

Subject: : Conservation

Topic: : Drilling In State Forests Under Consideration Again

Re: Drilling In State Forests Under Consideration Again

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URL:

Does the state own the mineral rights to the state forests? I honestly don't know.

I know, for instance on the ANF, that the forest service does not own the mineral rights. The land was sold to the gov't with the stipulation that the original landowner has mineral rights, and if at some time they wish to drill or mine they may do so. There have been gas wells on ANF land for many, many years. Of course those wells don't compare in size to the Marcellus wells they're drilling now.

My opinion is that the existence of gas wells is not a terrible thing in itself. They can bring in a lot of money to a region, for relatively little environmental damage. But we have to make sure the environmental damage remains minor, because left to their own devices, the unscrupulous small companies will be first on the scene, and they tend to disregard things like rules. We have to be really careful. The DEP, watershed organizations, etc., have to get in gear quickly, come up with proper protections, and enforce those protections. Violations need to get more than a slap on the wrist.