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To: Kinslow, Sara
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Subject: headlines

From: Smith, Bonnie
Sent: Wednesday, July 31, 2013 10:02 AM
To: R3 EVERYONE; Howell, Amie
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EPA Region III

Office of Public Affairs

Mid-Atlantic Headlines

Wednesday, July 31, 2013

*** DAILY HOT LIST ***

New EPA head McCarthy outlines ambitious agenda in Harvard speech

WASHINGTON POST BOSTON — In her first public speech since talking the helm of the Environmental Protection Agency two weeks ago, Administrator Gina McCarthy told an audience at Harvard Law School cutting carbon pollution will "feed the economic agenda of this country." "Climate change will not be resolved overnight," she told the 310-person audience. "But it will be engaged over the next three years. That I can promise you." McCarthy made a full-throated defense of her agency's right to address greenhouse gas emissions and other pollutants, detailing how the air quality regulations and brownfield cleanup efforts have produced economic benefits in the United States. "Can we stop talking about environmental regulations killing jobs, please?," she asked, prompting loud applause."We need to embrace cutting edge technology as a way to spark business innovation," her Boston accent so evident in the hard "a" in spark, she then repeated, "And I said 'spaahrk.'" At the start of her remarks McCarthy joked about the challenge she faced in getting her post, noting that being confirmed was "the honor of a lifetime. That's a very good thing, because I swear it took two lifetimes to get confirmed." The speech represented a homecoming for McCarthy, a Boston-area native. Her 27-year old daughter Maggie McCarey, a program coordinator at the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources, gave her a glowing introduction in which she noted her mother "perfected her mediating skills" brokering arguments among her three children for the past three decades. McCarey noted that while some might wonder why she would choose to follow in her mother's footsteps, "But for me, the real question is, why would I not want to be like her?" The emotional introduction left the administrator, in her own words, "inside a blubbering idiot, and a proud mom." Recalling how EPA had improved the environment across the country—including in Lowell, Mass., where she watched the river run blue, yellow and other colors depending on what dyes the textile mills dumped in the water,–McCarthy said the agency remains committed to making environmental progress. "And frankly, that still is, everywhere. And we're not going to stop looking at the science. And we're not going to stop driving for improvements." She identified climate change as the agency's top priority, saying it would model its efforts on the stricter fuel efficiency standards for cars and light trucks the administration brokered with the auto industry during its first term. "EPA cannot dictate solutions," McCarthy said. "We have to engage."

Climate rules can boost economy, McCarthy says in first public speech

GREENWIRE In her first public appearance as U.S. EPA administrator, Gina McCarthy said the agency will "reinvent how we view the business of climate change" by working with the industry to boost the economy while implementing President Obama's climate change plan. McCarthy, speaking this morning at Harvard Law School, said the Climate Action Plan was an opportunity to "bend the curve" and could "fuel the complementary goals of turning America into a magnet for new jobs and manufacturing." "For too long we've been focused on this false choice. It's not a choice between the health of our children and the health of our economy," McCarthy said at an event sponsored by Harvard's Environmental Law Program. "The truth is we need to embrace cutting carbon pollution as a way to spark business innovation. We need to cut carbon pollution to grow jobs. We need to cut carbon pollution to strengthen the economy. "Let's approach this as an opportunity of a lifetime, because there are too many lifetimes at stake," she added. McCarthy, who was confirmed two weeks ago after a months-long wait, is tasked with a series of complicated rulemakings in the president's second term, headlined by crafting regulations that will limit carbon dioxide emissions from new and existing power plants within the next two years.Although McCarthy called it a "wicked cool exciting time for me," those future rules are already getting blowback from EPA's traditional opponents, who say the plan is another "war on coal" that will penalize existing power plants and bar new coal plants from being built. A letter from 23 House Republicans last week said the plan would "take the unprecedented step of imposing an energy tax by regulatory fiat" (*E&E Daily*, July 24).

Observers say drillers' woes stem from arrogance

ASSOCIATED PRESS PITTSBURGH - The boom in oil and gas fracking has led to jobs, billions in royalties and profits, and even some environmental gains. But some experts say arrogance, a lack of transparency and poor communication on the part of the drilling industry have helped fuel public anger over the process of hydraulic fracturing, or fracking. "It's a big issue for the industry. I have called for greater transparency. That is the only way to have an honest

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conversation with the public," said John Hofmeister, a former Shell Oil Co. president and author of "Why We Hate Oil Companies." As an example, Mr. Hofmeister said, some industry leaders have suggested that the fracking boom has never caused water pollution. But while the vast majority of wells don't cause problems, "everybody knows that some wells go bad." One of the biggest promoters of the Marcellus Shale drilling boom in Pennsylvania says that while fracking opponents have exaggerated some risks, the industry hasn't always handled key issues well, either. Terry Engelder, a Penn State geologist, cited the highly publicized case in Dimock, where 18 families began complaining in 2009 that nearby drilling had polluted their water supply with methane and toxic chemicals. State environmental regulators ultimately agreed, imposing large fines on Cabot Oil & Gas Co, and temporarily banning the company from drilling in a 9-square-mile area around the town. Cabot paid the fines but denied responsibility for the contamination. Mr. Engelder said at least some of the industry's missteps have been unintentional and stem from inexperience. In Dimock, the land had so many layers of rock and the drilling boom was so new that both the industry and regulators struggled to understand and explain the problems with the water wells, Mr. Engelder said. Cabot spokesman George Stark said that in retrospect, the company realized the geology around Dimock was "highly unusual" and that pre-drilling tests for methane would have helped determine which wells had natural contamination of methane. While many issues were at play, Mr. Engelder said, experts came to believe that the well construction techniques used in the early years of Pennsylvania's drilling boom "were just inadequate to the task" of protecting groundwater. Regulations for well cement jobs were later strengthened, but by that time, anger and negative publicity had started and the damage was done.

Editorial: Maryland's climate opportunity

BALTIMORE SUN (Monday) Gov. O'Malley's road map for aggressively reducing greenhouse gas emissions offers a chance for the state's economy to bloom along with the environment. The dog days of summer are upon us, and most Marylanders are more inclined to reach for beach-friendly paperbacks than a 265-page treatise on climate change. That's a shame, because the latest effort to address greenhouse gas emissions in Maryland — an ambitious plan released last week by Gov. Martin O'Malley — ought to be required reading, particularly by those who dismiss such efforts as too costly or unnecessary.

Federal workers asked to submit cost-saving ideas

WASHINGTON POST The White House has launched the latest round in its annual program seeking cost-saving suggestions from federal employees, the SAVE Award. “The President’s last four budgets have included over 80 SAVE Award proposals that are saving hundreds of millions of dollars and improving the way government operates,” Steve Posner, Office of Management and Budget associate director for strategic planning and communications, said in a posting on the OMB site. “We know these ideas alone won’t solve the nation’s long-term fiscal challenges, but they represent common-sense steps to improve government and provide a better value to the American people.” Federal employees submitted more than 85,000 suggestions in the prior four rounds, raising ideas ranging from reducing wasted medicine at Veterans Affairs Department hospitals to using less costly shipping when mailing packages without urgent delivery times. Suggestions in the program, formally the Securing Americans Value and Efficiency Award, are being solicited through Aug. 9. The winner is chosen by online voting and gets a meeting with President Obama and inclusion of the idea in the next White House budget proposal. The award for 2012 went to an Education Department employee from Arlington, Va., Frederick Winter, who suggested that employees who receive subsidies for taking public transit in their commuting shift from regular transit fares to discounted senior fares as soon as they are eligible. In addition to suggestions that have been included in budget proposals, with mixed results, others have been carried out administratively.

Release of EPA slideshow raises more Dimock questions

SCRANTON TIMES TRIBUNE A leaked Environmental Protection Agency slideshow presentation showed natural gas drilling could cause "significant damage" to drinking water through migrating methane, something the federal agency did not look for when it spent months in the heavily drilled Dimock Twp. in 2011-12.The slideshow revealed the federal agency was told methane migration from natural gas drilling posed a threat to drinking water, a main concern of residents of Dimock. Environmental groups called on the EPA to revisit the Susquehanna County township. "The PowerPoint raises important questions about how EPA came to its determination that the water in Dimock was OK to drink when it points to the possibility of significant long-term contamination," said Kate Sindig of the Natural Resources Defense Council. The slideshow discusses isotopic analysis - a means of determining the origin of natural gas in water. The isotopic analysis presented in the slideshow could distinguish between gas from shallow pools and those from deep rock formations.David Yoxtheimer of Penn State University's Marcellus Center for Outreach and Research said the isotope analysis discussed in the EPA presentation is less than exact and could result in a false positive. "The isotopic signatures of some of these gases are close and overlap," he said. "It's not a slam-dunk diagnostic tool." The EPA said the slideshow was the work of an on-scene coordinator. It has not been peer reviewed and does not reflect the official agency position. "The EPA will consider this information, along with tens of thousands of other data points, as a part of its ongoing and comprehensive National Study on the Potential Impacts of Hydraulic Fracturing," said EPA spokeswoman Alisha Johnson. The leaked presentation emerged almost exactly one year after the EPA closed its investigation into Dimock water contamination saying "sampling and an evaluation of the particular circumstances at each home did not indicate levels of contaminants that would give EPA reason to take further action."

PENNSYLVANIA

PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

Longer pollen seasons nothing to sneeze at - - *One in a series of occasional articles about the regional effects of climate change and how we're coping. (7/29/113)*Even though she'd been walking in the woods for only a few minutes, Jen McIntyre was in distress. Tears were running down her cheeks. She couldn't breathe through her nose. "I feel like this is our new reality," McIntyre said recently of the allergies that have begun to plague her. McIntyre, 43, of Mount Airy, never had allergies, aside from reactions to the odd dog or horse. Now, she feels as though her body has gone beyond some sort of tipping point. Did something happen to her? Or did it happen to the world around her? Perhaps both. Earlier springs and later fall frosts linked to climate change have already lengthened the pollen season - in some areas, significantly, by two weeks or more, studies show. Plants are blooming earlier and staying in bloom longer. On top of that, plants are pumping out more pollen. And there are indications that the "allergenicity" - the potency of the pollen - is increasing. The number of people who are sensitized to pollen is rising as well. Climate change is neither a polar phenomenon nor something in the future. It is "already affecting the health of individuals within our communities," said George Luber, associate director for climate change at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta. There's "clear evidence" that airborne allergens are being influenced by warming temperatures and rising carbon dioxide levels, he said. "It's a big deal . . . it's really important for health," said Kim Knowlton, an environmental health professor at Columbia University and a senior scientist with the Natural Resources Defense Council. She and Luber wrote the human health chapter of the draft 2013 National Climate Assessment, regular reports that Congress required in 1990 legislation. Allergies "can diminish productivity at work. They can keep kids out of school," Knowlton said. Add asthma - allergies are often the start - and "it can be more than an inconvenience," she said. "It can send people to the emergency room." What triggers the bouts of sneezing and other symptoms for most sufferers is tree pollen in the spring, grass and weeds in the summer, and ragweed in the fall, although ragweed could gear up any day now. The relationship between airborne allergens and climate change is complex.

Long-term changes are sometimes difficult to distinguish from short-term weather effects. For example, studies have shown that increased carbon dioxide supports the growth of poison ivy - another plant that many are allergic to. But so does abundant rainfall, which the region has certainly had this year, resulting in lush vines of the stuff all over the place. For those sensitive to poison ivy's allergen - urushiol - studies at Duke University have also shown that increased carbon dioxide leads to increased potency.

Updated environmental movement
What's wrong with the environmental movement? It's stuck in the 20th century. I've been to dozens of meetings with Sierra Club, MoveOn, 350.org, and others, full of well-meaning, Birkenstock-wearing, tree-hugging, polar-bear-loving hippies of all ages. I love these people. They're doing all the right stuff: calling legislators, signing petitions, going to marches, writing letters to the editor. All the right stuff for the 1960s, that is. With the exception of online petitions, what are they doing that we didn't do to stop the Vietnam War, fight racism, and promote women's rights? Climate change is the battle of battles. If we lose this, it won't matter if we have female priests, fix our bridges, and get hedge-fund moguls to air-drop gold ingots onto America's slums. We'll still be starving, choking, or drowning. So we need millions more people raising their voices until we get action. Is there anything that will change more habits of more people in time to stave off disaster? Yes, and Madison Avenue knows all of the tricks. Marketing is not just the art of getting people who already buy your bacon-stuffed Twinkie to buy more. Marketing goes beyond your customer base to the undecideds. That's what the Sierra Club hasn't discovered yet. It's great at lobbying Congress and getting retirees to write letters, but it keeps attracting the same people to do the same things. The last meeting I went to, there was more discussion among the 20 people there about bird-watching groups and membership fees than about the end of the world. To fight climate change, we need to fill stadiums with activists. That's why I started the Innovation Incubator. We are brainstorming ideas meant to appeal to different demographics - the people who don't go to marches or are too polite to yell at legislators. For those with limited time, how about a website that asks for a commitment of just five minutes a day, alerts them at a time they designate, and gives them both serious and funny ways of joining the battle? For those who don't think sustainable energy is feasible: Take some of the off-the-grid homes created for the Solar Decathlon and put them in prominent spots like the Franklin Institute. Invite adventurous young couples to live there, showing that alternative energy is not the future, it's the present. For those who think they're doing enough: a series of posters showing someone screwing in a compact fluorescent light bulb or driving a Prius and proclaiming, "There! Climate change is fixed!" How about our own Keebler elf or Mr. Clean, called Paul Reverse, who rides into cities on horseback sounding the alarm? Why aren't all the climate groups doing things like this? Are they suspicious of big initiatives that look like what corporate America does? Are they just as clueless about marketing as their enemies are about the coming collapse? Whatever. We need more disruptive people and ideas to get this into high gear. Before we experience what disruptive really means.

PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE

Confidential agreement should have been part of Washington County Marcellus Shale case record *Newly released transcript also reveals details of lifetime gag order on Hallowich family*A just-released Washington County Court transcript of an August 2011 settlement hearing in a high-profile Marcellus Shale damage case shows the case records should have included a missing confidential settlement agreement, and reveals details of an unusual lifetime "gag order" that covers two minor children involved in the case. According to the 16-page transcript, then-Washington County Court Judge Paul Pozonsky approved sealing the court records with the settlement agreement "attached thereto" in the private hearing held to settle the claims of Chris and Stephanie Hallowich against Range Resources, Williams Gas/Laurel Mountain Midstream and Markwest Energy. The Hallowiches, who had been long-time critics of shale gas drilling, claimed that Marcellus Shale gas development -- including four wells, gas compressor stations and a 3-acre wastewater impoundment -- adjacent to their 10-acre farm in Mount Pleasant, Washington County, damaged the family's health and the value of their property. The Hallowiches signed an affidavit as a condition of the settlement that stated their family's health was not damaged by the gas operations.

Pennsylvania drillers eye shale layers atop Marcellus The question of fracking the shale layers above and below the Marcellus has transitioned from an "if" to a "when" for many oil and gas operators in Pennsylvania. On that, they agree; how to do it is another story. In recent discussions with analysts, executives at three of southwestern Pennsylvania's largest oil and gas firms shared contrasting views about what they believe happens when two wells are fracked on top of each other. They were talking about their companies' experiments with the Upper Devonian formation, which is a group of shales that lies only a few hundred feet above the Marcellus. Downtown-based EQT Corp. has changed its strategy after monitoring four Upper Devonian wells for a few years. Rather than drill Marcellus wells now and come back for the Upper Devonian bounty later, the company decided to drill more of these shallower shale wells at the same time as the Marcellus ones. Their Upper Devonian wells aren't the most stellar in terms of gas production, executives said, but it makes sense in the context of an already constructed well pad and paved access road, with all the necessary equipment already on site, to toss another horizontal spoke into the ground.

New infrastructure boosts West Virginia, southern Pennsylvania natural gas production; Bakken Shale Flaring Burns Nearly One-Third Of Natural Gas Drilled, New Study Finds
"A notable increase since early 2012 in natural gas production in West Virginia and nearby counties in southern Pennsylvania continued through July 2013. Although producers have increasingly shifted their attention to more liquids-rich shale gas in the wet gas regions of these states, production in the dry gas regions has benefitted from the addition of infrastructure, improving takeaway capacity from their gas fields. From July to September last year, the following projects expanded the production capacity of West Virginia and southern Pennsylvania by almost 1 billion cubic feet per day (Bcf/d): July 2012: Equitrans placed its Sunrise Project into full service, with capacity to carry 0.31 Bcf/d from Wetzel County, West Virginia, to Greene County, Pennsylvania, and providing access to five separate interconnections serving Mid-Atlantic consumers. September 2012: Dominion Transmission initiated service from the four new compressor stations and 110 miles of new pipeline built for its Appalachian Gateway Project, providing capacity to carry 0.47 Bcf/d of natural gas from production areas in West Virginia and southern Pennsylvania to an interconnect with the Texas Eastern Transmission Pipeline. September 2012: Equitrans placed into service its newly built 0.20 Bcf/d Blacksville Compressor Station in Monongalia County, West Virginia. Natural gas production in West Virginia and southern Pennsylvania has risen as these expansions provided increased access to markets. Production in West Virginia averaged 2.34 Bcf/d through mid-July 2013, compared to 1.55 Bcf/d through mid-July 2012, a 51% increase. Production in the nearby dry regions of southern Pennsylvania doubled during this period, from 0.86 Bcf/d to 1.73 Bcf/d. Additional growth in West Virginia is expected as Texas Eastern announced plans to build a 0.39 Bcf/d pipeline lateral to its mainline from Dominion's 0.20 Bcf/d Natrium processing plant in West Virginia by the end of 2014. Planned processing plant expansions through the end of this year could also add significantly to the state's processing capacity, which totaled 0.85 Bcf/d in 2012."" (U.S. Energy Information Administration)

Marcellus Shale Coalition looking for new leadership (6/29/13) Katie Klaber, the first CEO of the Marcellus Shale Coalition, said Friday that she's in her last few months on the post and that the organization is looking for a new leader. The coalition, formed in 2008 to advocate for oil and gas operators working in the Marcellus play, brought Ms. Klaber onboard in late 2009. She was previously an executive with the Allegheny Conference on Economic Development.According to the organization's 990 tax form, Ms. Klaber earned $361,115 in 2010, her first full year, and $532,996 in 2011, the last for which data is available.Ms. Klaber was employed under a contract with the organization and the decision to separate was made within the context of that contract,

the coalition said.Over the past three and a half years, the organization has expanded to five locations in Pennsylvania and 16 full-time staffers. It has 43 full members, who each pay hefty $50,000 annual membership fees, and 239 associate members, who pay $15,000 annually. In 2011, its revenue was $7.3 million.Ms. Klaber said she's proud of her success on many regulatory and legislative fronts, but the one still gnawing at her is the issue of local government control over drilling. The organization has promoted having statewide rather than local rules for where companies can drill, as is outlined in Pennsylvania's Act 13, parts of which are still being debated in court. "We've called that the Achilles' heel of the Pennsylvania system," Ms. Klaber said.The Coalition's next leader will have to deal with that, she said.Ms. Klaber will be part of the search committee looking for a replacement over the next several months. The coalition wants a candidate familiar with Pennsylvania, with the operators in the Marcellus Shale, and someone who could unite companies to advocate with a "strong, single voice," Ms. Klaber said.The organization won't change after her departure, she said.

PITTSBURGH TRIBUNE REVIEW

Mosquito that can transmit West Nile found in Lawrenceville The Allegheny County Health Department reported Tuesday that the Asian Tiger mosquito, which can transmit the deadly West Nile virus, has been found throughout Lawrenceville. Acting Health Director Dr. Ron Voorhees said the mosquito could turn up elsewhere because it has been found in two other municipalities in previous seasons. Residents should keep their gutters clean and remove all water-holding containers on their property. Known as the Asian Tiger because of its Southeast Asia origin and characteristic black-and-white striped legs and body, the mosquito is an aggressive day biter from dawn to dusk that also can transmit other mosquito-borne diseases to humans and domestic animals. Last week health officials identified the first mosquitoes to test positive for West Nile, in Point Breeze. Last year, the first West Nile-infected mosquitoes were found in May. No human cases of the virus have been diagnosed in the state this year. Allegheny County had two nonfatal cases last year.

STATE IMPACT PENNSYLVANIA

Silenced Critic of Dimock's Water Problems Switches to Air Pollution Concerns One of Dimock's most outspoken critics of gas drilling in Northeast Pennsylvania says she has shifted gears and changed tactics by networking with industry. Victoria Switzer says she wants to persuade drillers to use the best available technologies that reduce air emissions beyond current regulatory requirements. Switzer may be best known for her witticisms shaming and ridiculing both local lawmakers and industry representatives who she saw doing little to protect the environment, or the health of local residents. As one of the plaintiffs in a lawsuit against Cabot Oil and Gas, Switzer could be heard speaking out in newspapers, on national TV news programs like CBS's *60 Minutes*, and Josh Fox's Gasland Part 2. But since settling her lawsuit with Cabot Oil and Gas, Switzer has had to muzzle her thoughts on Dimock's water issues. So, she says she's turned to air quality. "We knew we had hit a wall with the water issues," said Switzer. "You couldn't persuade people in a town like this where the hospitals are funded by the gas industry. We more or less gave up on that." But Switzer says she's not giving up on remaining in her home on Carter Road, where she wants to breathe clean air. She's working with a new organization called Breathe Easy Susquehanna County to limit the air pollutants that could come from dozens of new compressor stations planned for the area. "As we saw the list of compressor stations, it was like the surprise Christmas package under the tree," said Switzer. "It's like a Tim Burton Christmas." Switzer says there could be up to 50 compressor stations built in Susquehanna County alone. Compressor stations pressurize gas to move it through pipelines, and in the process generate nitrogen dioxide, an ozone causing gas that can cause respiratory illnesses, and volatile organic compounds. Switzer describes the years fighting gas drilling in Dimock, and being in the national and international spotlight as "an exhausting ordeal." But so far, she's optimistic about working with lawmakers and industry to reduce air emissions.

HAZELTON STANDAD SPEAKER

Tranguch demolition part of city cleanup campaign Tearing down what's left of the former Tranguch Tire Service garage at 22nd and North Church streets is no arbitrary project. It's part of a campaign by Hazleton Police Chief Frank DeAndrea to clean up eyesores in the city. DeAndrea said hundreds of properties all over the city need to be razed or repaired, but it takes time to find the owners who are, in most cases, absentee owners. He singled out the Tranguch property because of its location on state Route 309 at the Hazleton-Hazle Township line. "It was left go for so long, and is in such an advanced state of disrepair," DeAndrea said. Tranguch Tire Center, 997 N. Church St., closed and declared bankruptcy in 1995 after the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said it was potentially responsible for releasing a plume of gasoline that seeped into groundwater and spread fumes into a neighborhood of 450 homes. The EPA set up a treatment and monitoring station on the property, and half of the tire center was demolished. The other half remained standing but presented a danger to anyone who trespassed. But there is a long process to follow before a building gets to that point - and therein lies the problem, he said. "First, you have to find the owner," DeAndrea said. "In the case of the Tranguch building, that was easy. But a lot of the owners of these buildings - and there are hundreds in the city - are absentee owners who live out of town." Finding the property owner takes a long time, and then when the owner is found, officials have to get them to respond. More often than not, they don't, he said. City code enforcement personnel can levy fines and eventually place a lien against the property if fines are unpaid. "Placing a lien means if the owner tries to sell the house, then we can get our money," DeAndrea said. "What if the owner just abandoned the property?" DeAndrea said he is monitoring the evolution of a new law in Chicago and Las Vegas that puts the responsibility of the property on a bank instead of the property owner. "I'd like to put some real teeth into our ordinance," DeAndrea said. "Banks tend to respond quicker." DeAndrea said he intends to address other dilapidated properties in the city.

POCONO RECORD

400 acres of Kittatinny Ridge to be preserved A group of federal officials and preservationists gathered Monday at a Saylorsburg-area farmhouse to celebrate the acquisition of more than 400 acres of open space along the Kittatinny Ridge. They were unveiling the 80-acre Alfred Moreton farm, acquired for the Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuge, and the 350-plus acre Alpine Motorsports Park tract, acquired for the state Game Commission. The projects were both funded by trustees of the Palmerton Zinc Pile Superfund Site. The trustees are tasked with acquiring habitats similar to those lost to industrial activity in Palmerton. "It took many years of vision, hard work, and, most of all, collaboration for you to get to this milestone today," said Deborah Rocque of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The acquisition is significant not only because of the preserved habitats, but the properties' proximity to the Appalachian Trail. "The Appalachian Trail is about views, scenery and the culture of the lands we're going through. This is a real big win," said Pamela Underhill, who recently retired as superintendent of the trail for the National Parks Service. Neighbors expressed their gratitude. "The acquisition of these lands to the east, in my mind, it rectifies the spirit of what was lost. I'm just so happy to be here two generations later to see that come all the way around," said Ilene Eckhart, whose family has lived near the Alpine tract for three generations. The Alpine preservation project began with a group of neighbors more than 10 years ago. Before the federal funding came, the preservation effort was much more grassroots. "It took quite a bit of money. When we started this, we were doing flea markets, bake sales, anything to raise money. Until it was all said and done, the funds were quite expensive," said Frank O'Donnell, president of the Blue Mountain Preservation Association.

POTTSTOWN MERCURY

New EPA chief: Climate controls will help economy (AP) (Updated at 2:15 p.m.) WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama's top environmental official wasted no time Tuesday taking on opponents of the administration's plan to crack down on global warming pollution.In her first speech as the head of EPA, Gina McCarthy told an audience gathered at Harvard Law School in Cambridge, Mass., that curbing climate-altering pollution will spark business innovation, grow jobs and strengthen the economy. The message was classic Obama, who has long said that the environment and the economy aren't in conflict and has sold ambitious plans to reduce greenhouse gases as a means to jumpstart a clean energy economy.

$2M released for New Hanover water lines to replace polluted wells (7/26/13)NEW HANOVER — The state has released the $2 million needed to pay for the extension of a Superior Water Co. line to provide water to roughly 30 properties whose wells have been found to be polluted with hazardous chemicals."This waterline project is being made possible through the cooperation, assistance and partnership of New Hanover Township, Superior Water Company, area legislators and the Department of Environmental Protection," Gov. Tom Corbett said in a prepared statement released by the DEP. "It will provide clean drinking water to a community where wells were polluted and will ensure the public's safety," said Corbett. The

money comes from the Hazardous Sites Cleanup Fund grant comes from Act 13 impact fee revenues, which are generated largely by fees put on natural gas wells in the Marcellus Shale formation. The source of the pollution of the wells along Layfield and Hoffmansville roads is believed to be the former Good Oil site on Layfield Road. Sampling of more than 40 drinking water wells showed elevated levels of volatile organic compounds, pesticides and herbicides, along with oil and gasoline. In working with EPA, as well as state and federal health officials, DEP provided bottled water to affected residents, and installed carbon filtration units in homes where contamination levels posed an inhalation risk. The contamination was first noted by the Montgomery County Health Department in 2011 and DEP initially met with area residents in April 2012 to discuss its investigation.

SCRANTON TIMES TRIBUNE

Release of EPA slideshow raises more Dimock questions A leaked Environmental Protection Agency slideshow presentation showed natural gas drilling could cause "significant damage" to drinking water through migrating methane, something the federal agency did not look for when it spent months in the heavily drilled Dimock Twp. in 2011-12. The slideshow revealed the federal agency was told methane migration from natural gas drilling posed a threat to drinking water, a main concern of residents of Dimock. Environmental groups called on the EPA to revisit the Susquehanna County township."The PowerPoint raises important questions about how EPA came to its determination that the water in Dimock was OK to drink when it points to the possibility of significant long-term contamination," said Kate Sindig of the Natural Resources Defense Council. The slideshow discusses isotopic analysis - a means of determining the origin of natural gas in water. The isotopic analysis presented in the slideshow could distinguish between gas from shallow pools and those from deep rock formations. David Yoxtheimer of Penn State University's Marcellus Center for Outreach and Research said the isotope analysis discussed in the EPA presentation is less than exact and could result in a false positive. "The isotopic signatures of some of these gases are close and overlap," he said. "It's not a slam-dunk diagnostic tool." The EPA said the slideshow was the work of an on-scene coordinator. It has not been peer reviewed and does not reflect the official agency position. "The EPA will consider this information, along with tens of thousands of other data points, as a part of its ongoing and comprehensive National Study on the Potential Impacts of Hydraulic Fracturing," said EPA spokeswoman Alisha Johnson. The leaked presentation emerged almost exactly one year after the EPA closed its investigation into Dimock water contamination saying "sampling and an evaluation of the particular circumstances at each home did not indicate levels of contaminants that would give EPA reason to take further action."

STATE COLLEGE CENTRE DAILY TIMES

Focus on Research | Penn State researchers turn fieldwork into expansive volume on Pa. avian population

Armed with maps and enthusiasm, birders spread out across the state in recent years to get some of the most detailed information available on avian nesting in Pennsylvania. The results of those efforts: the Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in Pennsylvania. The 616-page book, published in November 2012, gives experts and novices a look at the nearly 200 species of birds that breed in Pennsylvania, from the well-known song sparrow to the merlin, which, for the first time, was documented as nesting in the Commonwealth. Researchers from Penn State, including the Earth and Environmental Systems Institute, were part of the efforts that brought together specialists from the Pennsylvania Game Commission, Cornell University and the Pennsylvania State Data Center, along with two dozen professionals who stopped at 36,000 points and more than 2,000 volunteers. From 2004 to 2009, those bird lovers headed out across the state to listen for, identify and observe pileated woodpeckers, indigo buntings, robins and owls — 190 species in total. The state is divided into 83 regions, which are then further divided for volunteers who headed out into forests and meadows, listening and looking for birds and tell-tale signs that they were setting up homes, if only for a short while. Joe Bishop, geospatial coordinator at Riparia in Penn State's College of Earth and Mineral Sciences, said the book includes bird reports with different levels of evidence of nesting from observation (the species is seen during breeding season) to confirmed (sightings of fledglings). In between those levels are possible and probable. "There are protocols they follow to be sure it's a breeding activity and not just a casual fly-by," Bishop said.

TIMES LEADER

Bush to deliver oil-gas address in Pittsburgh

President George W. Bush will address oil and natural gas executives during the fifth annual DUG East conference at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center this fall. The event generally draws hundreds of oil and gas officials from all over the world, including representatives of companies such as Chesapeake Energy, Consol Energy, XTO Energy, Chevron, EQT Corp., Royal Dutch Shell and many others. The 2012 DUG East attracted more than 3,200 attendees and 315 exhibitors to a 45,800-square-foot show floor. The event has also drawn anti-fracking protesters to the downtown Pittsburgh streets.

WILLIAMSPORT 's LYCOMING COLLEGE

Clean Water Institute supports summer research (7/25/13) Thirteen students are spending their summers as interns with the Lycoming College Clean Water Institute. Several projects are being conducted under the direction of CWI directors Mel Zimmerman, Ph.D., professor of biology, and Peter Petokas, Ph.D., CWI research associate. The main project for the summer is to continue the Unassessed Waters Project, in partnership with PA Fish and Boat Commission, Zimmerman said. Since 2010, the CWI has completed 230 unassessed waters using backpack electrofishing equipment in the Loyalsock, Lycoming and Pine Creek watersheds. This summer, the institute is working on completing at least 80 streams in the Pine, Lycoming, Antes Fort and White Deer Hole creek watersheds. Projects include water quality monitoring of the West Branch of the Susquehanna River from Lock Haven to Sunbury, surveys of eastern hellbender populations in north central Pennsylvania streams, monitoring of water quality before and after best management practices are established on farms in the several watersheds, pre- and post-stream restoration studies along creeks in northern Lycoming County, and designing and presenting educational programs and activities about Pennsylvania wildlife topics to campers at Camp Victory, Millville. The students also will work with Cromaglass and Archaea Solutions Inc. to determine if microbes can degrade wastewater in salt water environments, and study sewer plant discharge sites. Participants include seniors Jenna Baker, Newfield, N.Y.; Chelsea Brewer, South Williamsport; Lynette Dooley, New Milford; Sarah Fetherolf, Hamburg; Brian Gordon, Baltimore, Md.; Cory Trego, Pottstown; and Emily Vebrosky, Frackville; and juniors Kourtney Mottern, Danville; Alyssa Sechler, Turbotbille; and Laura Shelmire, Trout Run. Sophomore participants are Miranda Giraldo, Hudson, N.H.; Clayton Good, Muncy; and Sarah Pedrick, Salem, N.J. The internships were made possible through grants and support from the Degenstein Foundation, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the Pine Creek Headwaters Protection Group, the Pine Creek Preservation Association, Tioga County Trout Unlimited, Rose Valley Mill Creek Watershed Association, Tioga County Conservation District, Wetlands Training Institute, Archaea Solutions Inc. and a Pennsylvania Growing Greener grant to Lycoming County.

ASSOCIATED PRESS (PA)

Observers say drillers' woes stem from arrogance PITTSBURGH - The boom in oil and gas fracking has led to jobs, billions in royalties and profits, and even some environmental gains. But some experts say arrogance, a lack of transparency and poor communication on the part of the drilling industry have helped fuel public anger over the process of hydraulic fracturing, or fracking. "It's a big issue for the industry. I have called for greater transparency. That is the only way to have an honest conversation with the public," said John Hofmeister, a former Shell Oil Co. president and author of "Why We Hate Oil Companies." As an example, Mr. Hofmeister said, some industry leaders have suggested that the fracking boom has

never caused water pollution. But while the vast majority of wells don't cause problems, "everybody knows that some wells go bad." One of the biggest promoters of the Marcellus Shale drilling boom in Pennsylvania says that while fracking opponents have exaggerated some risks, the industry hasn't always handled key issues well, either. Terry Engelder, a Penn State geologist, cited the highly publicized case in Dimock, where 18 families began complaining in 2009 that nearby drilling had polluted their water supply with methane and toxic chemicals. State environmental regulators ultimately agreed, imposing large fines on Cabot Oil & Gas Co, and temporarily banning the company from drilling in a 9-square-mile area around the town. Cabot paid the fines but denied responsibility for the contamination. Mr. Engelder said at least some of the industry's missteps have been unintentional and stem from inexperience. In Dimock, the land had so many layers of rock and the drilling boom was so new that both the industry and regulators struggled to understand and explain the problems with the water wells, Mr. Engelder said. Cabot spokesman George Stark said that in retrospect, the company realized the geology around Dimock was "highly unusual" and that pre-drilling tests for methane would have helped determine which wells had natural contamination of methane. While many issues were at play, Mr. Engelder said, experts came to believe that the well construction techniques used in the early years of Pennsylvania's drilling boom "were just inadequate to the task" of protecting groundwater. Regulations for well cement jobs were later strengthened, but by that time, anger and negative publicity had started and the damage was done.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

WASHINGTON POST

As new EPA chief, Gina McCarthy vows to act on climate changeBOSTON — The new head of the Environmental Protection Agency told an audience at Harvard Law School on Tuesday that cutting carbon pollution will “feed the economic agenda of this country” and vowed to work with industry leaders on shaping policies aimed at curbing global warming.“Climate change will not be resolved overnight,” EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy told the 310-member audience. “But it will be engaged over the next three years. That I can promise you.”McCarthy made a full-throated defense of her agency’s right to address greenhouse-gas emissions and other pollutants, saying that air-quality regulations and environmental cleanup efforts have already produced economic benefits in the United States.“Can we stop talking about environmental regulations killing jobs, please?” she asked, prompting loud applause. “We need to embrace cutting-edge technology as a way to spark business

innovation.”She also made a joke of her strong Boston accent by repeating, “And I said, ‘spaahrk.’” McCarthy also joked about the challenge she faced in getting her post, calling her confirmation “the honor of a lifetime.”“That’s a very good thing,

because I swear it took two lifetimes to get confirmed,” she said. The speech represented a homecoming for McCarthy, a Boston area native, who was introduced by her 27-year-old daughter, Maggie McCarey, a program coordinator at the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources. McCarthy, a veteran of Republican administrations in Massachusetts and Connecticut, has spent much of the past four years at the EPA shepherding through air regulations, which have come under attack from business groups for helping shut down power plants. Her nomination to succeed former EPA administrator Lisa P. Jackson dragged on for more than four months as several GOP senators used the pick as a way to highlight their problems with President Obama’s environmental agenda.

New EPA head McCarthy outlines ambitious agenda in Harvard speech BOSTON — In her first public speech since talking the helm of the Environmental Protection Agency two weeks ago, Administrator Gina McCarthy told an audience at Harvard Law School cutting carbon pollution will “feed the economic agenda of this country.” “Climate change will not be resolved overnight,” she told the 310-person audience. “But it will be engaged over the next three years. That I can promise you.” McCarthy made a full-throated defense of her agency’s right to address greenhouse gas emissions and other pollutants, detailing how the air quality regulations and brownfield cleanup efforts have produced economic benefits in the United States. “Can we stop talking about environmental regulations killing jobs, please?,” she asked, prompting loud applause.“We need to embrace cutting edge technology as a way to spark business innovation,” her Boston accent so evident in the hard “a” in spark, she then repeated, “And I said ‘spaahrk.’” At the start of her remarks McCarthy joked about the challenge she faced in getting her post, noting that being confirmed was “the honor of a lifetime. That’s a very good thing, because I swear it took two lifetimes to get confirmed.” The speech represented a homecoming for McCarthy, a Boston-area native. Her 27-year old daughter Maggie McCarey, a program coordinator at the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources, gave her a glowing introduction in which she noted her mother “perfected her mediating skills” brokering arguments among her three children for the past three decades. McCarey noted that while some might wonder why she would choose to follow in her mother’s footsteps, “But for me, the real question is, why would I not want to be like her?” The emotional introduction left the administrator, in her own words, “inside a blubbering idiot, and a proud mom.” Recalling how EPA had improved the environment across the country—including in Lowell, Mass., where she watched the river run blue, yellow and other colors depending on what dyes the textile mills dumped in the water,–McCarthy said the agency remains committed to making environmental progress. “And frankly, that still is, everywhere. And we’re not going to stop looking at the science. And we’re not going to stop driving for improvements.” She identified climate change as the agency’s top priority, saying it would model its efforts on the stricter fuel efficiency standards for cars and light trucks the administration brokered with the auto industry during its first term. “EPA cannot dictate solutions,” McCarthy said. “We have to engage.”

Federal workers asked to submit cost-saving ideas The White House has launched the latest round in its annual program seeking cost-saving suggestions from federal employees, the SAVE Award. “The President’s last four budgets have included over 80 SAVE Award proposals that are saving hundreds of millions of dollars and improving the way government operates,” Steve Posner, Office of Management and Budget associate director for strategic planning and communications, said in a posting on the OMB site. “We know these ideas alone won’t solve the nation’s long-term fiscal challenges, but they represent common-sense steps to improve government and provide a better value to the American people.” Federal employees submitted more than 85,000 suggestions in the prior four rounds, raising ideas ranging from reducing wasted medicine at Veterans Affairs Department hospitals to using less costly shipping when mailing packages without urgent delivery times. Suggestions in the program, formally the Securing Americans Value and Efficiency Award, are being solicited through Aug. 9. The winner is chosen by online voting and gets a meeting with President Obama and inclusion of the idea in the next White House budget proposal. The award for 2012 went to an Education Department employee from Arlington, Va., Frederick Winter, who suggested that employees who receive subsidies for taking public transit in their commuting shift from regular transit fares to discounted senior fares as soon as they are eligible. In addition to suggestions that have been included in budget proposals, with mixed results, others have been carried out administratively.

WASHINGTON TIMES

EPA, critics at odds over pollution regulations' effect on jobs Critics contend that the Obama administration’s Environmental Protection Agency is crushing jobs in the coal industry and elsewhere by implementing a host of new regulations. But the agency’s new administrator, Gina McCarthy, believes the opposite is true. “The truth is, we need to embrace cutting pollution as a way to spark business innovation,” she said Tuesday during a speech at Harvard University. “We need to cut carbon pollution to grow jobs. We need to cut carbon pollution to strengthen the economy. Let’s talk about this positively. Let’s approach this as an opportunity of a lifetime.” In her first public comments since emerging from a bruising Senate confirmation battle two weeks ago, Ms. McCarthy said the EPA will play a vital role not only in reducing U.S. greenhouse gas emissions but also in building a stronger, more diversified economy. She described her agency as an important player in helping to “feed the economic agenda of this country,” and rejected assertions by congressional Republicans and others that the EPA’s regulatory agenda hampers job creation. “Can we stop talking about environmental regulations killing jobs, please? At least for today,” Ms. McCarthy said. In her new role as EPA administrator, Ms. McCarthy — a veteran environmental regulator with more than three decades’ experience at the state and federal levels — will be the most visible, vocal proponent of the aggressive climate change agenda laid out by President Obama last month. Central to that agenda are new limits on carbon emissions from new and existing power plants, an approach viewed by Republicans and many in the energy industry as the death knell for U.S. coal-fired plants. As the EPA moves forward with more controversial regulations, Ms. McCarthy promised that the agency won’t dictate to states and local governments, but instead will follow their lead.

DELAWARE

WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL

Lack of dredging bids strands plans to repair Delaware beaches - *Lack of bids throws wrench in plans to repair beaches*- The Delaware River channel-deepening project – and a companion plan to use the dredged sand to rebuild Broadkill Beach – received a setback Tuesday when the Army Corps of Engineers received no bids from contractors to work on the latest phase of dredging. “We are currently polling the industry to determine why we received no bids (the preliminary indications are a shortage of dredging equipment among qualified potential bidders, due in part to all the Sandy restoration work),” Army Corps of Engineers spokesman Edward C. Voigt said in an email. “Once we have that information, we will determine how to proceed.” There are 25 Superstorm Sandy-related beach repair projects, including five in Delaware, either completed, underway or planned. They span from Rhode Island to Virginia and have an estimated cost of $600 million. The first of the projects planned for Delaware got its start over the weekend, when a dredge crew began pumping sand at Fenwick Island. The states’ environment chief, Collin O’Mara, said he had just signed the last five outstanding easements that would have allowed the sand to be pumped onto Broadkill when state officials got word about 4 p.m. Tuesday. The project was expected to start as early as mid-September. “We’ll work with the Army Corps to see if there is any opportunity to attach this to an existing contract,” O’Mara said. If nothing can be done, “we may be looking at a one-year delay,” O’Mara said. The good news, he said, is that all easements and permits are in hand. Residents of the unincorporated Broadkill community worked with state officials to make sure they had everything in place, O’Mara said. Some even drove paperwork to neighbors who were out of state to speed up the process, he said.

Building homes that make more power than they take (AP) NEW PALTZ, N.Y. —Homes being built in this Hudson Valley cul-de-sac offer prospective buyers wooded lots, pretty views and — oh yes — the promise of thumbing your nose at the power utility. These “zero-net energy” homes will feature thick walls, solar panels and geothermal heating and cooling systems, meaning families should be able to generate more energy over a year than they consume. These homes under construction 70 miles north of New York City have costly green features. But the builders believe they are in tune with consumers increasingly concerned about the environment and fuel costs. And there are homebuyers here and around the nation who are willing to pay more for savings down the line.

DELAWARE CAPE GAZETTE

Rehoboth youth takes honors at 27th annual fishing tourney (Photo) At the Delaware State Fair July 25, Gov. Jack Markell, Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control Secretary Collin O’Mara, U.S. EPA Region III Administrator Shawn M. Garvin and Division of Fish and Wildlife Director David Saveikis honored the winners of the Division of Fish and Wildlife’s 27th annual Youth Fishing Tournament held June 8. The Sussex County winner, second place statewide, is 14-year-old **Will Geppert** of Rehoboth Beach, who caught 7.2 pounds of fish in Ingrams Pond. This year’s tournament drew a total of 194 young anglers and their families. The New Castle County location, Lums Pond in Bear, drew 88 children and teens casting lines, while at Kent County’s Wyoming Pond, 42 youngsters turned out. Sussex County reeled in 64 young anglers at Ingrams Pond in Millsboro. Winners received fishing rods and tackle boxes as well as trophies, and all participants received prizes. All of the fish caught in the tournament were weighed and released. The biggest fish of the day was a largemouth bass weighing 1.11 pounds, caught by Zach Rowe of Greenwood. Olivia Marzullo of Georgetown caught the smallest fish of the day, a 0.44-ounce bluegill. Another interesting catch was a snapping turtle caught by Ian Rieley of Millsboro.

Lionfish come roaring up the coast Don't let the beautiful colors and feathery spikes of the lionfish fool you. The tropical fish, unknown in Atlantic and Caribbean waters until the 1980s, are wreaking havoc on coral reefs in tropical waters by eating the small fish that eat algae off the reefs and help keep the reefs healthy. Now, the fish have expanded northward and have been spotted off the Delaware coast. Mark Moline, director of oceanography for the University of Delaware School of Marine Science and Policy, says the predatory fish, once indigenous to the Pacific, were first released in Atlantic waters in 1986 from a Florida aquarium. More made their way to Biscayne Bay after Hurricane Andrew blew through Florida in 1992. "It just takes a small accident like this," Moline said. Since the initial introduction of lionfish to Atlantic waters, the fish have exploded throughout the Caribbean and off the Florida shores. Lionfish spawn 30,000 eggs a week; in the Pacific natural predators help suppress the population by eating juvenile lionfish. In particular, Southeast Asia has a number of fish that prey upon lionfish. "If you see a lionfish there, it's rare. Natural predators are there to keep the numbers down," he said. In the Caribbean, however, lionfish numbers have exploded, and they have taken a toll on the natural reefs that lie underneath the waters. "Lionfish eat the herbivores that eat the algae off the reefs," Moline said. "This is a classic predator story."

MONDAQ

Doing Good While Doing Well - Delaware Is The 19th State To Adopt Public Benefit Corporation Law
A new Delaware law authorizing the creation of public benefit corporations ("PBCs") in Delaware becomes effective on August 1, 2013. PBCs are a new type of socially conscious for-profit corporation intended to operate in a responsible and sustainable manner. While PBCs operate on a for-profit basis and pay income taxes, they are unique in that they are managed in a manner that balances the pecuniary interests of its stockholders with persons, entities or communities that are materially affected by the corporation's conduct. Delaware is the 19th state to adopt such legislation. Businesses that elect public benefit corporation status in Delaware will receive the stability, efficiency and predictability of Delaware law, as well as a way to differentiate their business and transparently report on their social and environmental performance.

WEST VIRGINIA

CHARLESTON GAZETTE

Blog: Critics issue report on coal plant transfers
We've had a few stories in the Gazette and on this blog about the recent proposals by FirstEnergy and American Electric Power to transfer greater ownership of some of their coal-fired power plants to their West Virginia-based subsidiaries (see here, here, here and here). Now, there's a new report out that presents some of the evidence and analysis questioning whether the state Public Service Commission should approve these proposals. The report, Mountain State Maneuver: AEP and FirstEnergy try to stick ratepayers with risky coal plant, was put together by Cathy Kunkel of Energy Efficient West Virginia and by energy consultant David A. Schlissel. Kunkel and Schlissel served as expert witnesses for citizen groups that intervened in the PSC cases to argue against the plant transfers. In their report, they conclude: These proposals will have the effect of shifting the risks of coal-fired power generation from merchant generators to captive ratepayers, while increasing both the cost and the risk for West Virginia consumers. They also raise concerns about the ability of holding companies to manipulate regulated subsidiaries …

Blog: Report: Most U.S. pipelines go uninspected
The U.S. Energy Information Administration is reporting in the latest edition of its "Today in Energy": A notable increase since early 2012 in natural gas production in West Virginia and nearby counties in southern Pennsylvania continued through July 2013. Although producers have increasingly shifted their attention to more liquids-rich shale gas in the wet gas regions of these states, production in the dry gas regions has benefitted from the addition of infrastructure, improving takeaway capacity from their gas fields.

COAL TATTOO

Obama energy chief: 'Challenges we face are serious'
As Vicki Smith from The Associated Press reports (see today's Gazette), Obama Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz paid a visit to the agency's laboratory in Morgantown, W.Va., yesterday, and touted the administration's commitment to helping find a path for the coal industry in a carbon-constrained world: President Obama and the U.S. Department of Energy are committed to a role for coal in a national energy strategy, and they've backed it up with research spending, Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz said Monday. In a visit to the National Energy Technology Laboratory in Morgantown — the only one of the federal government's 17 national labs dedicated to fossil fuels — Moniz said the administration has spent $6 billion on clean-coal technology with an emphasis on the capture, storage and reuse of carbon emissions. "We have an 'all of the above' strategy, and it's real," he said. But the administration also believes the U.S. must prepare for a low-carbon economy, so scientists must help find ways to use coal and gas more cleanly. Moniz spoke to hundreds of federal employees who work at the West Virginia lab, and to those who watched remotely from research sites and small offices in Pennsylvania, Oregon, Alaska and Texas. In all, the national lab employs 1,426 people, about 850 of whom are contractors.

The latest from Arch Coal …
Arch Coal, Inc. (NYSE: ACI) today reported a net loss of $72.2 million, or $0.34 per diluted share, in the second quarter of 2013. Excluding non-cash accretion of acquired coal supply agreements and asset impairment costs, Arch's second quarter 2013 adjusted net loss was $60.5 million, or $0.29 per diluted share. In the second quarter of 2012, Arch reported an adjusted net loss of $22.1 million, or $0.10 per diluted share. Arch reported second quarter 2013 revenues of $766 million, representing a decline versus the prior-year quarter and reflective of overall weakness in the metallurgical coal markets compared with the year-ago period. Adjusted earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, depletion and amortization ("EBITDA") totaled $110.5 million in the second quarter of 2013 compared with $180.9 million in the second quarter of 2012 and $83.6 million in the first quarter of 2013, representing an increase of 32 percent versus the prior-quarter period. Arch's second quarter 2013 adjusted EBITDA excludes an asset impairment charge of $20.5 million related to an investment in a clean coal power plant project that was cancelled. Arch's CEO, John W. Eaves, said: During the second quarter, we achieved a sequential improvement in our earnings as we continued to manage our business effectively in the face of weak coal market conditions. Arch employed strong cost control, particularly in the Powder River Basin and in Appalachia, which positively impacted our per-ton margins. Our cost reduction initiatives are generating results, and we will continue to pursue aggressive cost reductions across all of our operations during the second half of the year. Of regional note, Arch said: "Given recent metallurgical market dynamics, we have idled two contract mines at Cumberland River during the second quarter and have elected to push back the longwall start-up at Leer until late in the fourth quarter," said Eaves. "These decisions have resulted in lowering our overall metallurgical coal sales expectations for 2013." Eaves also said today: We will continue to focus on the things we can control during the downturn, while carefully positioning ourselves for the market rebound. We have significantly curtailed capital spending, diligently reduced costs and further streamlined our diversified asset portfolio. Moreover, since the market downturn began in late 2011, we have significantly increased our overall liquidity, with an ample cash position to use for future debt reduction as coal markets improve. A year ago at this time, Eaves said: We are executing on our strategy to navigate near-term challenges and emerge as a stronger, more competitive company when markets rebound.

Report details move from coal to natural gas
There's a new report out today from SNL Financial that tells us: As environmental regulations continue their forward march and gas prices remain low compared to historic rates due to increased domestic supply, the number of power plants changing their primary fuel source to natural gas has increased dramatically. In 2011 and 2012, just more than 5.5 GW of power plant capacity switched to burning primarily natural gas from another form of fossil fuel, according to an SNL Energy analysis of U.S. Energy Information Administration 860 data.

BLUEFIELD DAILY TELEGRAPH

Delegation prepares to confront EPA on coal
Absent from the official invitation list for that ballyhooed trip to confront the Environmental Protection Agency in a Thursday protest against what are perceived as paralyzing regulations on coal are any legislators from the heart of the southern coalfields. And one southern lawmaker, while expressing confidence in the ability of those invited to carry coal's message to the White House, is keenly disappointed. Moreover, a Republican leader in the House, reminded that no one from his party made the guest list either, termed the visit a public relations gimmick. Heading the entourage destined Thursday for the nation's capital via bus tentatively are Senate President Jeffrey Kessler, D-Marshall and House Speaker Tim Miley, D-Harrison. The list also is to include a representative of industry and the United Mine Workers of America, but a complete roster was unavailable Tuesday from state Democratic headquarters in Charleston. "I have full confidence in those going, but the heart of the coalfields should be represented as well," said Sen. Daniel Hall, D-Wyoming, who voiced his desire to the Democratic leadership that he be asked to attend. "It would be easy to name 15 people from the coalfields in the House and Senate

who should be first on the list." Not only were southern lawmakers snubbed, but ditto for the Republicans, prompting criticism by House Minority Whip Daryl Cowles, R-Morgan, who said it is plain to see that West Virginia's economy has suffered by the EPA's assault on the coal industry.

WEST VIRGINIA PUBLIC RADIO

Energy Secretary says coal still part of nation's energy future The National Energy Technology Laboratory in Morgantown hosted the country's cabinet secretary of energy Monday. Ernest Moniz is the nation's new Secretary of Energy. He toured facilities, met with employees, and talked with the press about the nation's energy agenda. Moniz acknowledges there is skepticism about climate change, but says naysayers need to look at the facts when discussing climate change. Moniz advocates a low carbon energy economy, which will affect coal production. He says the Obama administration is in favor of carbon capture programs. "The more we can lower the costs, of lower carbon approaches, the better the chance we have of going faster to a lower carbon economy," Moniz said. Moniz looked at the chemical looping combustion technologies at NETL, and other programs.

DNR director says elk hunt in the works for southern WV A heated discussion during the state Division of Natural Resources quarterly meeting has a state lawmaker questioning the director's intentions for future elk hunting in the state.

WEST VIRGINIA STATE JOURNAL

Commentary: Behind the curtain in the fight over coal ash disposal My July 26 story on the passage of West Virginia Republican Cong. David McKinley's coal ash bill in the House last week and on the bill's circumvention of the standard rulemaking process for state environmental permitting programs prompted strong response from McKinley's office. I ran those responses by Lisa Evans, the environmental lawyer whose interpretation I relied on in that story, for her reactions. It's a peek behind the curtain in this complex process and I thought I'd share some of it for interested readers. For background, I'll reiterate here that McKinley has been working since he entered office in 2011 to oppose an Environmental Protection Agency rulemaking effort on the disposal of coal combustion residuals, or CCRs, commonly known as coal ash. The agency has proposed to affirm its support for the safe re-purposing of CCRs — in wallboard, for example — but to regulate coal ash that is disposed of in one of two ways: as a hazardous waste, in recognition of concerns about health effects from toxics that leach into ground water from unlined dry landfills and wet impoundments, or, alternatively, in the same manner as household waste. Re-purposing of CCR's reduces power plants' disposal costs and so helps to keep the cost of coal-fired power down and to maintain that market for coal. McKinley is concerned that designation of CCRs as a hazardous waste will stigmatize re-use, although there is precedent: for example, used motor oil, which is handled as a hazardous waste in its disposal but also is widely re-used.

McKinley coal ash bill's circumvention of EPA "unprecedented" (July 26) In a vote of 265 to 155, the Coal Residuals Reuse and Management Act of 2013, introduced by Rep. David B. McKinley, R-W.Va., passed the House of Representatives on July 25. H.R. 2218, which received 39 votes from Democrats, would create a state-implemented permit program for the management and disposal of coal combustion residuals, or CCRs, commonly known as coal ash. The emphasis, there, is on "state." The process is being conducted in a way specifically designed to cut out the usual environmental rulemaking body, the Environmental Protection Agency. The bill is a version of McKinley's bill that the House passed in 2011, revised with feedback from the Senate and from others. "This bill is a classic manifestation of compromise," McKinley said after the vote. "We listened to so many people." In creating a state-run program, the bill would pre-empt a rulemaking currently under way at the EPA. The agency has found that the unlined landfills and slurry ponds that power plants dispose of CCRs in West Virginia and across the U.S. can leach contaminants into surface and groundwater. It aims to set federal standards for the disposal of coal ash, either under the hazardous waste subtitle of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act or in the same manner as household garbage.

WHEELING INTELLIGENCER

'Cracker' Options Are Limited "So, other than that, Mrs. Lincoln, how was the play?" The sarcastic line, sometimes a reaction to a person with a long list of misfortunes, comes to mind when I hear talk about West Virginia landing an ethane "cracker" plant. Why? Because other than a plentiful supply of natural gas to provide ethane for a cracker, the chips seem to be stacked against us. Members of the Wheeling Rotary Club had as their guest speaker this week Bob Orndorff, an official of Dominion, the big energy company that just built a natural gas fractionation plant at Natrium, in Marshall County. It is a massive undertaking, processing about 200 million cubic feet of gas a day. The plant produces about 36,000 barrels of natural gas liquids a day. And, it turns out enough ethane to supply "a world-class cracker" plant, Orndorff noted. So that means someone will be eager to construct a cracker near the Dominion plant? Nope. Not enough flat land is available there, Orndorff told the Rotarians. He also said he receives inquiries frequently from companies interested in building a cracker plant in West Virginia. A site at an old DuPont chemical plant at Washington, W.Va., continues to get attention. At one time, we in the Northern Panhandle and East Ohio had high hopes Shell could be convinced to build a cracker here. But in early March 2012, the company said it was more interested in a site at Monaca, Pa. State officials continue to be optimistic at least one cracker will be built in West Virginia, however. Orndorff mentioned two obstacles, in addition to the difficulty of finding a site large enough for a cracker.

ASSOCIATED PRESS (W. VA.)

Glenville area rattled by another minor earthquake GLENVILLE, W.Va. -- The Glenville area has been shaken by another minor earthquake. The U.S. Geological Survey reports that a magnitude-2.8 earthquake occurred at 2:09 a.m. Tuesday. The epicenter was 7 miles south-southwest of Glenville. A Gilmer County 911 dispatcher says there were no reports of damage. It's the second minor earthquake in the area in less than two weeks. A magnitude-2.7 earthquake occurred on July 20. Its epicenter was less than a mile southwest of Glenville.

SUSTAINED OUTRAGE

Report: Most U.S. pipelines go uninspected
The U.S. Energy Information Administration is reporting in the latest edition of its "Today in Energy": A notable increase since early 2012 in natural gas production in West Virginia and nearby counties in southern Pennsylvania continued through July 2013. Although producers have increasingly shifted their attention to more liquids-rich shale gas in the wet gas regions of these states, production in the dry gas regions has benefitted from the addition of infrastructure, improving takeaway capacity from their gas fields. From July to September last year, the following projects expanded the production capacity of West Virginia and southern Pennsylvania by almost 1 billion cubic feet per day (Bcf/d): July 2012: Equitrans placed its Sunrise Project into full service, with capacity to carry 0.31 Bcf/d from Wetzel County, West Virginia, to Greene County, Pennsylvania, and providing access to five separate interconnections serving Mid-Atlantic consumers. September 2012: Dominion Transmission initiated service from the four new compressor stations and 110 miles of new pipeline built for its Appalachian Gateway Project, providing capacity to carry 0.47 Bcf/d of natural gas from production areas in West Virginia and southern Pennsylvania to an interconnect with the Texas Eastern Transmission Pipeline. September 2012: Equitrans placed into service its newly built 0.20 Bcf/d Blacksville Compressor Station in Monongalia County, West Virginia.

MARYLAND

BALTIMORE SUN

Editorial: Maryland's climate opportunity Gov. O'Malley's road map for aggressively reducing greenhouse gas emissions offers a chance for the state's economy to bloom along with the environment. The dog days of summer are upon us, and most Marylanders are more inclined to reach for beach-friendly paperbacks than a 265-page treatise on climate change. That's a shame, because the latest effort to address greenhouse gas emissions in Maryland — an ambitious plan released last week by Gov. Martin O'Malley — ought to be required reading, particularly by those who dismiss such efforts as too costly or unnecessary.

SALISBURY DAILY TIMES

Salisbury, Fruitland win wastewater plant grants Two key Lower Shore projects designed to filter much of the nutrient pollution from municipal sewage plants are getting a big financial boost from Maryland officials.

DELMARVA PUBLIC RADIO

State Grants for Sewage Treatment in Salisbury And Fruitland The Maryland Board of Public Works has authorized $1.2 million for wastewater treatment plant upgrades for the towns of Salisbury and Fruitland. The funding is part of the 2000 Chesapeake Bay Agreement signed by five states including Maryland to clean up the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries such as the Wicomico River. Salisbury got $1 million for designing improvements to fix an earlier upgrade that did not meet pollution control standards. The city is now under a consent agreement with the Maryland Department of the Environment to finish the project in the next five years. The Salisbury Daily Times reports that officials hope to cut nitrogen discharge by 83 percent and phosphorus by 85 percent. Meanwhile, in Fruitland $200-thosuand will go to an engineering study aimed at improving nutrient removal facilities at its wastewater treatment plant. Ultimately, it's hoped that nitrogen discharge will be cut by 62 percent and phosphorus by 85 percent

CARROLL COUNTY TIMES

School system joins Energy Star campaign, computers to automatically enter sleep mode
School system employees and students will need to adjust to a new power management tool that will change they way they use school computers. Carroll County Public Schools is now part of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Energy Star Low Carbon IT Campaign. All of the school system's monitors and computers now automatically enter sleep mode after a set period of inactivity. The Energy Star Low Carbon IT Campaign is a nationwide effort to assist and recognize organizations for reducing the energy consumed by their information technology equipment, according to its website. The computer monitors will go into sleep mode after 20 minutes, and computers will completely enter sleep mode at 45 minutes, which uses a very small amount of power, according to Sharon Minor, Supervisor of Information Technology for Carroll County Public Schools. To get the computers out of sleep mode, users must press the computer's power button and then enter their password to resume the machine's previous session. The Windows operating system saves what was on the desktop computer when it comes out of sleep mode. The computers and monitors automatically go into sleep mode and there is remote management of this feature, which causes less disruption in the classroom, Minor said. "We took [Energy Star's] best practices and fit them into our environment," she said. There was a pilot of this energy saving measure at certain schools this past year. After receiving feedback, such as confusion about how to get the computer out of sleep mode, the school system sent out informational sheets for users and resolved other issues, Minor said. "Now we've standardized through all the desktops and other machines," she said. Gary Davis, chief information officer for the school system, said the school system was talking about implementing the sleep mode for a while, but first had to upgrade its infrastructure — including upgrading the computers to Windows 7 and updating certain settings.

Farmers say this summer has been good for crops, animals
The week of July 15 was rough on the 80 cows that produce milk at the Dell Brothers, Inc. farm, said Gary Dell, of his family-owned business. Milk production dropped to 66 pounds per day per cow from Monday to Friday that week, compared to 74 pounds on July 14. But that was an anomaly in a summer that has been mostly advantageous for the 2,500-acre farm that also grows corn and soy beans, Dell said. "We have had a really good summer," Dell said. "We had a fair amount of heat last week, which was kind of tough on the cows, but it has cooled off and things are better." This summer has had a good mix of rain and heat that has made farming easier, farmers and experts said. "It's just a good year," said Byran Butler, an extension agent for the University of Maryland who serves the agricultural community in the county with research-based information. "I wouldn't say it's super great, but things are growing well."

CECIL DAILY

New book says military contributes to Bay pollution
There's an element to the cleanup of the Chesapeake Bay that Richard Albright says hasn't been adequately addressed, and he hopes his new book will call attention to that element. Albright is a Grasonville resident and environmentalist who recently published "Death of the Chesapeake: A History of the Military's Role in Polluting the Bay," which looks at the environmental impact unexploded munitions are having on the health of the Bay. Earlier he wrote another book entitled "Cleanup of Chemical and Explosive Munitions." Noting there are a number of military installations along the shores of the Bay and its rivers, Albright says 10 to 20 percent of the bombs and shells that wind up on the bottom of the Bay don't explode and have nitrogen associated with them. Too much nitrogen in the water is a major concern of many in the environmental field. "That's a lot of explosives and nitrogen, and that nitrogen can cause cancer," he said. "Various things attach to munitions in the Bay and fish will hide around it. Fish will eat the stuff on the shells. Explosives can leak and the fish absorb what's leaked."

DELAWARE ONLINE

Whales put on rare show within view of Ocean City
OCEAN CITY, MD. — Customers of an ocean parasail operation got a firsthand look at a rare humpback whale breach close to the shoreline. "All of a sudden, the humpback whales just started breaching, pretty playfully, they were just coming over to the boat," said Tyler Barnes, owner of Paradise Watersports. "We usually see whales off in the horizon but we never see them up this close. " The boat was less than a mile offshore." he added. "t's pretty rare." Barnes said there were two parasail boats on the water between 15th and 30th streets when the whale was spotted. Most days they'll spot a dolphin or sea turtle, or even a manta ray, but a whale that close are a treat. The whale hasn't come back since its Sunday appearance.

MARYLAND GAZETTE NEWSPAPERS

Rockville offering tax breaks for 'green' building upgrades
Rockville is aiming to give companies looking to make earth-friendly improvements to their buildings a nudge in the right direction. The city is offering tax credits to offset some of the costs of renovating old commercial buildings to make them more energy efficient. Buildings that achieve Energy Star or Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design certification for their renovations can apply for the credit. Mark Charles, the city's chief of environmental management, said officials want to

target businesses that are on the fence about upgrading their buildings. “This is an incentive. It helps make up their mind about that,” he said. In exchange, Charles said, the city gets better buildings. “It attracts other tenants, other businesses who want to work and live in a green building, so that adds to the attraction of Rockville as a place to either locate your family or locate your business,” he said. “We’re always on the lookout for partnering ... sustainability with economic engines and economic expansion, and where they both cross over is kind of the sweet spot.” Rockville has budgeted $60,000 for the program this year, with funds made available on a first-come, first-serve basis. Funds in future years would have to be included in the budget by the Mayor and Council.

VIRGINIA

RICHMOND TIMES-DISPATCH

State seeks research lease for wind energy test project off Virginia Beach

Virginia has asked the federal government for a research lease for a wind energy project off Virginia Beach. Virginia’s Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy has put in its application with the U.S. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management for the site for a grid-connected wind test station on the outer continental shelf in the Atlantic Ocean, the federal agency said Monday. “We hope to have a lease in hand by the end of October,” said Cathie J. France with the state energy agency, though she noted there are “no guarantees” for that schedule. Dominion Virginia Power has been selected for a $4 million federal grant to do initial design and permitting for the 12-megawatt wind-power test facility. “This is an important step,” said Mary Doswell, Dominion Resources Inc.’s senior vice president for alternative energy solutions. “We have been hoping that they would move ahead with this. It’s a necessary step for state to be awarded the lease.” Richmond-based Dominion Resources is the parent company of Dominion Virginia Power, the state’s largest electric utility. The Virginia research leases aim to advance national offshore wind development and accelerate commercial development of the Virginia wind energy area, and with it the associated offshore energy industry supply chain, according to the state’s Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy. “The path to achieve the objective is to conduct research activities that will reduce private development and project costs and lower risk,” the state energy agency said in its lease application.

NORFOLK VIRGINIAN PILOT

Va. to participate in second Great ShakeOut drill

Registration is open for the second Great Southeast ShakeOut earthquake drill set for Oct. 17. The drill is scheduled for 10:17 a.m. and follows the second anniversary of the 5.8 magnitude earthquake centered in Mineral on Aug. 23, 2011, that could be felt around the state, according to a release from the Virginia Department of Emergency Management. Virginians are urged to participate and practice “Drop, Cover and Hold On,” what emergency officials say is the suggested response to an earthquake.

PILOT ONLINE

Study looks at Sandy's impacts on tidal marshes

For biologists who have been studying birds in East Coast tidal marshes, Superstorm Sandy couldn't have come at a better time. Just two months before Sandy pummeled New Jersey and New York last October, a research team completed the field work of a study looking at bird populations at risk due to the loss of tidal marshes from sea level rise. With that pre-storm data in hand, the researchers are now comparing the abundance of marsh plants and birds before and after Sandy in those same marshes, from Maine to Virginia. Conclusions cannot be drawn yet, but it's clear that Sandy devastated many marshes, said Brian Olsen, a University of Maine professor and a co-principal of the study, along with professors from the universities of Delaware and Connecticut and a biologist from the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. "Some of the places we've gone to, they used to be tidal marshes and now they're sand dunes or now they're open water," he said. "That's kind of extreme, but there are places where the tidal marshes are gone." The project, funded by a $200,000 grant from the National Science Foundation, will assess how well animal and plant populations in coastal marshes can weather change. The study specifically looks at whether the ability of certain plants and birds to withstand an extreme disturbance, such as a hurricane, is greater or less in marshes that are subjected to other stresses, such as sea level rise, development, pollution and invasive species.

LYNCHBURG NEWS AND ADVANCE

Landfill authority tables discussion about lengthening sound barrier

Extending a sound barrier wall around the regional landfill in Campbell County would do little to tamp down noise and could cost more than $200,000, according to a staff analysis presented to the governing board Monday. Solid Waste Director Clarke Gibson said a field test conducted from a neighboring home found noise levels averaged 45.7 decibels. Campbell County’s noise ordinance allows levels of up to 65 decibels during the day. The loudest landfill traffic recorded during the field test was 56 decibels, he said. Gibson said computer models developed by a third party indicate extending the wall as requested by some neighbors would further reduce noise levels by 5.1 decibels, which he said would be only marginally better. At the same time, the extension would cost the Region 2000 Services Authority up to $212,000, he said. Under the circumstances, the landfill board agreed it wasn’t prepared to make such a hefty investment. One neighbor active in advocating for a wall extension said Monday night he was frustrated and angry, and may seek legal counsel.

MISCELLANEOUS

GREENWIRE

Climate rules can boost economy, McCarthy says in first public speech In her first public appearance as U.S. EPA administrator, Gina McCarthy said the agency will "reinvent how we view the business of climate change" by working with the industry to boost the economy while implementing President Obama's climate change plan. McCarthy, speaking this morning at Harvard Law School, said the Climate Action Plan was an opportunity to "bend the curve" and could "fuel the complementary goals of turning America into a magnet for new jobs and manufacturing." "For too long we've been focused on this false choice. It's not a choice between the health of our children and the health of our economy," McCarthy said at an event sponsored by Harvard's Environmental Law Program. "The truth is we need to embrace cutting carbon pollution as a way to spark business innovation. We need to cut carbon pollution to grow jobs. We need to cut carbon pollution to strengthen the economy. "Let's approach this as an opportunity of a lifetime, because there are too many lifetimes at stake," she added. McCarthy, who was confirmed two weeks ago after a months-long wait, is tasked with a series of complicated rulemakings in

the president's second term, headlined by crafting regulations that will limit carbon dioxide emissions from new and existing power plants within the next two years.Although McCarthy called it a "wicked cool exciting time for me," those future rules are already getting blowback from EPA's traditional opponents, who say the plan is another "war on coal" that will penalize existing power plants and bar new coal plants from being built. A letter from 23 House Republicans last week said the plan would "take the unprecedented step of imposing an energy tax by regulatory fiat" (*E&E Daily*, July 24).

EPA submits final cooling water rule for White House review U.S. EPA has sent for final White House review a rule aimed at reducing the number of fish and other aquatic organisms that are sucked into cooling-water intakes at power plants and factories. Billions of fish, shellfish, larvae, sea turtles and marine mammals are vacuumed up by the systems each year, according to the agency. EPA agreed to finalize the rule under a legal settlement with environmental groups, although the deadline was pushed back several times and now stands at Nov. 4. Since the agency released a proposed rule in March 2011 that was sharply criticized by green groups, EPA has twice incorporated new data into its work. Industry lauded the inclusion of new information the agency received through comments and power plant visits last year (*Greenwire*, June 1, 2012). And environmentalists were pleased with new cost-benefit data they say better monetized the boost that the rule would give to fisheries. "It showed a significant economic benefit to the American public from protecting fisheries, and it changed the whole equation," said Steve Fleischli, director of the Natural Resources Defense Council's water program. "If you take those benefits into consideration, benefits outweigh costs 3-to-1."

Proximity to benzene plants could increase cancer risk -- study The risk of developing cancer of the immune system could be linked to the distance a person lives from a manufacturing plant that emits the chemical benzene, researchers said in a new study. "It would suggest even with moderate changes in distance that there can be large changes in the decrease in non-Hodgkin lymphoma," said Christopher Flowers, the study's lead author and head of the lymphoma program at the Winship Cancer Institute of Emory University in Atlanta. Non-Hodgkin lymphoma designates a large category of cancers that strike the body's immune system. In their study, researchers collated U.S. EPA data on chemical release sites in Georgia between 1988 and 1998, state cancer registry information from 1999 to 2008, and census information. Researchers found the risk of developing non-Hodgkin lymphoma dropped by about 0.3 percent for each mile between a person's home and a facility that released benzene. "These are mean differences between the location areas and release sites. That takes into account every release site in the state," Flowers said. There were 19 release sites in the state during the years examined.

Forest firefighters stressed by warming and budget cuts -- briefing Wildland firefighters are seeing their budgets slashed at a time when climate change is lengthening fire seasons and making them more active, firefighters and forest management officials told Democratic lawmakers today at the Capitol. This one-two punch of more work and fewer resources is affecting forest managers' ability to combat fires and to keep firefighters safe, witnesses said. It is also leading them to siphon resources away from other functions -- including wildfire prevention -- to react to fire emergencies, they said. The firefighters and forest managers spoke at a briefing this morning sponsored by the Bicameral Task Force on Climate Change, an all-Democratic congressional caucus that agitates for executive and legislative action to address global warming. The briefing came weeks after an Arizona blaze claimed the lives of 19 firefighters during a summer fire season that is already breaking records. "Bigger and more intense fires are one of the red flags of climate change," said Rep. Henry Waxman (D-Calif.), co-chairman of the task force, at the start of the briefing. "According to scientists, climate change is causing hotter and drier conditions, earlier snowmelt, and more outbreaks of pine bark beetles and other pests, and these factors are combining to make fires bigger and more destructive."

Millions of plastic particles float in Great Lakes Though not visible to the eye, bits of plastic are the latest pollutant to threaten the Great Lakes. The masses of plastic have previously been discovered in the world's oceans. Now researchers say they have found them in the lakes, which make up one-fifth of the world's freshwater supply. "If you're out boating in the Great Lakes, you're not going to see large islands of plastic," said Sherri Mason, a chemist with the State University of New York, Fredonia. "But all these bits of plastic are out there." Last year, scientists looked for particles in Lakes Superior, Huron and Erie. This summer, the search continues in Lakes Michigan and Ontario. The perfect roundness of the plastic bits found in the lakes have led researchers to believe they are the "microbeads" used in personal hygiene products such as body wash and toothpaste. Because of their miniscule size, they float right through screens at waste treatment plants and end up in the bodies of water, said Lorena Rios Mendoza, a chemist with the University of Wisconsin, Superior

NEW YORK TIMES

Blog: Another View on Gas Drilling in the Context of Climate Change I've received a "Your Dot" contribution on gas leaks and global warming from Louis A. Derry, an associate professor in the earth and atmospheric sciences department at Cornell University. It's a critique of one element in "Gangplank to a Warm Future," an Op-Ed article by Anthony R. Ingraffea, a professor of engineering at Cornell who is a prominent foe of expanded gas drilling using the bundle of methods commonly known as "fracking." You'll find it below. But first here's a little context. In a visit to Cornell last fall to give a lecture on energy and climate, I spent time with both researchers, along with several other scientists there focused on aspects of gas drilling and methane's environmental impacts. It was clear that there was a very wide range of views — particularly on the impact of gas leakage on climate — that resulted largely from different interpretations of the same data. I don't recall hearing anyone discount the importance of cutting gas leakage from wells, pipelines and other gas (and oil and coal) operations. That's been a prime interest of mine since 2009. But it's important for the public to know what is, and isn't, firmly established to make wise decisions on relevant policies. Read on for Derry's piece, which includes some technical terms that I'll explain in brackets (For starters, CH_4 is methane, the main constituent of the fuel we know as natural gas, and of course CO_2 is carbon dioxide).

POLITICOpro

Gina McCarthy: Climate change poses economic threat Climate change isn't an environmental problem — it's an economic problem, EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy said Tuesday. McCarthy doubled down on President Barack Obama's call for broad climate regulations in tandem with economic growth, making that the theme of her first speech since she was confirmed two weeks ago. "Hello. Climate change isn't an environmental issue. It is a fundamental economic challenge for us," the Boston native said during Tuesday's address at Harvard Law School. "It is a fundamental economic challenge internationally." Nobody looked at Hurricane Sandy as an environmental problem, McCarthy said. "They looked at it as economic devastation." She said the limits on natural resources are real; the threats of climate change are real; and the country should embrace cutting carbon emissions as a way to spark innovation. McCarthy's words came just hours before Obama delivered a speech in Tennessee focusing on creating jobs in the U.S., which called for bolstering the manufacturing industry, increasing investments in clean energy research and supporting a booming natural gas industry. Like the president, McCarthy had a clear message: Climate change regulations won't be the death knell for the economy that opponents claim.

USA TODAY

Study: Sea-level rise threatens 1400 US cities*How bad is the sea-level rise? Though scientists debate the severity, a new study says at least 316 U.S. cities and towns will be mostly submerged unless pollution can be pulled from the sky.* A rise in sea levels threatens the viability of more than 1,400 cities and towns, including Miami, Virginia Beach and Jacksonville, unless there are deep cuts in heat-trapping greenhouse gas emissions, says an analysis out Monday.Prior emissions have already locked in 4 feet of future sea-level rise that will submerge parts of 316 municipalities, but the timing is unclear and could take hundreds of years, according to the paper in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. If global warming continues at its current rate through the year 2100, at least an additional 1,100 cities and towns will be mostly under water at high tide in the distant future. "It's like this invisible threat," says author Benjamin Strauss,a scientist at Climate Central, a non-profit, non-advocacy research group based in Princeton, N.J., that's funded by foundations, individuals and federal grants. He says these sea levels are much higher than what's predicted this century — typically 1 to 4 feet — because climate change multiplies their impact over hundreds of years. He says many people have the mistaken notion that if greenhouse gas emissions stop, the problem of sea levels rising will go away. It won't, he says, because carbon dioxide stays in the atmosphere for centuries — even millenniums — and contributes to two factors that raise sea levels: higher temperatures and the loss of Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets.

GRIST MAGAZINE

Leaked EPA document raises questions about *fracking* pollution

The EPA doesn't seem very interested in finding out whether fracking pollutes groundwater. The latest indication of this emerged over the weekend in the Los Angeles Times. Residents of the small town of Dimock in northeastern Pennsylvania have long been convinced that Cabot Oil and Gas Corp. was poisoning their drinking water by fracking the land around them. In July of last year, the EPA announced that although water from some local wells contained "naturally occurring" arsenic, barium, and manganese, the agency was ending its investigation there without fingering the any culprits. Now we find out that staff at a regional EPA office were worried about the role of fracking in polluting the town's water, but their concerns appear to have been ignored by their bosses. An internal EPA PowerPoint presentation prepared by regional staffers for their superiors and obtained by the L.A. Times paints an alarming picture of potential links between water contamination and fracking. And it reinforces the perception that the EPA is giving a free pass to the fracking industry, perhaps because natural gas plays a key role in President Obama's quest for "energy independence" and an "all of the above" energy portfolio. From the L.A. Times article: The presentation, based on data collected over 4 1/2 years at 11 wells around Dimock, concluded that "methane and other gases released during drilling (including air from the drilling) apparently cause significant damage to the water quality." The presentation also concluded that "methane is at significantly higher concentrations in the aquifers after gas drilling and perhaps as a result of fracking [hydraulic fracturing] and other gas well work." …

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

Daylighting Takes Off as Cities Expose Long-Buried Rivers

The latest trend in urban renewal involves opening up underground streams. There's likely an underground stream in your city, but it may soon be seeing the light. Uncovering buried streams has had huge impacts in places as diverse as Seattle, Washington, Kalamazoo, Michigan, and even Seoul, Korea—improving local water quality, providing habitat for fish and birds, and turning neglected parking lots and roads into public parks that boost neighbors' property values and can revitalize entire cities. And city planners everywhere are starting to take note. In Yonkers, the fourth largest city in New York State, officials are a third done with a "daylighting" project—a term for the opening up of underground streams (see "11 Rivers Forced Underground"). In addition to exposing a waterway that had long been covered, the effort has already sparked plans for a new minor-league ballpark and new housing. "I credit the city and the people who ... figured that having a nice river in a downtown was something that was, economically, really good," said Ann-Marie Mitroff, director of river programs for Groundwork Hudson Valley, an environmental justice nonprofit. But why are all these streams covered at all? Flash back more than a hundred years. In many urban areas around the world, small streams were just getting in the way. You couldn't build on top of them, and the rapidly growing populations in many cities were throwing all their sewage into open water. Often, engineers found that the simplest solution was to bury the streams, routing the water into pipes and paving over the top. In Yonkers, "the Army Corps of Engineers put a parking lot on top of it, which everybody thought was progress," Mitroff said. In some cities, more than 70 percent of streams have been paved over. In many cases, city residents don't even know that there are buried waterways under their feet. Now, new research and a desire to revitalize urban cores is leading to a host of daylighting projects.

SNL FINANCIAL

Fuel fluctuations: More than 5.5 GW of generation switches to gas

As environmental regulations continue their forward march and gas prices remain low compared to historic rates due to increased domestic supply, the number of power plants changing their primary fuel source to natural gas has increased dramatically. In 2011 and 2012, just more than 5.5 GW of power plant capacity switched to burning primarily natural gas from another form of fossil fuel, according to an SNL Energy analysis of U.S. Energy Information Administration 860 data...The possibility of more generators relying on natural gas at the expense of other fossil fuels seems likely given the regulatory environment being promulgated by the White House and the EPA. The lower emission profile of natural gas allows plants to meet regulations without installing costly emission controls. In President Barack Obama's Climate Action Plan released in June, natural gas was described as a "bridge fuel" toward cleaner power plants, and the intent to promote fuel-switching to gas was stated. The climate plan also called for regulating existing CO_2 emitting sources, which will surely provide even more incentive for generators to move from the higher emitting oil and coal sources to gas. While the plan called for new regulation of existing sources, regulations for new CO_2-emitting sources have missed a deadline for completion. Passing the deadline potentially gives generators more time without regulation, but although the current iteration is overdue, the rule for new sources is slated to be repurposed in September. Government regulation is not solely directed toward CO_2 emissions. Generators will have to meet standards implemented by MATS in 2015, although options exist to prolong compliance. MATS' stringent standards represent one of the most costly regulations due to the multitude of controls that will need to be installed at high-emitting plants, all or most of which can be avoided when burning natural gas. Also, the U.S. Supreme Court has decided to review the Cross State Air Pollution Rule, or CSAPR, which was struck down by a federal appeals court in 2012. Although the appeals court's decision may be upheld, the uncertainty of additional regulation is concerning to coal-fired generators.

TRICITIES.COM

Appalachian Trail Conservancy names new director

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy's board of directors has appointed Ronald J. Tipton as the new executive director. Tipton will lead the organization beginning in late August. Tipton has spent most of the past 30 years as an advocate for public land preservation and national park protection. A graduate of George Washington University with an undergraduate degree in American studies and a law degree from GW's National Law Center, Tipton first worked as a program officer at the National Academy of Sciences and on the oversight-investigative staff of the House Environment, Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee. Since 1978, he has been a part of the advocacy and/or management team of four nonprofit national conservation organizations: The Wilderness Society, National Audubon Society, World Wildlife Fund and National Parks Conservation Association. Tipton was the senior vice president for programs for National Parks Conservation Association from 2000-08, when he became the senior vice president for policy. Currently, he is focused on expanding the number of national park units to increase the natural and cultural diversity of the system as the country approaches the 2016 Centennial celebration of the National Park Service.

SACRAMENTO BEE

Philippe Cousteau, Jr To Lead EarthEcho International's First Expedition

Philippe Cousteau's nonprofit EarthEcho International (www.earthecho.org) today announced the launch of *EarthEcho Expeditions*, an unprecedented initiative that leverages the rich Cousteau legacy of exploration and discovery to bring science education alive for today's 21st century learners. "*EarthEcho Expeditions* represents the culmination of more than a decade of working with educators and youth from around the world," said EarthEcho President and Co-founder Philippe Cousteau, Jr. "*EarthEcho Expeditions* uses the thrill of adventure to inspire and empower a new generation of environmental champions." *EarthEcho Expeditions* will be an annual program that will travel the world to engage young people in a voyage of discovery. The first journey begins September 3, 2013 in one of the world's largest aquatic dead zones located in the center of the Chesapeake Bay with *EarthEcho Expedition: Into the Dead Zone.* From investigating the depths of urban storm drains to scuba diving in the heart of the dead zone, Philippe Cousteau's team will immerse young people in an exciting exploration of one of the most important environments in the United States. Known as America's watershed, the Bay and its surrounding communities are rich in history and were once rich in sea and wildlife providing an ideal setting to explore both the environmental and economic impact of this critical global issue.

PR WEB

International Workshop Leads the Way to Sustainable Farming of Atlantic Salmon

The Atlantic Salmon Federation and the Conservation Fund, two internationally recognized conservation organizations, partner to produce sustainably farmed Atlantic salmon. What does the town of Shepherdstown on the Potomac River in West Virginia, USA have in common with the town of St. Andrews on the Bay of Fundy in New Brunswick, Canada? Both small communities have researchers that are at the forefront of making salmon aquaculture a commercially and environmentally-sound venture for forward-thinking entrepreneurs throughout the world. The Freshwater Institute, located in Shepherdstown, is an internationally-recognized program of the Conservation Fund, a charity that has been protecting land and water in the United States for thirty years. Its premier research and development facilities are dedicated to sustainable water use and re-use. The Atlantic Salmon Federation, a charity in both the United States and Canada, has worked for more than 60 years, through research, education and government relations, to conserve, protect and restore wild Atlantic salmon and the ecosystems on which their well-being and survival depend. So it made good sense for the Conservation Fund Freshwater Institute (CFFI) and the Atlantic Salmon Federation (ASF) to partner in 2011 to demonstrate the feasibility of producing farmed Atlantic salmon in land-based, recirculation aquaculture systems. This project is producing thousands of pounds of premium salmon sustainably, while creating a viable alternative to net-pen farming and helping to turn the tide of open ocean expansion. The product is getting rave reviews for its quality and taste from chefs, seafood distributers, and the general public. The program is determined to transfer expertise and technical information to industry, government, researchers and conservationists.

A few of the many additional stories about EPA Administrator McCarthy's Speech at Harvard:

EPA chief vows to develop carbon rules based on scienceBoston Globe - by Beth Daley

EPA head: Fighting climate change will create more jobsChristian Science Monitor - by David J. Unger

Highly Cited:After Delayed Vote, EPA Gains a Tough Leader to Tackle Climate ChangeNew York Times

Opinion:New EPA chief: Green focus can help economyBoston Herald

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