

FRACK ATTACK



Fracking site, Bedford County

B. Mark Schmerling

Pennsylvania's
parks and forests
threatened by
drilling



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Executive Summary

Pennsylvania is blessed with incredible public lands, from the famed hiking paths and scenic vistas of Loyalsock and Cook State Forests, to the pristine woods and walking trails of the Delaware Water Gap. These parks and forests are the destinations for millions of Pennsylvanians and visitors from around the globe who want to take advantage of the Commonwealth's great public lands for hiking, biking, fishing, or just to get away from it all.

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Each year, 35 million visitors trek to Pennsylvania's state parks. Estimates are that when local and county parks are included, this number increases substantially.¹ Federal public lands, such as the Delaware Water Gap, boast over 9 million visitors in Pennsylvania as well.² All told, Pennsylvania has over 2.2 million acres of state forestland, 120 state parks covering 330,000 acres,³ and more than 18 national parks. These places aren't simply critical natural and recreation areas, they are also important drivers of our local economies—the Commonwealth's state park system provides approximately 13,000 quality jobs to Pennsylvania's residents, and contributes 1.2 billion dollars to the state's economy.⁴

Our public lands are arguably Pennsylvania's greatest natural treasure, and they must be protected for future generations to enjoy and embrace. Unfortunately, more and more of Pennsylvania's public lands

are under siege from the growing threat of the oil and gas drilling process known as “fracking.”

Across Pennsylvania, 1.5 million acres of forestlands, comprising of 18 of the 20 state forests⁵, and 61 state parks sit atop the Marcellus Shale gas formation.

Sadly, politicians from both sides of the aisle—Democrats and Republicans alike—have used their positions of power to press for opening up these public lands, turning them into cash cows for state coffers instead of protecting them from harmful fracking activities. All told, 700,000 acres of state forestland is available for drilling due to either privately owned oil and gas rights, or because of acreage leased by PA-DCNR.⁶ The fracking industry and their political allies have also set their sights on county and state parks.

And while the full-court press to open up public lands to fracking is just beginning, the effects have already been disastrous—pipelines dissect state forestlands; spills of toxic fracking waste water have polluted pristine streams that crisscross through public lands;

- 1 Short Version of the History of Pennsylvania State Parks, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation of Natural Resources: <http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks/thingstoknow/history/shortversionofhistory/index.htm> (last visited September 15, 2014).
- 2 Pennsylvania Highlights, National Park Service: <http://www.nps.gov/state/pa/index.htm#program=parks> (last visited September 15, 2014).
- 3 Pennsylvania Department of Conservation of Natural Resources Fact Sheet. Available at: http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/cs/groups/public/documents/document/dcnr_009786.pdf (last visited September 15, 2014).
- 4 Pennsylvania Office of the Governor Press Release, Governor Corbett Issues Executive Order Protecting State Forests, Parks from Gas Leasing that Involves Surface Disturbance, May 23, 2014, Available at: http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/cs/groups/public/documents/news/DCNR_20029345.pdf (last visited September 15, 2014).

- 5 The only state forests areas that do not overlay with the Marcellus Shale gas formation are William Penn (17) and Michaux (1).
- 6 Don Hopey, *State to open more forest land for well drilling*, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, April 2, 2008, <http://www.post-gazette.com/local/neighborhoods/2008/04/02/State-to-open-more-forest-land-for-well-drilling/stories/200804020241> (last visited September 15, 2014).



Loyalsock fracking site

Pete Stern

roads and well pads lead to run-off pollution in nearby forestlands; and massive amounts of truck traffic are creating air and noise pollution—all in what were once peaceful places where Pennsylvanians went to recreate and enjoy nature.

Already Pennsylvania has seen nearly 1,500 acres of publicly-owned state forestland converted to roads, pipelines, and well pads for fracking.⁷ This not only damages the physical beauty and integrity of landscapes, but can have profound impacts on their economic value for tourism and recreation.⁸ Moreover, fracking can destroy and degrade the pristine streams and rivers that crisscross our public lands. From excessive water withdrawals to contamination from fracking chemicals and other pollution, the waterways that are the backbone of many parks and forests are at risk—putting local outdoor-related economies further at risk.⁹

Despite all this, on May 23, 2014, Gov. Tom Corbett announced his decision to lift the four-year moratorium on further leasing of state forestland. Incredibly, Gov. Corbett's executive order goes even further to allow drilling under our state parklands—an unprecedented decision for public lands that have specifically been spared from extractive purposes.

Pennsylvanians must protect our great public lands from the threat of fracking. Be it public lands under local, state or federal jurisdiction—from county parks, state parks and forests or parts of our national park service—drilling in these places will inevitably lead to the destruction of wild forests, the loss of essential habitat for native plants and wildlife. And in

turn this means the further degradation of the ecological and recreational value to the best parts of Pennsylvania's natural heritage and outdoors.¹⁰

To demonstrate the threat facing Pennsylvania's public lands from fracking, PennEnvironment Research & Policy Center has cataloged five compelling examples of public lands in the Commonwealth that face a growing risk from fracking—a risk that would do irreparable harm to the places that millions of Pennsylvanians love and cherish.

While highlighting five beloved places in this report, sadly, there are many more local, county, state and federal lands that are beloved and wild—and facing the encroaching threat of fracking.

If we cannot preserve the special places that we've been charged with protecting for future generations, there will be no place that is off limits to the drillers.

The five special public places highlighted in this report include:

- 1. Loyalsock State Forest**
- 2. Ohiopyle State Park**
- 3. Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area**
- 4. Deer Lakes Park, Allegheny County**
- 5. Cross Creek County Park, Washington County**

Our parks, forests and public lands must be protected from fracking and its web of destructive activities. We cannot allow our elected officials use them as cash cows over the short term and in turn leave a legacy of irreparable harm forever.

7 Pennsylvania Department of Natural Resources (DCNR) report: http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/cs/groups/public/documents/document/dcnr_20029147.pdf

8 National Parks and Hydraulic Fracturing, Balancing Energy Needs, Nature, and America's National Heritage. National Parks Conservation Association, Centre for Park Research. 2013, Available at: http://www.npca.org/assets/pdf/Fracking_Report.pdf (last visited September 15, 2014).

9 In Pennsylvania recreational fishing is a \$1.6 billion industry, See Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, Economic Value of Fishing and Boating in Pennsylvania (fact sheet), downloaded from fishandboat.com/promo/funding/fact_economic_impact.htm.

10 Pennsylvania Office of the Governor Press Release, Governor Corbett Issues Executive Order Protecting State Forests, Parks from Gas Leasing that Involves Surface Disturbance, May 23, 2014, Available at: http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/cs/groups/public/documents/news/DCNR_20029345.pdf (last visited September 15, 2014).

Loyalsock State Forest Under Attack: The heart of PA's Endless Mountains Region



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Loyalsock fracking site

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Situated in Pennsylvania's northern tier, Loyalsock State Forest is in the heart of the Endless Mountains Region. Straddling Bradford, Lycoming and Sullivan counties, this state forest provides its visitors with incredible hiking, canoeing, skiing, horseback riding, and fishing experiences.

Loyalsock State Forest is home to some of Pennsylvania's largest and most pristine wilderness areas. Loyalsock is also designated as an "Important Bird Area" due to the forestland's size, minimal amount of fragmentation, and excellent water quality—making it critical habitat for threatened birds and other endangered species.

Sadly, fracking has already been permitted in Loyalsock State Forest. Since the state Legislature and governor agreed to open up Loyalsock State Forest to fracking in 2009, nearly 100 wells have been per-

mitted in this great part of Pennsylvania's natural heritage.¹¹ To add insult to injury, Loyalsock is surrounded by nearly 100 additional wells encroaching upon its borders.¹²

To make matters worse, drillers are now poised to go even further to degrade Loyalsock. Currently, gas drilling companies are pressing Gov. Corbett to open up another 25,000-acre tract of pristine wilderness in Loyalsock State Forest. This area is known as the Clarence Moore Lands, which are named after the previous owner of these forestlands.

11 Ann Pinca, *Impacts of Drilling: A Before and After Visit to Bodine Mountain in the Loyalsock State Forest*, Responsible Drilling Alliance, <http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs194/1108623850811/archive/1114883680060.html#bodine> (last visited September 15, 2014).

12 Review of the PA DEP Permit Reporting Service Available at: http://www.depreportingservices.state.pa.us/ReportServer/Pages/ReportViewer.aspx?/Oil_Gas/Permits_Issued_Detail



Loyalsock Creek Cascades

Nicholas A. Tonelli



Loyalsock fracking site

Pete Stern

As part of the deed on these lands, Pennsylvania has the right to completely exclude drilling activity in these sensitive areas—yet the Corbett Administration has been meeting with Anadarko Inc. and Southwestern Energy Corporation in an effort to reach an agreement to allow fracking on these lands.¹³

The effects will undoubtedly be disastrous for Loyalsock State Forest. Studies expect drilling on the Clarence Moore Lands to lead to:

- At least 23 additional well pads, as well as compressor stations and waste pits;
- 34 miles of pipelines and 15 miles of roads carving up the forestlands—many cutting across some of the most beautiful hiking paths in Loyalsock.^{14,15}

Anadarko's fracking activity has already left a trail of environmental harm and violations in its wake across Pennsylvania—a recent study by the Environmental Integrity Project (EIP) ranked Anadarko among the 20 most common violators of Pennsylvania's environment laws, when it comes to their drilling activities.¹⁶

Allowing Anadarko to frack in the Clarence Moore Lands would be disastrous and cause irreparable damage to our public lands. Despite the public's vocal opposition to opening up Loyalsock to fracking—and ongoing outcry for protecting these lands—the Corbett administration has been unwilling to agree to put these lands off limits from fracking. As a consequence, this marvelous and symbolic place of Pennsylvania's wilderness is still under an imminent threat from fracking.

13 Susan Phillips, *Lovers of Pa.'s Loyalsock Forest Fight to Limit Drilling There*, StateImpactPennsylvania, May 20, 2013, <http://stateimpact.npr.org/pennsylvania/2013/05/20/lovers-of-pa-s-loyalsock-forest-fight-to-limit-drilling-there/> (last visited Feb. 3, 2014). See also: Loyalsock State Forest Clarence Moore Lands Fact Sheet, PA DCNR, http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/cs/groups/public/documents/document/dcnr_20026829.pdf (last visited September 15, 2014).

14 Proposed Loyalsock Development Plans, FracTracker, <http://maps.fracktracker.org/latest/webmap=c0be65953b674c39a742814f933aeb2e> (last visited September 15, 2014).

15 Morgan Myers, *Anadarko plan faulted*, Sun Gazette, October 27, 2013, <http://www.sungazette.com/page/content.detail/id/598641/Anadarko-plan-faulted.html?nav=5011> (last visited September 15, 2014).

16 Out of 588 operators in the State. See NOT IN THE INTEREST OF THE COMMONWEALTH: Anadarko's Record of Environmental Violations in Pennsylvania and its Implications for the Loyalsock State Forest, Environmental Integrity Project, February 6, 2014. Available at: http://www.environmentalintegrity.org/news_reports/documents/2014_02_06LoyalsockAnadarkoComplianceReportFINAL.pdf (last visited September 15, 2014).

Preserving one of Pennsylvania's Largest State Parks: Ohiopyle State Park



Andy Truello

Fracking site, Bedford County

B. Mark Schmerling

Located in southwestern Pennsylvania's Fayette County, Ohiopyle State Park is arguably one of Pennsylvania's best known and most visited state parks. A wild outdoor playground with dramatic beauty and awe-inspiring scenic views, Ohiopyle is visited by more than 1 million people each year. Ohiopyle is renowned for its network of breathtaking waterfalls, its white water rapids for rafting (considered to be some of the best whitewater rafting in the Eastern U.S.), and its impressive horseback riding trails with dramatic scenic overlooks.

Year-round people come from all around the United States to enjoy various summer activities, such as swimming, boating, and fishing along Ohiopyle's 14-mile long river gorge; and winter activities, such as snowshoeing, cross country skiing, and even snow fort building and horse sleigh rides during the now famous "Winterfest." The Youghiogheny River, which mean-

ders through the park, boasts one of the premier trout fisheries in Pennsylvania. All year round, wildlife such as otters, bald eagles, and ospreys are on display for the pleasure of nature-lovers and bird watchers. The south section of the Youghiogheny River Trail, part of the famed Great Allegheny Passage—a 318 mile system of hiking and biking trails that connects Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and Washington, D.C.—cuts through the park.

The Park also boasts an area with a National Natural Landmark designation.¹⁷ The Ferncliff Peninsula is a 100-acre botanical reserve containing many rare and unusual plants. Due to the unique geology of the area, the Peninsula receives seeds from the neighboring states of Maryland and West Virginia, and the river

17 See Ferncliff Peninsula Natural Area, National Park Service: <http://www.nature.nps.gov/npl/site.cfm?Site=FEPE-PA> (last visited September 15, 2014).

Cucumber Falls



Dave Olsen

gorge creates a warmer climate for the rare plants to survive. The particular microclimate of the Peninsula allows these plants to grow north of the range, creating a unique and fragile ecosystem with botanical treasures such as southern wildflowers.

But the treasures of Ohiopyle State Park are under threat. The entirety of the park lies above the Marcellus Shale, and companies have already expressed interest in testing in the park to determine the ideal locations for natural gas drilling.¹⁸ As is the case for many state parks, the Commonwealth owns very little of the mineral rights under Ohiopyle.¹⁹ Until recent-

ly, a moratorium on further leasing of state managed lands protected Ohiopyle from drilling. However, with Gov. Corbett's lifting of the moratorium, which includes language to allow for the first time the drilling under state parks, the possibility of drilling under Ohiopyle is greatly heightened.²⁰ This would put Ohiopyle's great incredible ridges, trails and forests at risk—as well as the often-visited streams and rivers—from harmful fracking.

We cannot allow one of Pennsylvania's best parks be opened to the air, water and noise pollution fracking has already brought to so many of our public lands.

18 Marianne Lavelle, *Parks, Forests Eyed for the Fuel Beneath*, National Geographic, October 26, 2010, <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2010/10/101022-energy-marcellus-shale-gas-parks-forests/> (last visited September 15, 2014).

19 Bruce Siwy, *Gas interests eye Ohiopyle, Laurel Ridge*, Daily American, March 09, 2010, http://articles.dailyamerican.com/2010-03-09/news/29150434_1_mineral-rights-seismic-testing-marcellus-gas (last visited August 29, 2014). See also: Elizabeth McGowan, *Number-Crunching the Footprint of a Gas Fracking Boom*, Forest by Forest Reuters, Apr 26, 2011, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/04/26/idUS424346587220110426> (last visited August 29, 2014).

20 Pennsylvania Office of the Governor Press Release, *Governor Corbett Issues Executive Order Protecting State Forests, Parks from Gas Leasing that Involves Surface Disturbance*, May 23, 2014, Available at: http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/cs/groups/public/documents/news/DCNR_20029345.pdf (last visited September 15, 2014).

The dangers of fracking near the Delaware Water Gap, an iconic recreation area



Michael Forster,
Rothbart Photography

Loyalsock fracking Site

Pete Stern

With nearly 5 million visitors annually, the Delaware Water Gap is America's 10th most visited area in our national park system, with more visitors each year than even the Grand Canyon.²¹ Covering approximately 70,000 acres of land across the states of Pennsylvania and New Jersey, the Delaware Water Gap is named after a mile-long stretch of the Middle Delaware River that slices through two Appalachian Mountains in the Kittatinny Ridge.

The Delaware Water Gap offers a wide range of recreational activities for visitors, such as swimming, boating, rafting, and fishing, as well as a plethora of hiking, biking, and birding experiences. With so many visitors each year, the Delaware Water Gap is also a huge economic asset for Pennsylvania,

generating \$216 million worth of economic activity in 2012 alone.²² Delaware River itself, 40 miles of which cuts through the heart of the Water Gap, provides critical spawning and nursery habitat for many important fish species, including largemouth bass, American eels, American Shad, and some endangered species of freshwater mussels.²³ The Delaware also supports the last commercial fishery operation for American Shad in the Northeast. Maybe most importantly, the Delaware River serves as a drinking water source for more than 15 million people in four states, including millions of residents

21 National Park Service website, <http://www.nps.gov/dewa/planyourvisit/index.htm>. See also: <http://www.npca.org/exploring-our-parks/visitation.html> (last visited September 15, 2014).

22 2012 National Park Visitor Spending Effects. National Park Service, US Department of the Interior. February 2014, Natural Resource Report NPS/NRSS/EQD/NRR—2014/765. Available at http://www.nature.nps.gov/socialscience/docs%5CNPSVSE2012_final_nrss.pdf

23 National Parks and Hydraulic Fracturing, Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River and Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area Case Study, National Parks Conservation Association, http://www.npca.org/assets/pdf/Delaware_Water_Gap_fracking.pdf (last visited September 15, 2014).



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below the Water Gap in Pennsylvania, Delaware and New Jersey.²⁴

Currently a drilling moratorium has been set by the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC), an intergovernmental agency which includes the governors of New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania and Delaware, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The current moratorium prevents drilling within the watershed as well as on the public lands of the Delaware Water Gap. However, the moratorium is not permanent. The Commission has stated that it will revisit the moratorium decision in the future—and Pennsylvania's Gov. Corbett has aggressively pushed DRBC to open up the region to fracking.²⁵

Should the moratorium on fracking near the Delaware Water Gap and in the Delaware River watershed be lifted, an estimated 15,000-18,000 gas wells could be drilled in the area.²⁶ Already, an exploratory well has been drilled in Wayne County Pennsylvania, north of the Water Gap in the Upper Delaware region.²⁷ With the moratorium lifted, the Water Gap would face a host of threats associated with fracking; such as water contamination and reduced water flow, excess sedimentation in tributaries and feeder stream of the Delaware, air pollution, habitat loss and fragmentation, and noise and scenic pollution. All of these threats would degrade the quality of the Water Gap itself.

Allowing fracking to endanger and forever change this national treasure, and what was once considered a scenic wonder of the world, is truly unacceptable.

24 Andrew Maykuth, *Philadelphia Water Department taking measured approach to fracking*, Philadelphia Inquirer, September 28, 2010, http://articles.philly.com/2010-09-28/news/24979722_1_gas-drilling-water-system-marcellus-shale (last visited September 15, 2014).

25 Robert Swift, *Delaware River drilling future embroils states*, Times-Tribune, August 11, 2013, <http://thetimes-tribune.com/news/gas-drilling/delaware-river-drilling-future-embroils-states-1.1534388> (last visited September 15, 2014).

26 *Impacts of Fracking in the Marcellus Shale Threatens National Parks*, Available At: <http://www.npca.org/protecting-our-parks/air-land-water/mining-and-fracking/fracking.html> (last visited September 15, 2014).

27 Andrew Maykuth, *Philadelphia Water Department taking measured approach to fracking*, Philadelphia Inquirer, September 28, 2010, http://articles.philly.com/2010-09-28/news/24979722_1_gas-drilling-water-system-marcellus-shale (last visited August 29, 2014).

Deer Lakes Park, a beloved county park under threat

James Watt



Loyalsock fracking site

Pete Stern

The nine parks that make up Allegheny County's 12,000 acre park system are incredibly popular, boasting over 11 million visitors annually who trek to these public lands for fishing, swimming and other outdoor activities.²⁸

One of the most popular parks in Allegheny County's park system is Deer Lakes Park.

Located only a half-hour from downtown Pittsburgh, Deer Lakes is a 1,180 acre park with three separate spring-fed lakes within its borders. These waterways make Deer Lakes a paradise for fisherman, who come to the park for its significant populations of trout,

largemouth bass, and bluegill.²⁹ Deer Lakes is also a popular destination for other outdoor activities, attracting hikers with over 25 miles of path, and families with playgrounds and a water spray park. Deer Lakes park also contains a popular 18-hole Disc Golf Course on site, where approximately 30,000 rounds of disc golf are played a year, and will host the 2015 Professional Disc Golf Association's World Championships.

In addition to the plethora of outdoor activities, Deer Lakes Park is also home to the Nicholas E. Wagman Observatory.³⁰ Despite being located a half hour's

²⁸ Allegheny County Pennsylvania Website, <http://www.alleghenycounty.us/recreation.aspx> (last visited September 15, 2014).

²⁹ Kaitlynn Riely, *A tranquil scene belies Deer Lakes Park drilling debate*, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, April 27, 2014, <http://www.post-gazette.com/local/north/2014/04/28/A-tranquil-scene-belies-Deer-Lakes-Park-drilling-debate/stories/201404280083> (last visited September 15, 2014).

³⁰ Allegheny County Parks Foundation, Deer Lakes Park, <http://www.acparksfoundation.org/parks/show.php?park=3> (last visited September 15, 2014).



Whitetail deer

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drive from the city of Pittsburgh, the remote location of Deer Lakes Park offers stargazers a unique chance to view a stunning amount of stars, planets, and other celestial objects up close.³¹

But all this is now threatened.

In November 2013, the Allegheny County Council voted down a 3-year fracking ban on county lands.³² This vote left open the possibility to authorize fracking beneath any or all of Allegheny County's nine parks. The threat to Deer Lakes Park however is immediate, as two fracking companies, Range Resources and Huntley Co., have pressed Allegheny County officials to lease land under the park for fracking. Sadly, Allegheny County Executive Richard Fitzgerald has championed the drillers efforts to allow fracking in the county's park system. Despite months of public

outcry, the Allegheny County Council voted 9-5 on May 7, 2014 to allow drilling beneath the park.³³

Given the track record of fracking on public lands, drilling in Deer Lakes Park will undoubtedly scar this scenic park and do untold harm for generations to come. The addition of new well pads, pipelines, and truck traffic will inevitably take a significant toll on the park, say nothing of the threat from impending spills, accidents or explosions that have plagued fracking activities around the Commonwealth.

At the same time, Deer Lakes Park is already threatened by 19 active wells that are encroaching upon the park's boundaries. An additional 24,000 acres of land surrounding the park have also been leased by Range Resources for drilling.³⁴

31 Julie Martin, *Stargazers can take in winter wonders at Deer Lakes Park*, Pittsburgh Tribune-Review, Feb. 13, 2013 <http://triblive.com/neighborhoods/yourallekiskivalley/yourallekiskivalleymore/3464461-74/star-says-winter#axzz3DOlwgluq> (last visited September 15, 2014).

32 Andrew McGill, *Drilling ban fails in Allegheny County Council*, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, November 19, 2013, <http://www.post-gazette.com/local/region/2013/11/20/Drilling-ban-fails-in-county-council/stories/201311200113> (last visited September 15, 2014).

33 Kaitlynn Riely and Richard Webner, *Deer Lakes Park drilling plan approved by Allegheny County Council*, 9-5, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette May 7, 2014, <http://www.post-gazette.com/local/north/2014/05/06/County-council-hears-both-sides-of-Deer-Lakes-Park-drilling-controversy/stories/201405060229> (last visited September 15, 2014).

34 Aaron Aupperlee, *Deer Lakes Park drilling might net up to \$74 million*, Pittsburgh Tribune-Review, Dec. 17, 2013 <http://triblive.com/news/allegheny/5265546-74/county-park-drilling#axzz2sw9ic289> (last visited September 15, 2014).

Cross Creek County Park: A quiet local refuge turned into an industrial landscape

Bob Doman



Cross Creek County Park

Bob Doman

Cross Creek County Park is located in southwestern Pennsylvania's Washington County, not far from the West Virginia border. It is the largest park in Washington County's park system, and came about after decades of planning between county and township officials from six municipalities.³⁵

Cross Creek County Park consists of 3,000 acres, including a 258 acre lake with 8 miles of shoreline. Fishing is considered one of the park's highlights, but Cross Creek also offers picnic shelters and tables, and well as hiking trails and hunting opportunities. The park is home to various species of panfish species including sunfish and crappie, as well as bountiful bass populations—Cross Creek Lake has one of the densest large-

mouth bass populations in the Commonwealth.³⁶

Cross Creek Lake is also part of a “special protection watershed” since its waterways are considered to be of exceptional value.³⁷

Despite all this, Cross Creek County Park has been opened up for fracking, which shockingly occurs within the parks borders, as well as around the periphery of Cross Creek's borders.³⁸ Since drilling began in 2008, 22 wells have been drilled within the park, with forestland cleared for gas well pads, impoundment pits, and roads.

³⁵ Washington County Official Website, Parks and Recreations, <http://www.co.washington.pa.us/index.aspx?nid=164> (last visited September 15, 2014).

³⁶ Cross Creek Lake, Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission Biologist Reports, http://fishandboat.com/images/fisheries/afm/2007/8x07_12cross.htm (last visited September 15, 2014).

³⁷ Seeps, Leaks, & Spills, Marcellus Shale US, http://www.marcellus-shale.us/seeps_leaks_spills.htm#WASHINGTON_COUNTY4 (last visited September 15, 2014).

³⁸ StateImpact PA Cross Creek Municipality Well Listings <http://stateimpact.npr.org/pennsylvania/drilling/municipalities/cross-creek-township-municipality/> (last visited September 15, 2014).



Cross Creek County Park

Bob Donnan

To add insult to injury, more than 800,000 gallons of water are allowed to be removed from Cross Creek Lake for fracking daily, contributing to noticeable reductions in the lake's water levels.³⁹

The company drilling in Cross Creek County Park, Range Resources, has had multiple violations of basic environmental laws from its drilling operations in the park.⁴⁰ One such instance in 2009 led to fracking wastewater being spilt into a tributary of Cross Creek Lake, killing fish, salamanders, crayfish, and aquatic

insect life in the stream.⁴¹ In multiple violations of the lease, the company also buried a waste pit and drill cuttings within the park, and clear cut trees specifically designated as off limits.⁴²

Residents in the area describe what once a quiet county park with children's playgrounds and other outdoor opportunities as being completely transformed by fracking activities in a way that is counter to the park's stated purposes of recreation, conservation, and historical purposes.⁴³

39 See http://www.donnan.com/Take-Back_Cross-Creek.htm (last visited September 15, 2014).

40 StateImpact PA Cross Creek Municipality Well Listings <http://stateimpact.npr.org/pennsylvania/drilling/municipalities/cross-creek-township-municipality/> (last visited September 15, 2014).

41 Waste from Marcellus shale drilling in Cross Creek Park kills fish, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, June 5, 2009, See Also: <http://www.propublica.org/article/pas-gas-wells-booming-but-so-are-spills-127>. See Also: http://s3.amazonaws.com/propublica/assets/natural_gas/range_resources_consent_assessment090923.pdf

42 Barbara Miller, Washington, Greene counties: Shaleonaïres - County budgets give new meaning to term 'Shaleonaïres', Observer-Reporter, November 2, 2013, <http://www.observer-reporter.com/article/20131102/NEWS01/131109887#U4fMgbTA8mE> (last visited September 15, 2014). See Also: Marcellus Drilling Near Cross Creek Lake, Marcellus Shale US, http://www.marcellus-shale.us/Cross_Creek_drilling.htm (last visited September 15, 2014).

43 Cross Creek Park Gas Wells, Marcellus Shale US, <http://www.marcellus-shale.us/Cross-Creek-Park-Gas-Wells.htm> (last visited September 15, 2014).

Conclusion

From the old growth forests of Cook Forest State Park and the gorgeous and iconic scenery of the Delaware Water Gap, to the unmatched hiking trails and wilderness areas of Loyalsock State Forest and the clear waterfalls of Ohiopyle—these are the public lands that make Pennsylvania such a great place to call home.

Frank Kovalchek

Yet these natural jewels—and many other beloved parks and forests across Pennsylvania—face the threat of encroaching fracking.

The people of Pennsylvania and visitors to these great public lands deserve to be able to hike, swim, fish, camp and boat in these special places, now and for generations to come. And if we are truly to be stewards of our public lands, it is critical that our elected officials and the general public are doing everything in their power to keep them pristine and protect them from destruction and pollution.

In order to protect these crown jewels of Pennsylvania's public lands—and the other parks and forests threatened by fracking—PennEnvironment supports:

- Immediately placing a moratorium on oil and gas leasing, and other fracking-related activities in our state parks, forests and other public lands;
- Designating ecologically-sensitive areas—on both public and private lands—as off limits to fracking. This may include areas that are important habitat for threatened or endangered species, supply drinking water to downstream communities, or threatened and sensitive ecosystems such as wetlands;
- Prohibit drilling activities from occurring within 5,000 feet, from any state forest or park land boundaries;

- All Pennsylvania's public land should be managed under the precautionary principle: management decisions should prevent any potentially negative impacts.
- Public input should be required for all decisions regarding extractive practices within our public lands. Currently, most decisions made about Pennsylvania's public lands do not include a process for public input; and
- Environmental Impact Studies (EIS) must be required for any proposed extractive practices in our public lands—be they local, state or federal lands. Currently, Environmental Impact Studies are not a required component of most intensive activities within the Commonwealth's public lands—activities that could cause irreparable harm to these public lands.

Fracking in Pennsylvania has left environmental damage and destruction in its wake: from water and air pollution; to exposure to toxic chemicals; to well blowouts and explosions.

We cannot allow this legacy of pollution and destruction to put the future of our parks, forests and public lands at risk.