published studies re health effects of fracking, and local tracking of effects, from an on-line investigative journalism site)

[Kasich plan for tax hike, cut gets mixed reaction](http://timesbulletin.com/main.asp?SubSectionID=364&ArticleID=172315&SectionID=165) [http://timesbulletin.com/main.asp?](http://timesbulletin.com/main.asp?SubSectionID=364&ArticleID=172315&SectionID=165)

[SubSectionID=364&ArticleID=172315&SectionID=165](http://timesbulletin.com/main.asp?SubSectionID=364&ArticleID=172315&SectionID=165) And for official government fact sheet on the new plans, see: <http://richmedia.onset.freedom.com/limanews/m0w39i-energy.pdf>

[Oil extraction method widely used in California with little oversight](http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-oil-fracking-20120315.0.4631157.story)

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-oil-fracking-20120315.0.4631157.story> (Note: For a related Los Angeles story, see: http://wavenewspapers.com/news/local/west_edition/article_388252fc-6e40-11e1-90b8-0019bb30f31a.html)

[Proposed oil and gas rule changes now final](http://www.minotdailynews.com/page/content.detail/id/563959/Proposed-oil-and-gas-rule-changes-now-final.html?nav=5010)

<http://www.minotdailynews.com/page/content.detail/id/563959/Proposed-oil-and-gas-rule-changes-now-final.html?nav=5010> (Note: North Dakota rules)

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