



**CITIZEN'S GUIDE:  
PROTECTING OUR STATE FORESTS  
FROM NATURAL GAS IMPACTS**

*What can we do?*

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With special recognition and gratitude to the  
**Environmental Fund of Pennsylvania**

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## INTRODUCTION

Pennsylvania's State Forests are being severely challenged as a result of leasing the mineral rights for natural gas exploration and development. Already our most pristine state forests are being impacted. Forestland is being cleared for roads, pipelines, well pads and storage areas. Heavy truck traffic is turning forests into industrial zones. The forests are being fragmented and threatened with air, water, and noise pollution from gas development. Those of us who use and love the Forests need to help take care of them. What can we do? Lots!

First, it is important to know that our rights are protected under Pennsylvania's Constitution. Article I Section 27 of Pennsylvania's Constitution states as follows:

The people have a right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural scenic, historic and esthetic values of the environment. Pennsylvania's public natural resources are the common property of all the people, including generations yet to come. As trustee of these resources, the Commonwealth shall conserve and maintain them for the benefit of all the people.

The impacts on Pennsylvania's State Forests – public natural resources that are the common property of all the people – are now affecting and will continue to affect our rights to the use and preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of our Forests.

## WHAT CAN A CITIZEN DO?

We can maintain our rights by actively doing the following:

- **Know our state forests well.** Get out more than we used to in order to see what impacts are taking place.
- **Check for:** impacts to existing trail, scenic or historic (virgin forest) areas; sediment from construction sites or roads; unusual water discoloration; loud noise; offensive fumes or strong odors; injured or dead wildlife or fauna; or light pollution in pristine areas.
- **Take samples** of discolored water.

- **Take photographs.**
- **Keep notes** of what is observed, and **report your findings** to DEP and DCNR (see [MORE INFORMATION](#) below).
- **Link up with others** who share our concerns, such as the Pennsylvania Forest Coalition ([FORESTcoalition@aol.com](mailto:FORESTcoalition@aol.com)) and the Keystone Trails Association ([www.kta-hike.org/](http://www.kta-hike.org/)).
- **Get involved with the watershed association** in your home area. Contact your local Conservation District Watershed Specialist for more information on local watershed associations. Most county websites provide a link to the Conservation District. If not, call your county and ask for the Conservation District.
- **Know our District Foresters.** Start by visiting the District Forester's office. Talk with them about what they see and what you see happening. Ask what you can do to help them keep a vigilant eye.
- **Know our State Representatives and Senators.** Contact them frequently – by letter, phone call, and in-person visits – about your concerns for the long-term protection of our forests. Emphasize the need to maintain the diversity of the ecology of the forest life. Tell them what you see happening from the gas extraction process in the State Forest. Here is the link to contacting our legislators:  
<http://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/findyourlegislator/index.cfm?CFID=45122606&CFTOKEN=36175002>
- **Contact DEP** frequently to get to know them in our areas. Let them know if you see any problems. Ask them how you can help.
- **Join Pine Creekers** in designating and protecting the Four Corners High Conservation Value Forest in Tioga, Lycoming, Clinton and Potter Counties. Contact Jim Weaver [jaweaver@epix.net](mailto:jaweaver@epix.net) for more information.

## **MONITORING PROGRAMS for CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT**

- **Alliance for Aquatic Resource Monitoring (ALLARM).** Engage in baseline stream monitoring through this nationally recognized project based at the Environmental Studies Department, Dickinson College. Since its founding in 1986, ALLARM has become a technical and programmatic support center for community organizations interested in watershed assessment, protection, and restoration. Through the work of professional and student staff, ALLARM offers comprehensive services to enable groups to use critical scientific tools to enhance environmental quality and fully participate in community decision-making. In 2010 the Alliance for Aquatic Resource Monitoring (ALLARM) researched and tested a volunteer-based Marcellus Monitoring protocol for the early detection of flowback contamination in small Pennsylvania streams. The protocol encourages concerned volunteers to collect weekly baseline monitoring as well as obtain certified lab analysis for signature chemicals. The protocol can be found at <http://www.dickinson.edu/about/sustainability/allarm/content/Marcellus-Shale-Monitoring-Resources/>. ALLARM can provide free workshops and quality assurance/quality control to community groups interested in baseline weekly monitoring in the Marcellus Shale region.

### **ALLARM Marcellus Monitoring Workshop Components**

- Science of Marcellus Shale and hydraulic fracturing
- How to locate well permit information
- How to map well permit information
- How to choose monitoring site locations
- Visual monitoring
- Chemical monitoring
- Data entry and management
- Data use

For more information about ALLARM, please contact:

Julie Vastine, ALLARM Director

Phone: 717-245-1565

Email: [vastine@dickinson.edu](mailto:vastine@dickinson.edu)

Website: [www.dickinson.edu/allarm](http://www.dickinson.edu/allarm)

- **Trout Unlimited Coldwater Conservation Corps (CCC) Training.** Conduct stream surveillance and monitor your favorite coldwater streams for impacts related to Marcellus Shale development. In 2010, the Pennsylvania Council of Trout Unlimited (PATU) launched the state-wide stream surveillance initiative, designed to collect baseline data in watersheds where there is no gas drilling and to monitor watersheds where gas drilling is occurring or is projected to occur. The CCC program concept can be traced to the Pine Creek Waterdog program of the Pine Creek Headwaters Protection Group. Several key partners have been instrumental in bringing the CCC program into fruition, including most notably the Alliance for Aquatic Resource Monitoring (ALLARM) based at Dickinson College. The CCC program utilizes a field manual and resources developed by PATU and TU as well as the Marcellus Monitoring manual and training resources developed by ALLARM. Building upon TU's science-based geospatial mapping analysis, TU has developed a state-wide monitoring strategy that guides our monitoring efforts, making sure that watersheds most at risk from shale gas development are being actively monitored. As many of the Pennsylvania's best trout streams are located in state forests, you can play an important role in monitoring the impacts on these valuable and irreplaceable ecosystems. With more than 200 volunteers trained in the first year of the CCC program, TU is putting boots on the ground to serve as watchdogs for Pennsylvania's coldwater streams. Learn more about the CCC program at [www.tu.org](http://www.tu.org), or contact Mitchell Blake, TU's Pennsylvania Marcellus Shale Field Organizer, at [mblake@tu.org](mailto:mblake@tu.org) or 814-977-0007.

- **Pine Creek Waterdog Training.** Spearheaded by the Pine Creek Headwaters Protection Group (PCHPG) in Tioga County, a number of conservation districts and watershed organizations have developed this monitoring program and hold training for Waterdogs. Contact PCHPG at [etomlinson@tiogacountypa.us](mailto:etomlinson@tiogacountypa.us).

## **MORE INFORMATION**

In addition to the above, here are some ways to obtain more information:

- To get a copy of the **leases** for gas extraction activities in the state forest, contact:

**Pennsylvania Department of the Treasury**, Bureau of Finance and Revenue. Website: [contractinfo@ptreasury.gov](mailto:contractinfo@ptreasury.gov). Phone: 717-787-2975

- To get a copy of the **permits** for gas extraction activities, contact:

**Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).**

- **DEP Website:** [www.depweb.state.pa.us](http://www.depweb.state.pa.us)

Phone: Williamsport - 570-327-3636; Harrisburg Central - 717-772-2199

- Use the **Pennsylvania Right to Know Law**, 65 P.S. § 67.101, et. seq.

For more information or to request **document reviews** of either DEP or DCNR, see:

[http://openrecords.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/open\\_records/4434/right-to-know\\_law/466460](http://openrecords.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/open_records/4434/right-to-know_law/466460))

For DEP document reviews, see:

[http://www.depweb.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/oil\\_and\\_gas/6003](http://www.depweb.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/oil_and_gas/6003)

- **DCNR Website:** [www.dcnr.state.pa.us](http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us).

Click on "quick links"

Click on "Bureaus"

Click on "Forestry"

Or go directly to **DCNR natural gas-related documents** at

<http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/naturalgasexploration/index.htm>

- **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency** "Eyes on Drilling" National Resource Center: 1-877-919-4EPA, or National Response Center for Spill of Hazardous Material: 1-800-424-8802
- **FracTracker:** Visit [www.FracTracker.org](http://www.FracTracker.org) for a variety of data and information related to the impacts of shale gas activity. You'll be likely to find information about activities near you. If you collect data or images, you may want to consider uploading it to the site. If you have questions, contact staff listed on the website.
- **Institute for Energy and Environmental Research:** Visit Wilkes University's Institute for Energy and Environmental Research for Northeastern Pennsylvania website at <http://energy.wilkes.edu/pages/1.asp>
- **Susquehanna River Basin Commission:** Visit the Susquehanna River Basin Commission website at [www.srb.com](http://www.srb.com). Enter the Water Resources Portal for maps and data. The Remote Water Quality Network also has valuable information on water quality in the Susquehanna Basin.

The State Forest belongs to us!

We can make a difference!

Thank you!

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