

Subject: : Conservation

Topic: : Fracking Issues 101

Re: Fracking Issues 101

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URL:

Greenghost,

They've been fracking in PA since 1960 at least, probably much earlier than that. It's not a new technique. As DGC alludes to, though, Marcellus certainly adds a new flavor. For one, Marcellus is a lot deeper than the traditional wells. More importantly, horizontal drilling is new. On a horizontal well, the volume of the borehole is exponentially higher. Which means the volume of water used to frack is also exponentially higher, as is the volume of cuttings which are removed, the pressures involved, the size of the pad, the amount of truck traffic, etc, etc, etc. Same process, but everything is MUCH bigger.

The same basic principles do apply. What matters from an environmental standpoint is only what's above the water table. i.e. what happens on the surface and in the top few hundred feet of the hole (cement job and so forth). It's just that with everything so vastly upscaled, the unavoidable impacts are higher, potential for damaging errors and accidents are higher, as are the effects of those events.

There are real impacts, and valid concerns about more serious complications. I just think radioactivity falls WAY down the list of concerns. It always bugs me that nobody ever seems to be objective on issues like this. If you're anti-drilling, every thing is horrible, and if the drillers had their way this would be an uninhabitable moonscape. If you're pro-drilling, the industry can do no wrong and there are zero negative impacts. Neither is anywhere close to reality.