EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

Date	HeadLine	Outlet
11/19/2012	Wonkbook: America's next top energy policy	Washington Post - Online
11/19/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	FuelFix.com
11/19/2012	Drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Mansfield News-Journal - Online
11/19/2012	Produced Water Market: Opportunities in the Oil, Shale and Gas Sectors in North America	pr-usa.net - Online
11/19/2012	EPA study on fracking could prove valuable commodity	Williamsport Sun-Gazette - Online
11/19/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	WTOP-FM - Online
11/19/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Daily Journal - Online
11/19/2012	President Obama is being watched from both sides on whether he will regulate or promote fracking	Review - Online, The
11/19/2012	Gas drilling dilemma in U.S.	Norman Transcript - Online, The
11/19/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices- Watertown Public Opinion: Ap Business	Watertown Public Opinion - Online
11/19/2012	PITTSBURGH — Energy companies, environmental groups, and even Hollywood stars are watching to see what decisions President Barack Obama makes about regulating or promoting natural gas drilling. ');" onmouseout="return hideTextPreview(this);" cl	Aspen Times - Online
11/19/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices » The Enid News and Eagle, Enid, OK	Enid News & Eagle - Online
11/19/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices »State, national, world »The Enid News and Eagle, Enid, OK	Enid News & Eagle - Online
11/19/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Jamestown Sun - Online, The
11/19/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	KSWO-TV - Online
11/19/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Santa Maria Times - Online
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	KCBD-TV - Online
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Jackson Sun - Online
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Lincoln Journal Star - Online
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	International Daily News - Online
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Aspen Times - Online
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Repository - Online, The
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	phillyburbs.com
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	KUSA-TV - Online
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	CNSNews.com - Cybercast News Service
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	WGEM-TV Online
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	WHEC-TV - Online
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Star-Beacon - Online
11/18/2012	Stakes high as drilling for natural gas presents Obama with historic choices » Cumberland Times-News	Cumberland Times-News - Online
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Courier - Online, The

11/18/2012	Historic choices on horizon	Durango Herald - Online, The
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Asbury Park Press - Online
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Island Packet - Online
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	WTRF-TV - Online
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Post and Courier - Online, The
11/18/2012	PITTSBURGH (AP) — Energy companies, environmental groups, and even Hollywood stars are watching to see what decisions President Barack Obama makes about regulating or promoting natural gas drilling. ');" onmouseout="return hideTextPreview(this)	Summit Daily News - Online
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	State Journal - Online, The
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	WRAL-TV - Online
11/18/2012	President Barack Obama faces historic natural gas drilling choice - 11/17/2012 10:55 PM MST	Denver Post - Online, The
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	WVNS-TV - Online
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	KWES-TV - Online
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Times Daily - Online
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Wilmington Star-News - Online
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Lexington Dispatch - Online, The
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Jamestown Sun - Online, The
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Coshocton Tribune - Online
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Galveston County Daily News - Online, The
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	KTAR-AM - Online
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	WXIX-TV - Online
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	WNYT-TV - Online
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Herald-Dispatch - Online, The
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Alexandria Daily Town Talk - Online
11/18/2012	Natural Gas Drilling Presents Historic Options And Risks For President Obama	Huffington Post, The
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	KRGV-TV - Online
11/18/2012	Natural-gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Vindicator - Online
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Monterey County Herald - Online
11/18/2012	Gas drilling boom presents Obama with historic choices on jobs, energy, environment	Newser
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	WALB-TV - Online
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Lodi News-Sentinel - Online
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	KTEN-TV - Online
11/18/2012	Loophole Lets Toxic Oil Water Flow Over Indian Land | KSMU	KSMU-FM Online
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with difficult choices	South Bend Tribune - Online
11/18/2012	Obama faces big drilling decisions	Times Leader - Online
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Times Daily - Online
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	San Jose Mercury News - Online
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	New Canaan News - Online
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Sentinel & Enterprise - Online
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	KCTV-TV - Online

11/18/2012	President Barack Obama faces historic natural gas drilling choice	Daily Camera - Online, The
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with difficult choices	WXIN-TV - Online
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Enquirer-Herald - Online
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Lake Wylie Pilot - Online
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Observer-Reporter - Online
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	San Francisco Chronicle - Online
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Greenwich Time - Online
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Marin Independent Journal - Online
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	NewsOK.com (Oklahoman) - Online
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with difficult choices	La Canada Valley Sun - Online
11/18/2012	Drilling choices tough on Obama	Hutchinson News - Online
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Inland Valley Daily Bulletin - Online
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Santa Cruz Sentinel - Online
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	News Tribune - Online
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	WSHM-TV - Online
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with difficult choices	KDAF-TV - Online
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Times-News - Online
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Tuscaloosa News - Online, The
11/18/2012	Stakes high as drilling for natural gas presents Obama with historic choices	Cumberland Times-News - Online
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Associated Press (AP)
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Associated Press (AP) - Online (United States)
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Associated Press (AP)
11/18/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Associated Press (AP)
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	WCNC-TV - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Lowell Sun - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Milwaukee Journal Sentinel - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	WPFO-TV - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	WWTV-TV - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	KPHO-TV - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Connecticut Post - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	WAFF-TV - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Atlanta Journal-Constitution - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Aspen Times - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Kingsport Times-News - Online
11/17/2012	Gas Drilling Presents Obama With Historic Choices	WLEX-TV - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	WJSU-TV - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Silver City Sun-News - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	KNOE-TV - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	KNDU-TV - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Greenfield Daily Reporter - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	KSL-TV - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	WBAL-AM - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	WFXT-TV - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Press Democrat - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	WOKV-FM - Online

11/17/2012	Los Angeles Local News, Weather, and TrafficGas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	KTTV-TV - Online
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11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	San Bernardino Sun - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Las Cruces Sun-News - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Ledger - Online, The
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	WCSC-TV - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with difficult choices	Imperial Valley Press - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Columbus Ledger-Enquirer - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Sunday Gazette-Mail
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with difficult choices	Morning Call - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	WSJV-TV - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	St. Paul Pioneer Press - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	WLOX-TV - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	KTVN-TV - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with difficult choices	WPMT-TV - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Daily Record - Online, The
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	KMPH-TV - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	WFLX-TV - Online
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11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Long Island Press - Online
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11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Tribune - Online, The
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Herald - Online, The
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Bellingham Herald - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	WLNE-TV - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling boom presents Obama with historic choices on jobs, energy, environment	Duluth News Tribune - Online, The
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Yahoo! Finance
11/17/2012	Dallas News | myFOXdfw.com Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	KDFW-TV - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	WDRB-TV - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	WBBH-TV - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	KENS-TV - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	WOWK-TV - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	KVVU-TV - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	KGWN-TV - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Sarasota Herald-Tribune - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	News & Observer - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	WTVT-TV - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Charleston Gazette, The
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Denver Post - Online, The
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	KTVB-TV - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Hawaii News Now
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Advocate - Online, The

11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	KLKN-TV - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	El Paso Inc. - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Las Vegas Sun - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Sun Herald - Online, The
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Herald-Journal - Online
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11/17/2012	FOX 35 News OrlandoGas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	WOFL-TV - Online
11/17/2012	KEVIN BEGOS | Associated Press	Journal Gazette - Online, The
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Austin American-Statesman - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Lexington Herald-Leader - Online
11/17/2012	UCLA Headlines November 16, 2012	UCLA News
11/17/2012	Some say the unexpected drilling boom presents historic options - and risks - for the Obama administration.	Olympian - Online, The
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Sify.com
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	MSN Money (US)
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	WHIZ-TV - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	KZTV-TV - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	KNDU-TV - Online
11/17/2012	Chicago News and Weather | FOX 32 NewsGas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	WFLD-TV - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Anchorage Daily News - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	WTHR-TV - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	WJRT-TV - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	WBOC-TV - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Fort Worth Star-Telegram - Online
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11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Northern Star - Online, The
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11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Sacramento Bee - Online, The
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	WLNS-TV - Online
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11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	WNEM-TV - Online
11/17/2012	Gas Drilling Presents Obama With Historic Choices	ABC News - Online
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11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Houston Chronicle - Online
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11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	KUSI-TV - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Republican - Online, The
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	KCAU-TV - Online
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11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Summit Daily News - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Gainesville Sun - Online, The
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Omaha World-Herald - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Charlotte Observer - Online
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11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Sunday Gazette-Mail - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	WGCL-TV - Online
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11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	WTVM-TV - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling boom presents Obama with historic choices on jobs, energy, environment	Washington Post - Online
11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	KPTV-TV - Online
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11/17/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Telegraph - Online, The
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11/17/2012	ANALYSIS: Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Times Herald-Record - Online
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11/16/2012	view printer-friendly version	KUHF-FM - Online
11/16/2012	Loophole Lets Toxic Oil Water Flow Over Indian Land	KUHF-FM - Online
11/16/2012	Loophole Lets Toxic Oil Water Flow Over Indian Land	Minnesota Public Radio - Online
11/16/2012	Loophole Lets Toxic Oil Water Flow Over Indian Land	NPR - Online
11/16/2012	EPA study should offer chance to review fracking	Fairmont Sentinel
11/16/2012	EPA Finds Fracking Study Optimistic	frackingscience.com
11/16/2012	Shale Game | Canadian Underwriter	Canadian Underwriter - Online
11/16/2012	Loophole Lets Toxic Oil Water Flow Over Indian Land	WFAE-FM - Online
11/16/2012	OH ends moratorium on fracking permits	WCPO-TV - Online
11/16/2012	Loophole Lets Toxic Oil Water Flow Over Indian Land	Northwest Public Radio - Online
11/16/2012	EPA?fracking study offers end to noise, foes' propaganda	Salem News - Online
11/16/2012	State issues four new deep injec...	Morning Journal - Online
11/16/2012	State issues four new deep injection-well permits	Morning Journal - Online
11/16/2012	Study to flesh out fracking's impact on drinking water	Vernal Express - Online
11/16/2012	Ohio renews injection-well permitting	Ithaca Journal - Online
11/16/2012	Loophole Lets Toxic Oil Water Flow Over Indian Land	KUOW-FM - Online
11/16/2012	Ohio once again issuing permits for injection wells	Tribune Chronicle - Online
11/16/2012	Ohio renews issuing permits for injection wells	Repository - Online, The
11/16/2012	GAS OFFICIAL SAYS EPA STUDY COULD DRIVE NEW FRACKING RULES UNDER SDWA	Inside EPA Weekly Report
11/16/2012	GOP HOUSE EYES 'RIFLE SHOT' EFFORTS TO REVISE KEY ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS	Inside EPA Weekly Report
11/15/2012	Ohio renews injection-well permitting	State Journal - Online, The
11/15/2012	Ohio renews injection-well permitting	Star-Gazette - Online
11/15/2012	Loophole Lets Toxic Oil Water Flow Over Indian Land	KUNC-FM - Online
11/15/2012	Loophole Lets Toxic Oil Water Flow Over Indian	Wyoming Public Radio - Online

	Land	
11/15/2012	ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS: A quieter climate skeptic takes top GOP spot on key panel (E&E Daily, 11/14/2012)	Land Letter
11/15/2012	Loophole Lets Toxic Oil Water Flow Over Indian Land	OPBmusic.org
11/15/2012	Loophole Lets Toxic Oil Water Flow Over Indian Land	KWGS-FM - Online
11/15/2012	Loophole Lets Toxic Oil Water Flow Over Indian Land	WKAR-FM - Online
11/15/2012	Loophole Lets Toxic Oil Water Flow Over Indian Land	WYSO-TV - Online
11/15/2012	Loophole Lets Toxic Oil Water Flow Over Indian Land	KQED-FM - Online
11/15/2012	Loophole Lets Toxic Oil Water Flow Over Indian Land	WBUR - Online
11/15/2012	Loophole Lets Toxic Oil Water Flow Over Indian Land	Vermont Public Radio - Online
11/15/2012	Loophole Lets Toxic Oil Water Flow Over Indian Land	WBFO-FM - Online
11/15/2012	Loophole Lets Toxic Oil Water Flow Over Indian Land	North Country Public Radio - Online
11/15/2012	Water report badly needed re: gas boom	Pocono Record
11/15/2012	Loophole Lets Toxic Oil Water Flow Over Indian Land	KBIA-FM - Online
11/15/2012	EPA invites public to submit data on fracking	Wyoming Business Report, The
11/15/2012	Loophole Lets Toxic Oil Water Flow Over Indian Land	KUHF-FM - Online
11/15/2012	Loophole Lets Toxic Oil Water Flow Over Indian Land	WCPN-FM - Online
11/15/2012	Loophole Lets Toxic Oil Water Flow Over Indian Land	New Hampshire Public Radio - Online
11/15/2012	Loophole Lets Toxic Oil Water Flow Over Indian Land	WGBH News
11/15/2012	Ohio renews issuing permits for injection wells	Independent - Online, The
11/15/2012	Loophole Lets Toxic Oil Water Flow Over Indian Land	WVXU-FM - Online
11/15/2012	Ohio renews issuing permits for injection wells	Times-Reporter - Online, The
11/15/2012	Loophole Lets Toxic Oil Water Flow Over Indian Land	NPR - Online
11/15/2012	WV organization tracks fracking chemicals	West Virginia Public Broadcasting - Online
11/15/2012	Get the facts on fracking	Minot Daily News - Online
11/15/2012	Battelle to Assist OEPA, ODNR in Assessment of Wastewater Treatment Technologies	pr-usa.net - Online
11/15/2012	Obama re-election worries chemical industry	Chemistry World - Online
11/15/2012	EPA?study on fracking should bring guidance	Express - Online, The

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Wonkbook: America's next top energy policy
Washington Post - Online

11/19/2012

Posted by Ezra Klein on November 19, 2012 at 8:54 am

Welcome to Wonkbook, Ezra Klein and Evan Soltas's morning policy news primer. To subscribe by e-mail, click here. Send comments, criticism or ideas to Wonkbook@gmail.com. To read more by Ezra and his team, go to Wonkblog.

Wonkbook's Number of the Day: 70 billion to 140 billion gallons. That's the amount of water it takes to "frack" the 35,000 oil and gas wells drilled in the United States each year, according to a story by Alison Sider, Russell Gold and Ben Lefebvre in the Wall Street Journal. With the rise of hydraulic fracturing, the oil and gas industry is confronting a new wave of challenges in water waste management and pollution control. Today, Wonkblog starts off with a brief look at the news, research, debates and policies at the intersection of energy and environment.

Top story: Is it time for a joint energy-and-environment policy?

World Bank says it's time for action on climate change. "Jim Yong Kim, World Bank president, has made an urgent plea for action to address the 'devastating' risks of climate change as the development body releases a stark assessment of the potential impact of rising global temperatures. 'It is my hope that this report shocks us into action,' Dr Kim said in the foreword of a study the bank commissioned to look at what would happen if the world warmed by 4°C from pre-industrial levels." Pilita Clark in The Financial Times.

Read: The World Bank's report (PDF) 'Turn Down the Heat: Why a 4C warmer world must be avoided.'.

Is an energy policy revamp in the works? "The United States needs to update its energy policy to reflect the boom in natural gas and oil production that has boosted manufacturing jobs, said the top Democrat on the Senate energy committee [Sen. Ron Wyden] on Thursday ... Congress has not had a comprehensive energy bill since 2007, well before the widespread use of hydraulic fracturing or 'fracking' technology to blast free natural gas and oil trapped in shale rock." Roberta Rampton, Reuters.

NationalJournal Debate: Do the results of the 2012 election pave the way for Washington to achieve bipartisan energy and environment policies?.

Should the US export natural gas? "Now that the election is over, the Department of Energy is set to issue a much delayed — and politically charged — review that bears on America's manufacturing future: What's the effect of exporting more of the new U.S. gas bonanza?...The Department of Energy is considering a number of new requests to build export facilities that would liquefy natural gas for export abroad. Its imminent report is expected to look at the economic effects of larger exports. It has delayed approving new applications until after the report is issued." John Bussey in the Wall Street Journal.

@noahpinion: I am going to take such inordinate glee over the next 30 years watching conservatives see cheap alternative energy slowly become a reality.

The next step for fracking: recycling the water. "Companies are racing to find ways to recycle the water used in hydraulic fracturing, chasing an emerging market that could be worth billions of dollars ... While the recycled water can't currently be cleaned up enough for drinking or growing crops, it can be cleaned of chemicals and rock debris and reused to frack additional wells, which could sharply cut the costs that energy companies face securing and disposing of water ...

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Though fracking has brought U.S. oil production to its highest level in more than 14 years and produced a glut of natural gas, it requires huge amounts of water, raising costs for energy companies and spurring opposition from environmental groups at a time when some states are suffering through droughts. It takes between 70 billion to 140 billion gallons of water to frack 35,000 wells a year, the industry's current pace." Alison Sider, Russell Gold and Ben Lefebvre in the Wall Street Journal.

@JimPethokoukis: Dan Yergin says US energy revolution = 1.7M jobs since 2008. Brown energy helped get green energy POTUS reelected

The EPA is refusing to waive the ethanol mandate. "The Environmental Protection Agency is rejecting requests from states and meat industry groups to waive regulations that require the blending of ethanol into gasoline. EPA rejected petitions from nearly a dozen states, including Texas, Virginia, and Maryland, for waivers of the federal Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS)." Ben German in the Hill.

@TPCarney: You know who has a mandate? Gas stations. To buy ethanol.

How communities are looking to use shale oil and gas to spark an enduring turnaround. "A gas boom has brought companies and workers into parts of Pennsylvania that lie atop the Marcellus Shale formation, a rich source of both natural gas and controversy. The common economic criticism of the drilling industry is that it booms and then busts, generating few local jobs and leaving little lasting economic benefit. But Lycoming County, in the north-central part of the state, is trying to change that. The county and its main city, Williamsport, are working diligently to position themselves not just as a host to the arriving companies, but also as a source of local workers for the industry and a long-term beneficiary of its local and national expansion." John Schwartz in the New York Times.

Top op-eds

@Ben_German: GOP's Whitfield on oil tax breaks: "There is widespread sentiment in the House that says look let's just get rid of all [energy] incentives"

Top op-eds

Kamin: The bias toward cutting discretionary spending. "I, and my fellow budget geeks, can generate discretionary savings for negotiators in a jiffy. Just tell me how many hundreds of billions you want cut, and in a minute I can give you back a new set of annual discretionary limits for the decade. Sure, policymakers will eventually have to make specific cuts to hit those limits. But that pain can often be deferred, because specific decisions on discretionary spending are made annually. Discretionary spending five or 10 years from now looks like a piggy bank to negotiators. Take money out, and let some future policymaker actually ax the programs. It's not the same for other areas of the budget. If policymakers want savings from entitlement programs such as Medicare or Social Security, or if they want additional revenue, they must, in relatively short order, come up with the specific ways to reduce those programs or raise that revenue. The lines on the spreadsheet must be filled with painful decisions about premiums and co-pays, benefit levels and tax rates." David Kamin in .

KRUGMAN: Why we mourn the Twinkie. "[T]he demise of Hostess has unleashed a wave of baby boomer nostalgia for a seemingly more innocent time...[T]he '50s — the Twinkie Era — do offer lessons that remain relevant in the 21st century. Above all, the success of the postwar American economy demonstrates that, contrary to today's conservative orthodoxy, you can have prosperity without demeaning workers and coddling the rich ... Yet in the 1950s incomes in the top bracket faced a marginal tax rate of 91, that's right, 91 percent, while taxes on corporate profits were twice as large, relative to national income, as in recent years. The best estimates suggest that circa 1960 the top 0.01 percent of Americans paid an effective federal tax rate of more than 70 percent, twice what they pay today." Paul Krugman in the New York Times.

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DOUTHAT: The liberal gloat. "Liberals look at the Obama majority and see a coalition bound together by enlightened values — reason rather than superstition, tolerance rather than bigotry, equality rather than hierarchy. But it's just as easy to see a coalition created by social disintegration and unified by economic fear... The progressive bias toward the capital-F Future, the old left-wing suspicion of faith and domesticity, the fact that Democrats have benefited politically from these trends — all of this makes it easy for liberals to just celebrate the emerging America, to minimize the costs of disrupted families and hollowed-out communities, and to treat the places where Americans have traditionally found solidarity outside the state (like the churches threatened by the Obama White House's contraceptive mandate) as irritants or threats. This is a great flaw in the liberal vision, because whatever role government plays in prosperity, transfer payments are not a sufficient foundation for middle-class success." Ross Douthat in the New York Times.

CAPRETTA AND LEVIN: Why Obamacare is still no sure thing. "Talk of the law's inevitability is intended to pressure these governors into implementing it on the administration's behalf. But states still have two key choices to make that together will put them in the driver's seat: whether to create state health-insurance exchanges, and whether to expand Medicaid. They should say 'no' to both ... Running the exchanges would be an administrative nightmare for states, requiring a complicated set of rules, mandates, databases and interfaces to establish eligibility, funnel subsidies, and facilitate purchases. All of this would have to take place under broad and often incoherent statutory requirements and federal regulations that have yet to be written." James C. Capretta and Yuval Levin in the Wall Street Journal.

KELLER: Honey, I shrunk the Pentagon. "[I]magine you are the new secretary of defense, and, wow, has Secretary Panetta left you a full docket...It's easy to overlook in all that excitement, but your best opportunity to make a major contribution to the security of your country is none of the above. It is the unglamorous, unpopular, unfinished business of right-sizing our defense budget, without putting us at grave risk." Bill Keller in the New York Times.

BIGGS AND RICHWINE: The truth about federal pay. "Should federal workers get a raise? With salaries and benefits paid to the government's civilian workers totaling $271 billion in 2011, deciding whether to extend the freeze enacted last year on cost-of-living increases has important budgetary consequences ... The Federal Salary Council, an advisory body of academics and leaders of public employee unions, suggested last month that federal workers are underpaid by an average of 35 percent relative to nonfederal employees." Andrew G. Biggs and Jason Richwine in .

DIONNE: Obama and the end of decline. "Obama should take that opening to relieve an anxiety felt across the partisan and ideological divides. For much of the last decade, Americans of very different stripes have been haunted by the fear that our country is in decline. If Obama is looking for a single, unifying objective, it should be to make sure that by the time he leaves office, the vast majority of Americans will have abandoned their declinist fears. He should want conservatives and Republicans, no less than liberals and Democrats, to perceive their nation as on the move again." E. J. Dionne in .

Top long reads

Sohrab Ahmari examines the rise of censorship and free-speech restriction on university campuses: "At Yale University, you can be prevented from putting an F. Scott Fitzgerald quote on your T-shirt. At Tufts, you can be censured for quoting certain passages from the Quran. Welcome to the most authoritarian institution in America: the modern university — 'a bizarre, parallel dimension,' as Greg Lukianoff, president of the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, calls it. Mr. Lukianoff, a 38-year-old Stanford Law grad, has spent the past decade fighting free-speech battles on college campuses. The latest was last week at Fordham University, where President Joseph McShane scolded College Republicans for the sin of inviting Ann Coulter to speak."

Mistakes you've made before made on the international stage interlude: Taliban spokesperson uses "CC" instead of "BCC." Accidentally discloses entire Taliban mailing list.

Got tips, additions, or comments? .

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The austerity crisis

Tax increases are a necessary part of the deal, Pelosi says. "House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) said in an interview airing Sunday that tax increases must be part of any deal to avert the looming 'fiscal cliff.' Asked by ABC's Martha Raddatz whether she would accept a deal that capped deductions for high earners but left rates as they are, Pelosi said it would be unacceptable. 'What you just described is a formula in a blueprint for hampering our future,' Pelosi said. 'Just to close loopholes is far too little money.'" Aaron Blake in .

A 'fiscal cliff,' by any other name, spells 'austerity'. "Come January, the United States might careen off the fiscal cliff. Or start rolling down the fiscal slope. Or, in a worst-case scenario, find itself staggering amid the hot ashes of a debtpocalypse ... Many politicians and pundits in Washington are terrified of it, and President Obama and Congressional leaders met Friday to publicly kick off a series of negotiations to avoid it. But that does not mean that anyone can quite agree on what to call it. Indeed, in Washington, vigorous semantic debate has sprung up alongside the heated policy debate. And a thousand tortured metaphors have bloomed."Annie Lowrey in the New York Times.

The uneven bite of curbing tax deductions. "Limiting personal income-tax deductions and other federal tax breaks, an idea gaining momentum as part of a fix for America's budget crisis, would hit some parts of the country harder than others, with a series of high-income blue states leading the way...If that happens, taxpayers in relatively affluent states with higher home prices and state and local taxes could see their tax bill rise significantly, depending how the limits are designed. That in turn is likely to affect how the concept is greeted by lawmakers." Alan Zibel and John D. McKinnon in the Wall Street Journal.

AARP says no cuts to Social Security, Medicare for retirees. "AARP, the lobbying powerhouse for older Americans, last year made a dramatic concession. Amid a national debate over whether to overhaul Social Security, the group said for the first time it was open to cuts in benefits ... [T]his time around, as Washington debates how to tame the ballooning federal debt, AARP is flatly opposed to any benefit reductions for the nation's retirees. AARP's rejection of any significant changes to the nation's safety net could be a major factor as policymakers seek a deal to put the government's finances in order through raising taxes and cutting spending on federal programs, possibly including popular entitlements such as Medicare and Social Security." Michael A. Fletcher and Zachary A. Goldfarb in .

Will Paul Ryan bridge the gap between a compromise and the House GOP? "[W]hile the campaign trappings and the high profile of the national campaign are behind him, Mr. Ryan now finds himself at the center of one of the biggest fiscal negotiations in a generation. Speaker John A. Boehner has tapped Mr. Ryan, who has returned to his post as the House Budget Committee chairman after an unsuccessful run for vice president, to help strike a deal to avoid big tax increases and spending cuts by the end of the year, and to bring along fellow Republicans." Jennifer Steinhauer in the New York Times.

Stocking the Cabinet

President may announce some picks in just a week or two. "President Barack Obama, who is on a four-day trip through Asia, is reviewing material on reshaping his cabinet and is on track to announce some of his picks as early as the week after Thanksgiving, people familiar with his plans said. The president's top focus is on finding successors for secretaries who are preparing to leave the administration, including the secretaries of state and the Treasury, these people said. He also must fill the positions of some top West Wing advisers who are poised to depart." Peter Nicholas and Carol E. Lee in the Wall Street Journal.

All I want for Christmas interlude: "Projecteo," a thumb-size projector of Instagram photos.

The Republican re-think

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GOP plans to neuter right wing's influence in congressional primaries. "Read their lips: no more Todd Akins. In the wake of the GOP's Election Day beatdown, influential Republican senators say enough's enough: Party leaders need to put the kibosh on the kind of savage primaries that yielded candidates like Akin — and crippled Republican prospects of taking the Senate in two straight election cycles...It's time, they say, for Washington bosses to be more assertive about recruiting and then defending promising candidates." Manu Raju in Politico.

Jindal: Republicans needs to stop saying 'stupid things.' "Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal (R) criticized Republican candidates on Sunday for making comments he said alienated voters and cost the party the presidency and key Senate seats. 'We don't need to demonize, and we also don't need to be saying stupid things,' Jindal, the new chairman of the Republican Governors Association, said on 'Fox News Sunday.' ... 'It's not just a marketing campaign. It's not just having better P.R. folks," Jindal said. "We're going to go and convince and fight for every single vote, showing them we are the party for the middle class, upward mobility. We don't start winning majorities and winning elections by insulting our voters.'" Brendan Sasso in the The Hill.

... But they have yet to tell their base the unpleasant news. "By now, [Wyoming] voters here are over the initial shock. The ranchers, businessmen and farmers across this deep-red state who knew, just knew that Americans would never re-elect a liberal tax-and-spender president have grudgingly accepted the reality that voters did just that. But since the election, a blanket of baffled worry has descended on conservatives here like early snow across the plains, deepening a sense that traditional, rural and overwhelmingly white states in the center of the country are losing touch with an increasingly diverse and urban American electorate." Jack Healy in the New York Times.

Why the Republicans' future might not be so bad. "The party's superstars are coming of age. The 2012 election for Republicans was sort of like the 2004 election for Democrats in terms of candidate quality ... In each case, the superstars -in-waiting for the party were one election away from making runs in their own right ... There are a historic number of GOP governors. Next year, 30 states will be run by Republicans ... Remember that when the Democratic Party found itself in the political wilderness after the 1988 election, it turned to its governors — including the boy wonder from Arkansas — for ideas on how to remake itself. And we know how that turned out." Chris Cillizza in .

From sea to shining sea

The Sisyphean task of coastal rebuilding, and the federal subsidies. "Across the nation, tens of billions of tax dollars have been spent on subsidizing coastal reconstruction in the aftermath of storms, usually with little consideration of whether it actually makes sense to keep rebuilding in disaster-prone areas. If history is any guide, a large fraction of the federal money allotted to New York, New Jersey and other states recovering from Hurricane Sandy — an amount that could exceed $30 billion — will be used the same way. Tax money will go toward putting things back as they were, essentially duplicating the vulnerability that existed before the hurricane." Justin Gillis and Felicity Barringer in the New York Times.

Fili-busting

Will Senate Democrats' filibuster reform plan change anything? Experts answer a resounding, 'Maybe.' "When the 113th Congress convenes in January, one of the first things the Senate Democratic majority is expected to do is act to reform the filibuster...So what actually is on the table? Ryan Grim at the Huffington Post reports that Democrats are coalescing around a proposal by Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.). Under that plan, bills that fail to get a majority would fail immediately, but if a bill gets between 51 and 60, it will be debated as long as a senator is on the floor speaking about it. Once debate ends, a new vote would be conducted, and the bill could pass with a simple majority." Dylan Matthews in .

Economy

This week in economic data. "Data scheduled to be released include existing home sales for October housing starts for

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October (Tuesday); weekly jobless claims; the Thomson Reuters/University of Michigan consumer sentiment index for November; leading economic indicators for October (Wednesday)." The New York Times.

Investment is falling sharply. "U.S. companies are scaling back investment plans at the fastest pace since the recession, signaling more trouble for the economic recovery. Half of the nation's 40 biggest publicly traded corporate spenders have announced plans to curtail capital expenditures this year or next, according to a review by The Wall Street Journal of securities filings and conference calls. Nationwide, business investment in equipment and software — a measure of economic vitality in the corporate sector — stalled in the third quarter for the first time since early 2009. Corporate investment in new buildings has declined." Sudeep Reddy and Scott Thurm in the Wall Street Journal.

Investors hustle before higher taxes. "Business owners and investors are rapidly maneuvering to shield themselves from the prospect of higher taxes next year, a strategy that is sending ripples across Wall Street and broad areas of the economy.All this is weighing on the broader financial markets, as worries mount about the economic drag from the combination of higher tax rates and reduced government spending set for January if President Obama and Senate Republicans cannot reach a budget compromise before then." Nathaniel Popper and Nelson D. Schwartz in the New York Times.

Music recommendations interlude: Spoon, "I Summon You," 2005.

Health Care

Apres 2012, le deluge? Lots of health care regulations coming soon. "With the national health law's political future now entrenched, a deluge of new rules is expected in the coming days and weeks as the Obama administration fleshes out the law's complex components. Most of the anticipation has been focused on rules that determine how the new state-based insurance marketplaces called exchanges will operate. But also closely awaited are decisions about how the government will tax medical devices, allot the shrinking pool of money for hospitals that treat the uninsured, and determine how birth control insurance coverage can be guaranteed for employees of religious schools, universities and charities." Jordan Rau in .

Interview: Mass. Health Policy Commission chair Stuart Altman, or the most important person you haven't heard of in health policy.

What happens when a woman is denied an abortion? "We know a fair amount about the women who obtain abortions... We know a lot less, however, about women who seek out an abortion but don't receive the service. They don't get counted in the abortion statistics. At least, not until now. A new research project at the University of California at San Francisco is studying a group of 231 women who were turned away from 30 abortion clinics across the country. Dubbed the Turnaway Project, its researchers recruited women who had shown up at an abortion clinic days after its limit on gestational period had passed. It compares those women, who carried their pregnancies to term, with others who had abortions...They found that 76 percent of the women who were denied abortions were receiving public assistance, compared with 44 percent of those who were not. Sixty-seven percent were living below the poverty line, 11 points above those who received abortions." Sarah Kliff in .

Explainer: 5 battles to watch surrounding the Affordable Care Act.

Three more states have decided not to set up health exchanges for themselves. "Georgia, Ohio and Wisconsin joined more than a dozen other states on Friday in saying they would not establish health insurance exchanges, while a handful of other states said they would take advantage of an extra month allowed by the Obama administration to make decisions." Robert Pear and Abby Goodnough in the New York Times.

Energy

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The whole truth about Superstorm Sandy and climate change. "The inconvenient truth on climate change and Sandy falls in the middle of these extreme views. It's a fuzzy, messy truth that contains many shades of gray. But it's a truth that's we're all equipped to understand. There's no need to dumb down this reality or suppose anyone will take the issue of climate change any less seriously by appreciating the many nuances in the climate change and hurricane discussion." Jason Samenow in .

Wonkbook is produced with help from Michelle Williams.

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Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
FuelFix.com

11/19/2012

PITTSBURGH — Energy companies, environmental groups, and even Hollywood stars are watching to see what decisions President Barack Obama makes about regulating or promoting natural gas drilling.

The stakes are huge. Business leaders don't want government regulations to slow the flow of hundreds of billions of dollars of clean, cheap domestic energy over the next few decades. Environmental groups see that same tide as a potential threat, not just to air and water, but to renewable energy. And on a strategic level, diplomats envision a future when natural gas helps make the U.S. less beholden to imports.

Some say the unexpected drilling boom presents historic options — and risks — for the Obama administration.

"It's a tough choice. The president is in a real bind," said Charles Ebinger, director of the energy security initiative at the Brookings Institution, a Washington, D.C., nonprofit. "I think the question is what does he want his legacy to be?"

Ebinger said that if Obama fully embraced the boom in gas drilling the nation could see "incredible" job gains that could lead to "a re-industrialization of America." Possibilities like that are tempting to any president, and perhaps even more so in the current economy.

"But really embracing this stuff is going to bring him squarely in conflict with some of his environmental supporters. It's not without some possible peril, particularly if he gets to be seen too cozy with the oil and gas folks," Ebinger said.

Hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, has made it possible to tap into deep reserves of oil and gas but has also raised concerns about pollution. Large volumes of water, along with sand and hazardous chemicals, are injected underground to break rock apart and free the oil and gas.

Environmental groups and some scientists say there hasn't been enough research on water and air pollution issues. The industry and many federal and state officials say the practice is safe when done properly, and that many rules on air pollution and disclosure of the chemicals used in fracking are being strengthened.

The Sierra Club is already trying to slow the gas rush, which began in Texas and has expanded to Pennsylvania, Colorado and other states. It's started a nationwide "Beyond Natural Gas" campaign to push for more regulation on an industry it describes as "Dirty, Dangerous and Run Amok."

"We need to avoid replacing one set of problems with a new but very different set of problems," said Michael Brune, the Sierra Club's executive director, referring to coal and natural gas. Investing in green energy makes more economic and environmental sense, he said.

The Sierra Club knows natural gas will be a part of the nation's energy future. "How much a part is a big fight right now," Brune said.

Such arguments have resonated with many environmental groups, and with actors and musicians who are lending their star power to anti-drilling efforts.

The Hollywood film Promised Land is scheduled for release in December, starring Matt Damon, with a story line about drilling from best-selling novelist Dave Eggers. But even before its release, critics pounced on the fact that some

financing for the project came from a company in the United Arab Emirates — a country that stands to lose money if the U.S. gets more of its energy needs at home.

Brune agreed that "you have to acknowledge that there are benefits to home-grown energy."

Critics say many states haven't been tough enough on the industry, which has objected to the idea of national drilling regulations. Some state officials oppose such proposals, too.

"Yes, we are concerned," said Patrick Henderson, energy executive for Pa. Gov. Tom Corbett. "Upwards of 10 federal agencies are seeking to put their proverbial nose under the tent with regard to oil and gas development." He added that federal intrusion "is a surefire way to impede job growth. We'll be vigilant of proposed federal rulemakings."

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is conducting one major national review of drilling and potential drinking water impacts, but it won't be finished until 2014.

Jack Gerard, president of the American Petroleum Institute, which lobbies for the industry in Washington, is hoping Obama's campaign rhetoric doesn't change.

"He has evolved on the oil and the gas issue, and today, he gives it a full-throated endorsement in terms of the need to produce it to create jobs, get our economy back on track," Gerard said in a postelection conference call.

Most experts agree that Obama faces four big choices about the gas boom: whether to back nationwide EPA rules; whether to keep pressuring coal-fired power plants to reduce emissions (which benefits gas as an alternative fuel); whether to allow large-scale exports of liquefied natural gas; and whether to support a national push to use compressed gas in commercial vehicles.

One expert in Texas predicted that Obama won't go to extremes.

"I don't think the administration will do anything to halt development," said Kenneth Medlock III, a professor at Rice University's Center for Energy Studies in Houston, adding that there will be "some attempts" to move regulations into federal hands.

Medlock expects Obama to keep the pressure on the coal industry, but go slowly on the natural gas export issue. The industry says exports have the potential to be highly profitable, but some members of Congress fear exports will just drive up domestic prices, depriving consumers and other industries of the benefits of cheap natural gas.

Others see an opportunity for the president to stake out a middle ground.

"A lot of the industry guys are pretty shaken by the anti-fracking movement," said Michael Shellenberger, president of the Breakthrough Institute, an Oakland nonprofit that promotes new ways to address environmental issues. "That might make them a bit more open to regulatory oversight."

Shellenberger said natural gas could also be a "big opportunity" for Obama as part of a broader campaign to address greenhouse gas emissions.

Ebinger agreed, saying that "if we really pushed tax credits to get diesel out of long-distance trucks" that could lead to massive carbon dioxide reductions. But at some point, Obama will have to make tough decisions. "I don't think the president can punt this one," he said.

Whatever Obama does, "it will definitely drive a bunch of people crazy" in the environmental community, Shellenberger

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said.

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Drilling presents Obama with historic choices
Mansfield News-Journal - Online

11/19/2012

All eyes on him as issue looms

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The stakes are huge. Business leaders don t want government regulations to slow the flow of hundreds of billions of dollars of clean, cheap domestic energy over the next few decades. Environmental groups see that same tide as a potential threat, not just to air and water, but to renewable energy. And on a strategic level, diplomats envision a future when natural gas helps make the U.S. less beholden to imports.

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Ebinger said that if Obama fully embraced the boom in gas drilling the nation could see incredible job gains that could lead to a re-industrialization of America. Possibilities like that are tempting to any president, and perhaps even more so in the current economy.

But really embracing this stuff is going to bring him squarely in conflict with some of his environmental supporters. It s not without some possible peril, particularly if he gets to be seen too cozy with the oil and gas folks, Ebinger said.

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Environmental groups and some scientists say there hasn t been enough research on water and air pollution issues. The industry and many federal and state officials say the practice is safe when done properly, and that many rules on air pollution and disclosure of the chemicals used in fracking are being strengthened.

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We need to avoid replacing one set of problems with a new but very different set of problems, said Michael Brune, the Sierra Club s executive director, referring to coal and natural gas. Investing in green energy makes more economic and environmental sense, he said.

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

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Yes, we are concerned, said Patrick Henderson, energy executive for Pa. Gov. Tom Corbett. Upwards of 10 federal agencies are seeking to put their proverbial nose under the tent with regard to oil and gas development. He added that federal intrusion is a surefire way to impede job growth. We ll be vigilant of proposed federal rulemakings.

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One expert in Texas predicted that Obama won t go to extremes.

I don t think the administration will do anything to halt development, said Kenneth Medlock III, a professor at Rice University s Center for Energy Studies in Houston, adding that there will be some attempts to move regulations into federal hands.

Medlock expects Obama to keep the pressure on the coal industry, but go slowly on the natural gas export issue. The industry says exports have the potential to be highly profitable, but some members of Congress fear exports will just drive up domestic prices, depriving consumers and other industries of the benefits of cheap natural gas.

Others see an opportunity for the president to stake out a middle ground.

A lot of the industry guys are pretty shaken by the anti-fracking movement, said Michael Shellenberger, president of the Breakthrough Institute, an Oakland nonprofit that promotes new ways to address environmental issues. That might make them a bit more open to regulatory oversight.

Shellenberger said natural gas could also be a big opportunity for Obama as part of a broader campaign to address greenhouse gas emissions.

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Produced Water Market: Opportunities in the Oil, Shale and Gas Sectors in North America pr-usa.net - Online

11/19/2012

Bharat Book introduces a report "Produced Water Market: Opportunities in the Oil, Shale and Gas Sectors in North America". This report is based on 40 primary research interviews with high level industry insiders and focuses on the four sectors where the potential for water treatment technology is greatest:

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- The treatment of frac water in the shale: the current moratorium on development in the Marcellus shale is led by consumer concerns about the contamination of ground water, and represents the largest political obstacle to the fracking industry's development. How can this be overcome?

- The desalination of oil-field produced water as an alternative to off-site reinjection: In some parts of the US it is not possible to re-inject produced on-site, due to regulation and geology. Is it economically viable to desalinate produced water for reuse?

- The demand for designer water in secondary and tertiary oil recovery: most enhanced oil recovery techniques require water of a specific salinity. To what extent is this an opportunity for membrane separations technology?

- Meeting the water needs of the Canadian oil sands: extracting heavy crude and bitumen from oil sand is a thirsty process (up to 4.5 barrels of water are required for each barrel of synthetic crude oil produced). With tighter regulatory control of water abstraction for the oil sands, is there an opportunity for greater reuse?

Produced Water Market analyses each of these themes to show you the scope of the opportunities and the nature of the challenges that will need to be overcome if you are to succeed in this sector. It takes a comprehensive look at the background to the market, including the regulatory drivers, the technologies, the supply chain, and the companies involved .

Who should read this report?

For water companies there is a huge business opportunity from the increased need for water treatment solutions such as chemicals and filtration. Produced Water Market will advise you how to partner up with operators in the oil and gas sectors, so that your water treatment products enjoy an increased market share. This is essential reading both for those wishing to expand their business into the produced water market, and for existing incumbents who want to increase their market share and get ahead of their competitors.

For gas operators in the hydraulic fracturing sector, there is currently no dominant player for advanced water treatment the market is wide open. Many companies, both established and emerging, are jostling for position and trying to increase their market share. The US is several years ahead of the global market in terms of developing unconventional gas streams, so is paving the way in terms of technological advances and regulation.This report will show you how to play the market in this crucial period of development, helping you to identify the best opportunities for your business over the next two years.

For oil companies, the volumes of water produced as a result of drilling are tremendous and treatment is costly. Produced

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

Water Market is your indispensible guide to increasing the efficiency of water treatment whilst controlling the cost to your business. This can only be achieved through an understanding of the new technologies, and which are most suited to your particular extraction methods.

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PRODUCED WATER MARKET

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EPA study on fracking could prove valuable commodity
Williamsport Sun-Gazette - Online

11/19/2012

Americans have been drilling wells for oil and gas for more than a century and a half. Hydraulic fracturing - or fracking - has been in use to augment well production for decades.

Yet it has been only during the past few years that a gusher of propaganda about fracking has surfaced.

Incredibly, some public officials, such as those in New York state, have allowed it to dictate policy.

What about the facts on fracking and other oil and gas industry practices?

A variety of studies indicate there is little or no danger of groundwater being contaminated by chemicals used in fracking, as the industry points out.

Nevertheless, the Environmental Protection Agency has launched a comprehensive study of fracking.

Recently, EPA official George Paulson said a progress report on the study should be released by the end of this year. A final report is due in 2014, he added.

Good. The EPA's progress report should give scientists, the gas and oil industry, and those worried about fracking opportunities to check the agency's methodology.

EPA officials, sometimes accused of bowing to the demands of radical environmentalists rather than basing policy on science, should welcome the oversight.

There indeed are some valid concerns about fracking, primarily involving well casings used to keep chemicals out of groundwater. But rejecting the practice altogether, in view of what appears to be an excellent environmental record, makes no sense.

The EPA study should provide solid, science-based guidance that will safeguard the environment while allowing Americans to get at the gigantic supplies of natural gas underneath our feet.

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Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
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Sunday - 11/18/2012, 8:08am ET

FILE - In this July 27, 2011 file photo, Range Resources site manager Don Robinson stands near the well head by the drill that goes into the shale at a well site in Washington, Pa. Energy companies and environmental groups are both wondering how President Barack Obama's reelection will impact the boom in shale natural gas drilling. (AP Photo/Keith Srakocic, File)

By KEVIN BEGOS

Associated Press

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The Associated Press

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November 17, 2012 8:57 pm • Associated Press

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Whatever Obama does, "it will definitely drive a bunch of people crazy" in the environmental community, Shellenberger said.

Recommendations

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

President Obama is being watched from both sides on whether he will regulate or promote fracking

Review - Online, The

11/19/2012

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Gas drilling dilemma in U.S.
Norman Transcript - Online, The

11/19/2012

Nation/World

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Nation/World

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices- Watertown Public Opinion: Ap Business Watertown Public Opinion - Online

11/19/2012

Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices

Keith Srakocic

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FILE - In this July 27, 2011 file photo, Range Resources site manager Don Robinson stands near the well head by the drill that goes into the shale at a well site in Washington, Pa. Energy companies and environmental groups are both wondering how President Barack Obama's reelection will impact the boom in shale natural gas drilling. (AP Photo/Keith Srakocic, File)

Posted: Saturday, November 17, 2012 8:57 pm | Updated: 11:19 pm, Sun Nov 18, 2012.

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Associated Press

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Posted in Ap business

on

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Updated: 11:19 pm.

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11/19/2012

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November, 18 2012 5:14 pm

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11/19/2012

The Enid News and Eagle, Enid, OK

November 17, 2012

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By Kevin Begos

Associated Press

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November 17, 2012

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State, national, world

In unusual CIA case, FBI detoured from usual path

The way the FBI responded to a cyberstalking complaint that led to the downfall of ex-CIA Director David Petraeus was the exception, not the rule.

November 18, 2012

1 Photo

Congress to investigate Benghazi 'talking points'

Lawmakers want to know why a final draft of the Obama administration's now-discredited "talking points" omitted an early CIA conclusion that terrorists were involved in the attack on a U.S. diplomatic post.

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1 Photo

Public nudity ban eyed in fed-up San Francisco

San Francisco may be getting ready to shed its image as a city where anything goes, including clothing.

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November 17, 2012

1 Photo

Crave a Twinkie? The price is going up fast online

Contrary to popular belief, Twinkies don't last forever. Most bought in stores Friday carry an expiration date of early December,

November 17, 2012

1 Photo

Officials: Vets' float crossed track after signals

It was the second of two floats carrying veterans in Thursday's parade in Midland. The first was exiting the tracks when

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the warning bells and signals were activated, 20 seconds before the accident, according to the National Transportation Safety Board. The second float didn't enter the tracks until several seconds after the warning system went off, the NTSB said. By that time, the guardrail was lowering.

November 17, 2012

4 Photos

2 Stories

Coast Guard: Body found near burned Gulf oil rig

The news came shortly after the Coast Guard suspended a 32-hour-long search for two workers missing after the fire erupted.

November 17, 2012

2 Photos

Moonshine makers set up shop in Georgia city hall

The clanking of the still and the smell of corn and alcohol fill the room several yards and a few interior walls away from the offices of the city clerk, the mayor and other officials running the town about 60 miles north of Atlanta.

November 17, 2012

1 Photo

Fallin delays decision on Okla. insurance exchange

Fallin last year rejected $54 million in federal grant money to establish a state exchange.

November 16, 2012

1 Photo

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Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
Jamestown Sun - Online, The

11/19/2012

Published November 18, 2012, 12:00 PM

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By:

Associated Press, The Jamestown Sun

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KSWO-TV - Online

11/19/2012

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Santa Maria Times - Online

11/19/2012

2012-11-17T18:57:42Z 2012-11-18T21:05:31Z Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices

The Associated Press

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November 17, 2012 6:57 pm • Associated Press

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Recommendations

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KCBD-TV - Online

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Jackson Sun - Online

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Written by

KEVIN BEGOS

Associated Press

Filed Under

News

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11/18/2012

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The Associated Press

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November 17, 2012 6:36 pm • Associated Press

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International Daily News - Online

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2012-11-18 02:40:41

Web Editor:

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KEVIN BEGOS,Associated Press

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Aspen Times - Online

11/18/2012

Sunday, November 18, 2012

Kevin BegosThe Associated PressAspen, CO Colorado

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By Anonymous

The Associated Press

Posted Nov 17, 2012 @ 11:31 PM

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Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
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Keith Srakocic

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FILE - In this July 27, 2011 file photo, Range Resources site manager Don Robinson stands near the well head by the drill that goes into the shale at a well site in Washington, Pa. Energy companies and environmental groups are both wondering how President Barack Obama's reelection will impact the boom in shale natural gas drilling. (AP Photo/Keith Srakocic, File)

Posted: Saturday, November 17, 2012 9:57 pm | Updated: 12:04 am, Sun Nov 18, 2012.

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Associated Press

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4:30 PM, Nov 17, 2012

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By KEVIN BEGOS , Associated Press

November 17, 2012

FILE - In this July 27, 2011 file photo, Range Resources site manager Don Robinson stands near the well head by the drill that goes into the shale at a well site in Washington, Pa. Energy companies and environmental groups are both wondering how President Barack Obama's reelection will impact the boom in shale natural gas drilling. (AP Photo/Keith Srakocic, File)

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Sierra Club's executive director, referring to coal and natural gas. Investing in green energy makes more economic and environmental sense, he said.

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E-Brief

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
WGEM-TV Online

11/18/2012

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Associated Press

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

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WHEC-TV - Online

11/18/2012

Posted at: 11/18/2012 12:05 PM

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Star-Beacon - Online

11/18/2012

National News

November 18, 2012

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National News

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November 18, 2012

Holiday red-ribbon campaign plugs Ohio road safety

Law enforcers around Ohio plan more than 9,700 hours of enforcement during the holidays, including 23 sobriety checkpoints statewide.

November 18, 2012

McAfee warns consumers of the '12 Scams of Christmas'

Operating on the theory that forewarned is forearmed, McAfee is exposing what it calls it "Top 12 Scams of Christmas" that criminals plan to use to rip off consumers as they shop online this holiday season.

November 17, 2012

1 Photo

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

From Connery to Craig, 007 style mirrored the times

The 007 movie franchise has turned 50 with the release of "Skyfall," one of the best in the series that's already breaking box-office records overseas.

November 17, 2012

1 Photo

Ohio won't set up state health care exchange

Ohio won't set up its own health insurance exchange but is instead opting for a partnership with the federal government to run the new online market under President Barack Obama's health care law.

November 17, 2012

Ohio unemployment rate drops again, below US rate

Ohio's unemployment rate inched downward again in October, the state Department of Job and Family Services said Friday.

November 17, 2012

VIDEO: Robots show off flips and wrestling moves

At a robot show in Mexico City, prototypes showed off their moves to a crowd of students and tech scouts. While some robots were trained as medical aids, others performed gymnastics and sumo wrestling.

November 17, 2012

1 Photo

Closure decision expected today from Hostess Brands

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

Stakes high as drilling for natural gas presents Obama with historic choices »
Cumberland Times-News
Cumberland Times-News - Online

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KEVIN BEGOS

Associated Press

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Courier - Online, The

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The Associated Press

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Recommendations

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

Historic choices on horizon
Durango Herald - Online, The

11/18/2012

Associated Press

Article Last Updated: Saturday, November 17, 2012 8:11pm

Keith Srakocic/Associated Press file photo

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Asbury Park Press - Online

11/18/2012

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7:48 PM,

Nov 17, 2012

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11/18/2012

The Associated Press

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WTRF-TV - Online

11/18/2012

By KEVIN BEGOS

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By KEVIN BEGOS

Associated Press

Posted: Sunday, November 18, 2012 12:01 a.m.

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AP Photo/Keith Srakocic, File

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

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Summit Daily News - Online

11/18/2012

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November, 17 2012 3:15 pm

Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices

The Associated Press

Range Resources site manager Don Robinson stands near the well head by the drill that goes into the shale at a well site in Washington, Pa., in July 2011. Energy companies and environmental groups are both wondering how President Barack Obama's re-election will impact the boom in shale natural gas drilling.

AP Photo / Keith Srakocic, File

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State Journal - Online, The

11/18/2012

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WRAL-TV - Online

11/18/2012

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President Barack Obama faces historic natural gas drilling choice - 11/17/2012 10:55 PM MST Denver Post - Online, The

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WVNS-TV - Online

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11/18/2012

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By Kevin Begos

Associated Press

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Wilmington Star-News - Online

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By KEVIN BEGOS

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Lexington Dispatch - Online, The

11/18/2012

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Jamestown Sun - Online, The

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The Associated Press

Published November 17, 2012

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KTAR-AM - Online

11/18/2012

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Posted at: 11/18/2012 12:05 PM

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11/18/2012

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Alexandria Daily Town Talk - Online

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Range Resources site manager Don Robinson is seen in July 2011 near the well head at a drilling site in Washington, Pa. Range Resources and other energy companies and environmental groups are wondering how President Barack Obama's re-election will affect the boom in shale natural gas drilling. / AP

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Natural Gas Drilling Presents Historic Options And Risks For President Obama
Huffington Post, The

11/18/2012

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10. Optometrists

Percent increase: 33.1 percent Total new jobs (2010-2020): 11,300 Median income: $94,990 States with the most jobs per capita: Hawaii, North Dakota, Montana Optometrists specialize in the care of eyes and vision. Their responsibilities include diagnosing eye injuries and diseases, as well as prescribing glasses and contact lenses. In order to practice, they are required to have a Doctor of Optometry degree, presently awarded by just 20 accredited programs, and must be licensed by the National Boards in Optometry. Those who meet these qualifications are often extremely well-compensated: the top 10% of optometrists earned in excess of $166,400. With vision problems becoming more frequent as people grow older, the number of optometrists is expected to rise by 33.1% between 2010 and 2020. Read more at 24/7 Wall St.

9. Occupational Therapists

Percent increase: 33.5 percent Total new jobs (2010-2020): 36,400 Median income: $72,320 States with the most jobs per capita: Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire "Occupational therapists treat patients with injuries, illnesses, or disabilities through the therapeutic use of everyday activities. They help patients develop, recover, and improve the skills needed for daily living and working," according to the BLS. Becoming an occupational therapist requires a master's degree, which generally takes two years to complete. The number of occupational therapists is expected to reach 145,200 by 2020, as an aging baby-boomer generation looks to maintain its independence and stay active. Read more at 24/7 Wall St.

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Percent increase: 35.9 percent Total new jobs (2010-2020): 22,000 Median income: $82,040 States with the most jobs per capita: Montana, Colorado, Iowa "Occupational therapists treat patients with injuries, illnesses, or disabilities through the therapeutic use of everyday activities. They help patients develop, recover, and improve the skills needed for daily living and working," according to the BLS. Becoming an occupational therapist requires a master's degree, which generally takes two years to complete. The number of occupational therapists is expected to reach 145,200 by 2020, as an aging baby-boomer generation looks to maintain its independence and stay active. Read more at 24/7 Wall St.

7. Medical Scientists, Except Epidemiologists

Percent increase: 36.4 percent Total new jobs (2010-2020): 36,400 Median income: $76,700 States with the most jobs per capita: Massachusetts, California, Washington Though the roles of medical scientists vary from job to job, all study biological systems to understand their effects on human health. Medical scientists often work for the federal government, at research universities or in the private sector. By 2020, the number of medical scientists is projected to increase to more than 136,000, as the population of the United States grows and ages and the demand for prescription drugs rises. Educational requirements are quite high, with most positions asking for either a doctorate or a medical degree. The annual pay of the top 10% of medical scientists was $142,800. Read more at 24/7 Wall St.

6. Audiologists

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Percent increase: 36.8 percent Total new jobs (2010-2020): 4,800 Median income: $66,660 States with the most jobs per capita: New Mexico, Colorado, West Virginia Audiologists treat patients who have problems with their hearing, balance or ears. A doctoral degree is necessary, as is a state license, though exact requirements differ by state. Explaining projected job growth, the BLS notes that "hearing loss increases as people age, so an aging population is likely to increase demand for audiologists." There are not very many audiologists, and a projected 36.8 percent increase in jobs would bring the total number of audiologists to 17,800 by the end of the decade. Annual salaries exceeded $102,210 for the top 10 percent of audiologists. Read more at 24/7 Wall St.

5. Dental Hygienists

Percent increase: 37.7 percent Total new jobs (2010-2020): 68,500 Median income: $68,250 States with the most jobs per capita: Michigan, Utah, Idaho From 2010 to 2020, the number of dental hygienists is projected to rise by 37.7 percent to more than 250,000. Factors driving increased demand for this occupation include ongoing research linking oral health to general health, as well as an aging population keeping more of its teeth. Dental hygienists typically do not need a professional degree or previous work experience, though they often need an associate's degree and a license. Typical job responsibilities include cleaning teeth and taking dental X-rays. Read more at 24/7 Wall St.

4. Physical Therapists

Percent increase: 39.0 percent Total new jobs (2010-2020): 77,400 Median income: $76,310 States with the most jobs per capita: Rhode Island, Vermont, Maine Physical therapists assist patients by helping to address and correct dysfunctional movement and pain. They are required to have a postgraduate professional degree, typically a Doctor of Physical Therapy, and a license. Those completing these prerequisites join one of the fastest-growing professions in the country -- by 2020, the number of positions is expected to rise by 39 percent. The BLS states that "demand for physical therapy services will come, in large part, from the aging baby boomers, who are staying active later in life than previous generations did." The top 10 percent of physical therapists earned more than $107,920. Read more at 24/7 Wall St.

3. Market Research Analysts And Marketing Specialists

Percent increase: 41.2 percent Total new jobs (2010-2020): 116,600 Median income: $60,570 States with the most jobs per capita: Delaware, Massachusetts, New York Market research analysts work in most industries, monitoring and forecasting marketing and sales trends, as well as collecting and analyzing data on their companies' products or services. To become a market research analyst, a bachelor's degree is typically required, though many analysts have a master's degree. Citing increases in the use of market research across all industries, the BLS projects the number of positions in the field will rise to almost 400,000 by 2020. Top-earning market research analysts made more than $111,440 annually. Read more at 24/7 Wall St.

2. Diagnostic Medical Sonographers

Percent increase: 43.5 percent Total new jobs (2010-2020): 23,400 Median income: $64,380 States with the most jobs per capita: Rhode Island, Florida, South Dakota Diagnostic medical sonographers work in hospitals and other facilities, conducting ultrasounds on patients and analyzing

the resulting images. The BLS projects an increase of 43.5 percent in the number of positions between 2010 and 2020, which would raise the total number of such jobs to 77,100. Explaining the driving factors behind the growth, the BLS states that "as ultrasound technology evolves, it will be used as a substitute for procedures that are costly, invasive or expose patients to radiation." Sonographers typically need an associate's degree, and many employers prefer candidates to have professional certification. The top 10 percent of sonographers made more than $88,490 annually Read more at 24/7 Wall St.

1. Biomedical Engineers

Percent increase: 61.7 percent Total new jobs (2010-2020): 9,700 Median income: $81,540 States with the most jobs per capita: Massachusetts, Utah, Minnesota The work of biomedical engineers typically involves designing or maintaining biomedical equipment, such as artificial organs and X-ray machines. These jobs often require a great deal of technical knowledge in fields such as biology, engineering, math and chemistry. Because of this, a bachelor's degree is typically needed. The professional requirements come with impressive compensation. The median income for such jobs was $81,540 and the top 10 percent earned more than $126,990. Between 2010 and 2020, the number of biomedical engineers is projected to rise by 61.7 percent, more than four times the projected growth rate for all jobs, which is 14 percent. To explain its growth projections for the profession, the BLS cites the baby boomer generation's growing demand for biomedical devices and procedures as it "seeks to maintain its healthy and active lifestyle." Read more at 24/7 Wall St.

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Topics: Gas Drilling-Politics

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Natural-gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
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Associated Press

PITTSBURGH

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Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
Monterey County Herald - Online

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FILE - In this July 27, 2011 file photo, Range Resources site manager Don Robinson stands near the well head by the drill that goes into the shale at a well site in Washington, Pa. Energy companies and environmental groups are both wondering how President Barack Obama's reelection will impact the boom in shale natural gas drilling.

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Gas drilling boom presents Obama with historic choices on jobs, energy, environment Newser

11/18/2012

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By KEVIN BEGOS | Associated Press | Nov 17, 2012 8:57 PM CST in

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WALB-TV - Online

11/18/2012

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Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
Lodi News-Sentinel - Online

11/18/2012

Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices

Posted: Saturday, November 17, 2012 1:58 pm

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Associated Press

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Posted in Nation

on

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Please avoid obscene, vulgar, lewd, racist or sexually oriented language.

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KTEN-TV - Online

11/18/2012

By KEVIN BEGOS

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Loophole Lets Toxic Oil Water Flow Over Indian Land

Npr |

November 15, 2012 - 2:15pm

| By Elizabeth Shogren

Dirty water from the oil wells flows through oil-caked pipes into a settling pit where trucks vacuum off the oil. A net covers the pit to keep out birds and other wildlife. Streams of this waste water flow through the reservation and join natural creeks and rivers.

The air reeks so strongly of rotten eggs that tribal leader Wes Martel hesitates to get out of the car at an oilfield on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming. He already has a headache from the fumes he smelled at another oilfield.

Martel is giving me a tour of one of a dozen oil and gas fields on the reservation. These operations have the federal government's permission to dump wastewater on the land – so much that it creates streams that flow into natural creeks and rivers. And this water contains toxic chemicals, including known carcinogens and radioactive material, according to documents obtained by NPR through Freedom of Information Act requests.

The fumes hitting Martel's nose are hydrogen sulfide, which can be deadly. So Martel makes sure the wind is at his back before walking over to a pit the size of several tennis courts. Pipes are emptying dirty brown water that came up from oil wells into the pit, which is completely covered in goopy black oil.

The oil is supposed to float to the surface, and then a truck will vacuum it up. Any solid stuff should fall on the bottom of the pit, before the water rushes out and forms a stream. But there are still chemicals in the water—some from the earth, some from the oil and some the companies add to make the oil flow faster.

About a half-mile from the pit, Martel stops the car on a bridge over that stream of murky gray water. A shiny film covers the water in some places.

"I wish a lot of people could see this," says Martell, the vice chairman of the Eastern Shoshone Business Council, the tribal government. "This is something that's going on in the reservation: This don't look too cool."

In most of the country, this would be illegal. Most oilfields re-inject wastewater far underground, where it cannot cause harm.

So why is this wastewater being released into a desert wilderness of sage-brush-covered foot hills and sand stone cliffs

that blaze with reds and oranges?

The few cows grazing nearby provide a clue.

"You can see the tracks into the water here," says Martel. "This is one of their watering holes."

Inside EPA, Distress Over Dumping Loophole

Without the wastewater, this area would be bone dry most of the year.

In the 1970s, when the Environmental Protection Agency was banning oil companies from dumping their wastewater, ranchers, especially in Wyoming, made a fuss. They argued that their livestock needs water, even dirty water.

So the EPA made an exception, a loophole, for the arid West. If oil companies demonstrate that ranchers or wildlife use the water, the companies can release it.

Off the reservation, Western states get to decide what oil companies must do with wastewater; over time, states' rules have become stricter than the EPA's. Some states have all but outlawed dumping.

But on the Wind River Reservation, the EPA controls whether companies can release wastewater on a case-by-case basis.

The EPA refused multiple requests for interviews, but in a statement, the agency said it was evaluating the permits it gives some of the companies to expel this water on the reservation.

"EPA is reviewing new information associated with these permits and intends to meet with the Tribes in upcoming weeks to discuss next steps," the statement reads.

The responses to NPR's two Freedom of Information Act requests include emails between staffers, correspondence with the companies, results of water-quality tests, the permits, and documents justifying each permit. Most of this information had not been public before.

The documents show hints of mutiny inside the EPA. Some EPA staffers clearly are appalled about the wastewater releases.

One wrote in an email to colleagues: "Can we get together and discuss a strategic approach for sending our message of concern? I have attached pictures of this ridiculousness."

Another staffer warns that the chemicals in the water could have "irrevocable human health and environmental impacts."

The documents also show recent detective work that some EPA staffers did to try figure out what chemicals companies are putting in the water. Their research reveals that some of the waste streams sometimes include chemicals from hydraulic fracturing, an engineering technique designed to increase the flow of wells. They also include chemicals whose warning labels clearly state "toxic to aquatic organisms," "prevent material from entering sewers or waterways," and warnings about cancer and birth defects at low levels.

The documents suggest that at least some people inside the EPA are advocating for stricter rules. But much of this debate has been kept secret. The EPA refused to give NPR 757 documents about the loophole, claiming they can be kept secret because they are between the EPA and its attorneys or among EPA staffers.

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'We Should Know Better By Now'

Experts, including scientists at the U.S. Geological Survey, say it's very rare for oilfield water to be released into drainages or streams because it nearly always contains harmful chemicals.

"It's a very uncommon situation in the United States and, I believe, most of the rest of the world," said John Veil, a retired wastewater expert at Department of Energy's Argonne National Laboratory Energy, who now works as a consultant.

In one analysis that Veil did for Argonne, he found that 98 percent of the water companies pump up with oil is re-injected deep underground. Veil says it's usually far too salty to discharge.

Some scientists were alarmed when they learned about the oilfield wastewater releases, especially given that it is happening on tribal land.

"I was shocked when I heard this." says Rob Jackson, a Duke University environmental scientist. "I was very surprised this was allowed. It's just something that we should know better by now. We should know that dumping our waste on to the surface of the ground is a bad solution."

Other experts agreed that the chemicals in the water raise concerns. However, some scientists, including staffers from the U.S. Geological Survey, felt uncomfortable commenting for the record without doing their own testing.

Jackson reviewed many of the EPA documents released to NPR, including analyses of the chemicals in the wastewater streams and warning labels for some of the chemical treatments that companies add to the wells.

He stresses that they include hazardous air pollutants such as hydrochloric acid and naphthalene and carcinogens like benzene and ethyl benzene.

"There are many things in this water that you don't want in the environment or in people's drinking water. You don't need to be a genius to know this is a bad idea," Jackson says.

He urges the EPA to consider the consequences of its policy and how it looks.

"Are we doing something on tribal lands we wouldn't allow somewhere else? I think that's something we have to be asking ourselves?"

On The Reservation, Dead Ducklings, Dangerous Fumes

Outside the reservation, Western states decide how oil field waste is handled. And their rules are stricter than the EPA's. For instance, off the reservation, the state of Wyoming requires companies to inject wastewater deep underground and out of harm's way if they've added toxic chemicals to the wells. Other states have set tougher water quality standards that have nearly eliminated these releases.

On the Wind River Reservation, these oil field wastewater streams have flowed for several decades without attracting much interest, even from the tribes, according to Wes Martel and other officials of the two tribes that share the reservation, the Eastern Shoshoni and Northern Arapaho.

"Most of our elders were very trusting, very trusting people. They were glad they had the opportunity to get some revenue. Most of them were just thinking, 'We're being watched over, and things are being taken care of,'" says Martel, 65, who was in tribal government many years ago and was elected two years ago to return to government.

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But in 2005, the Wind River Environmental Quality Commission sampled the water downstream of some of the oilfields. Researchers found toxic levels of some chemicals, stretches of streams that were lifeless and stream beds splotched with black ooze, white crystals and purple growths. It recorded water temperatures as high as 125 degrees, and found dead ducklings, according to a draft report prepared by the tribes' environmental department.

During tours of four of the oilfields earlier this fall, I witnessed visible violations of the plain language of the permits that the EPA gave these companies to discharge wastewater. For instance, I saw stream beds covered in white crystals and rock-like formations below outfall pipes. The permits prohibit visible deposits in the receiving waters or shoreline. They also prohibit any visible foam or sheen — I saw both. At the wastewater discharge site at one oil field, company officials warned us to leave after a few minutes because of the danger of respiratory distress or death from hydrogen sulfide fumes.

The companies were reluctant to talk. One agreed to meet at its oilfield on the reservation but backed out the night before. Others failed to return multiple phone calls. Houston-based Marathon Oil Corporation, which runs three oilfields on the reservation, agreed to an interview but refused to be recorded.

"As far as I know, there has never been concerns and opposition for the quality of the water that I'm aware about," says Bob Whisonant, Rocky Mountain operations manager for Marathon Oil, which has three oilfields on the reservation.

Whisonant stresses that the water from his oilfields meet EPA's requirements.

"We're really fortunate within Wyoming that the water is extremely fresh, very suitable for livestock and agriculture purposes. That's why we're able to discharge," Whisonant says.

But the EPA's permits, which are reissued every several years, tell a different story. Even the state of Wyoming, which is known to be pro-industry, questioned the fact that the EPA's requirements didn't seem to protect aquatic life. The EPA's response was that the tribes had not adopted their own water quality standards.

The EPA permits acknowledge that oilfield water may not meet the agency's own water quality criteria.

The agency requires only minimal water testing at most of the oilfields, and it does not do its own testing to verify the companies' claims; nor does it sample water quality in the streams receiving the wastewater.

In 2007, the EPA required one company to test aquatic animals to see if they'd die in the water flowing from one oilfield-- it's a standard test of water quality known as whole effluent toxicity. The minnows and bugs in the sample died within an hour. The EPA asked the company to figure out what was killing the animals and propose remedies, but it let the company go on releasing the water for years. Five years later, the company, Marathon, says it is waiting for the EPA to OK a plan to lower high levels of sulfide in the water.

Wes Martel says he's been pushing the EPA to thoroughly study the wastewater and then require the companies to purify it or inject it underground.

He worries about water quality and wildlife – and about food safety, too. Oilfield water abounds on the reservation, and the cows that graze there will eventually end up on dinner plates.

"So it really makes you wonder: What impacts is this having on not only aquatic life, but our wildlife?" Martel says.

"You've got to wonder, what types of chemicals are those beef retaining? And when that goes to the slaughterhouse, what's in your steak?"

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

Ranchers Still Want The Water

But Eastern Shoshone member Darwin Griebel, one of a handful of ranchers whose livestock use the oilfield water, pooh poohs Martel's concerns.

"Animals drink it. People aren't going to drink it. Hell with the quality of the water," says Griebel.

Griebel has known Martel for nearly 60 years, since they were in elementary school and slept over at each others' houses, but he says they don't agree on this issue.

Griebel says his cows haven't suffered health problems from drinking the water and the impurities clear up after the streams have run for a while. (The tribes' water study backs up that idea: Concentrations of various harmful chemicals tend to decrease the farther you get from the oilfields.)

What's most concerning to Griebel is that the water has been crucial to his family's business for generations. Without it, he says: "There would be no water for the cows. There would be no water for the deer, the antelope. Nothing. It would put us out of business is what it would do."

But Martel says that if the EPA does not put a stop to this, the tribes will step in.

If the oil companies say that re-injecting or cleaning the water would be so expensive that it would no longer be profitable to pump oil, Martel knows what his response will be: "Good riddance."

"We'll take it over ourselves and do it right," he says.

Martel dreams of putting tribal companies in charge of their oilfields. Then the tribes would get all the profits, instead of just the royalties the companies pay them. They'd also be able to protect water quality for future generations. Copyright 2012 National Public Radio. To see more, visit http://www.npr.org/.

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

Gas drilling presents Obama with difficult choices
South Bend Tribune - Online

11/18/2012

President faces four tough options in energy policy

9:10 p.m. EST, November 17, 2012

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"It's a tough choice. The president is in a real bind," said Charles Ebinger, director of the energy security initiative at the Brookings Institution, a Washington, D.C., nonprofit. "I think the question is what does he want his legacy to be?"

Ebinger said that if Obama fully embraced the boom in gas drilling the nation could see "incredible" job gains that could lead to "a re-industrialization of America." Possibilities like that are tempting to any president, and perhaps even more so in the current economy.

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Obama faces big drilling decisions
Times Leader - Online

11/18/2012

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By KEVIN BEGOS, Associated Press

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

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San Jose Mercury News - Online

11/18/2012

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Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
New Canaan News - Online

11/18/2012

KEVIN BEGOS, Associated Press Updated 11:22 a.m., Saturday, November 17, 2012

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Sentinel & Enterprise - Online

11/18/2012

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

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Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
KCTV-TV - Online

11/18/2012

Saturday, November 17, 2012 5:04 PM EST Updated:

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(AP Photo/Keith Srakocic, File). FILE - In this July 27, 2011 file photo, Range Resources site manager Don Robinson stands near the well head by the drill that goes into the shale at a well site in Washington, Pa.

Associated Press

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

President Barack Obama faces historic natural gas drilling choice
Daily Camera - Online, The

11/18/2012

Companies, celebrities, activists align

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

Gas drilling presents Obama with difficult choices
WXIN-TV - Online

11/18/2012

President faces four tough options in energy policy

9:10 p.m. EST, November 17, 2012

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Enquirer-Herald - Online

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Lake Wylie Pilot - Online

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
Observer-Reporter - Online

11/18/2012

Associated Press

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San Francisco Chronicle - Online

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Greenwich Time - Online

11/18/2012

KEVIN BEGOS, Associated Press Updated 10:07 p.m., Saturday, November 17, 2012

FILE - In this July 27, 2011 file photo, Range Resources site manager Don Robinson stands near the well head by the drill that goes into the shale at a well site in Washington, Pa. Energy companies and environmental groups are both wondering how President Barack Obama's reelection will impact the boom in shale natural gas drilling. Photo: Keith Srakocic / AP

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NewsOK.com (Oklahoman) - Online

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La Canada Valley Sun - Online

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

Drilling choices tough on Obama
Hutchinson News - Online

11/18/2012

Mountain lion stalks across hunter's viewfinder

Domino's Pizza will be back in Hutch

Hostess: No more sweets

SYLVIA'S SILVER LINING

Hawker Beechcraft seeks to renege on warranties

Balancing environment versus benefits is difficult.

By Kevin Begos - Associated Press

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Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
Inland Valley Daily Bulletin - Online

11/18/2012

Click photo to enlarge

FILE - In this July 27, 2011 file photo, Range Resources site manager Don Robinson stands near the well head by the drill that goes into the shale at a well site in Washington, Pa. Energy companies and environmental groups are both wondering how President Barack Obama's reelection will impact the boom in shale natural gas drilling.

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Santa Cruz Sentinel - Online

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News Tribune - Online

11/18/2012

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WSHM-TV - Online

11/18/2012

Saturday, November 17, 2012 5:03 PM EST Updated:

Saturday, November 17, 2012 7:53 PM EST

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

Gas drilling presents Obama with difficult choices
KDAF-TV - Online

11/18/2012

President faces four tough options in energy policy

8:10 p.m. CST, November 17, 2012

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Times-News - Online

11/18/2012

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Cumberland Times-News - Online

11/18/2012

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Associated Press (AP)

11/18/2012

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WCNC-TV - Online

11/17/2012

Posted on November 17, 2012 at 5:34 PM

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Lowell Sun - Online

11/17/2012

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FILE - In this July 27, 2011 file photo, Range Resources site manager Don Robinson stands near the well head by the drill that goes into the shale at a well site in Washington, Pa. Energy companies and environmental groups are both wondering how President Barack Obama's reelection will impact the boom in shale natural gas drilling.

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Milwaukee Journal Sentinel - Online

11/17/2012

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
WWTV-TV - Online

11/17/2012

Saturday, November 17, 2012 5:03 PM EST Updated:

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11/17/2012

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Connecticut Post - Online

11/17/2012

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Atlanta Journal-Constitution - Online

11/17/2012

FILE - In this July 27, 2011 file photo, Range Resources site manager Don Robinson stands near the well head by the drill that goes into the shale at a well site in Washington, Pa. Energy companies and environmental groups are both wondering how President Barack Obama's reelection will impact the boom in shale natural gas drilling. (AP Photo/Keith Srakocic, File)

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Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
Kingsport Times-News - Online

11/17/2012

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WLEX-TV - Online

11/17/2012

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WJSU-TV - Online

11/17/2012

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Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
Silver City Sun-News - Online

11/17/2012

FILE - In this July 27, 2011 file photo, Range Resources site manager Don Robinson stands near the well head by the drill that goes into the shale at a well site in Washington, Pa. Energy companies and environmental groups are both wondering how President Barack Obama's reelection will impact the boom in shale natural gas drilling.

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11/17/2012

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
KNDU-TV - Online

11/17/2012

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Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
Greenfield Daily Reporter - Online

11/17/2012

Gas drilling boom presents Obama with historic choices on jobs, energy, environment

KEVIN BEGOS Associated Press

First Posted: November 17, 2012 - 7:36 pm

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Photos:

FILE - In this July 27, 2011 file photo, Range Resources site manager Don Robinson stands near the well head by the drill that goes into the shale at a well site in Washington, Pa. Energy companies and environmental groups are both wondering how President Barack Obama's reelection will impact the boom in shale natural gas drilling. (AP Photo/Keith Srakocic, File)

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KSL-TV - Online

11/17/2012

Associated Press

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WBAL-AM - Online

11/17/2012

AP Photo/Keith Srakocic

Business Video

State-by-State

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Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
WFXT-TV - Online

11/17/2012

Saturday, November 17, 2012 5:03 PM EST Updated:

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WOKV-FM - Online

11/17/2012

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Los Angeles Local News, Weather, and TrafficGas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
KTTV-TV - Online

11/17/2012

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Redwood Times - Online

11/17/2012

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Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
San Bernardino Sun - Online

11/17/2012

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Las Cruces Sun-News - Online

11/17/2012

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Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
Ledger - Online, The

11/17/2012

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WCSC-TV - Online

11/17/2012

By KEVIN BEGOS

Associated Press

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

Gas drilling presents Obama with difficult choices
Imperial Valley Press - Online

11/17/2012

President faces four tough options in energy policy

By Kevin Begos, Of The Associated Press Allentown Morning Call

6:10 p.m. PST, November 17, 2012

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FILE - In this July 27, 2011 file photo, Range Resources site manager Don Robinson stands near the well head by the drill that goes into the shale at a well site in Washington, Pa. Energy companies and environmental groups are both wondering how President Barack Obama's reelection will impact the boom in shale natural gas drilling.

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Advertiser

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Article Preview

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Ebinger said that if Obama fully embraced the boom in gas drilling the nation could see "incredible" job gains that could lead to "a re-industrialization of America." Possibilities like that are tempting to any president, and perhaps even more so in the current economy.

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

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Morning Call - Online

11/17/2012

President faces four tough options in energy policy

9:10 p.m. EST, November 17, 2012

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St. Paul Pioneer Press - Online

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WLOX-TV - Online

11/17/2012

By KEVIN BEGOS

Associated Press

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Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
Daily Record - Online, The

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WFLX-TV - Online

11/17/2012

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

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Wichita Eagle - Online

11/17/2012

Published Saturday, Nov. 17, 2012, at 4:10 p.m.

Updated Saturday, Nov. 17, 2012, at 6:50 p.m.

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
Long Island Press - Online

11/17/2012

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WREG-TV - Online

11/17/2012

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

Wenn das Leitungswasser Feuer fängt
ZollernAlbkurier

11/17/2012

Fracking ist in den USA trotz großer Umweltschäden weit verbreitet - Obama fordert schärfere Regeln

Samstag, 17. November 2012

von

PETER DE THIER

Anzeige

Nach Ansicht der Internationalen Energieagentur IEA werden die USA in weniger als acht Jahren Saudi Arabien überholen und auf der Liste der weltgrößten Ölproduzenten erstmals den Spitzenrang belegen. Möglich ist die dramatische Aufholjagd der Amerikaner wegen der wachsenden Beliebtheit von "Fracking". Präsident Barack Obama will nun sicherstellen, dass die hoch umstrittene Fördermethode schärfer reguliert wird.

Umweltorganisationen klagen seit Jahren, und Bürger sind über Fernsehbilder aus New York und Pennsylvania empört, wo Trinkwasser wegen des hohen Methangehalts sogar explodieren kann. Doch je größer in den USA der Widerstand gegen Fracking wird, desto energischer drängen die Energiekonzerne darauf, Standorte zum Einsatz der umstrittenen Bohrmethode weiter auszudehnen. In 18 US-Staaten wird zur Erdgasförderung sogenanntes "hydraulic fracturing" eingesetzt. Am häufigsten wenden Energieunternehmen die Methode im Nordosten der USA an.

Nach Angaben der Umweltorganisation Earth Justice ereigneten sich in New York und Pennsylvania während der vergangenen Jahre 15 Unfälle, sogenannte "fraccidents". Für Schlagzeilen sorgte 2011 das skurrile und zum Teil tragische Schicksal der Ortschaft Dimock in Pennsylvania. In der 1400 Einwohner Gemeinde bohrte jahrelang das texanische Unternehmen Cabot Oil and Gas. Bei einer routinemäßigen Überprüfung des Trinkwassers stellte die Umweltbehörde fest, dass dieses einen gefährlich hohen Anteil Methan enthält. Es kam zu zahlreichen Erkrankungen. Bürger berichteten, sie könnten mit einem Streichholz ihr Leitungswasser anzünden. 32 Betroffene reichten Klagen ein.

Damit konnten sie nur erreichen, dass Cabot Oil and Gas das Dorf mit Flaschenwasser versorgen musste und auf einem Gebiet von 15 Quadratkilometern nicht mehr bohren darf. Ende Juli kam es zu einem außergerichtlichen Vergleich. Cabot zahlte an die Opfer eine Entschädigung in unbekannter Höhe - hat dafür aber den Vorteil, dass der peinliche Skandal aus den Schlagzeilen verschwunden ist. In anderen Gegenden in Pennsylvania und New York gehen die Bohrungen nach Schiefergas aber munter weiter.

Dass Energiekonzerne nach Belieben schalten und walten können und Fracking weitgehend unreguliert bleibt, führen Umweltorganisationen auf die enge Kollaboration zwischen Aufsichtsbehörden und der Gasindustrie zurück. Der "Clean Water Act", ein Bundesgesetz das Mindeststandards für Grund- und Trinkwasser regelt, klammert Chemikalien, die beim Fracking verwendet oder freigesetzt werden, bewusst aus. Daher bleibt es Sache der einzelnen Staaten, die Bohrungen zu regulieren. Das will Washington nun ändern. Umweltminister Ken Salazar hat neue Regeln gefordert. Er will die Ölkonzerne verpflichten, bei Bohrungen, die in Naturschutzgebieten und auf staatlichem Land durchgeführt werden, zunächst einen Antrag zu stellen und darin konkret aufzulisten, welche Chemikalien sie verwenden wollen. Dagegen stemmen sich Lobbyisten der Ölindustrie hartnäckig.

Eine Studie der angesehenen Duke Universität ist zu dem Schluss gelangt, dass Fracking eine akute Gesundheitsgefahr

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

darstellt. In Gegenden, wo gebohrt wird, liege der Methangehalt im Grundwasser durchschnittlich 17 Mal über dem Normalniveau. Trotzdem weigern sich Umweltbehörden, die Gaskonzerne an die kurze Leine zu nehmen. Nun wollen Demokraten einen Gesetzesentwurf einbringen, der die Überwachung der Gaskonzerne von den Staaten auf das Energieministerium und der Umweltbehörde EPA überträgt. Überwinden müssen sie dazu den politischen Einfluss der Ölmultis und Bohrunternehmen - die werden es ihnen nicht leicht machen.

Anzeige

Singlebörse

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
Tribune - Online, The

11/17/2012

FILE - In this July 27, 2011 file photo, Range Resources site manager Don Robinson stands near the well head by the drill that goes into the shale at a well site in Washington, Pa. Energy companies and environmental groups are both wondering how President Barack Obama's reelection will impact the boom in shale natural gas drilling.

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
Bellingham Herald - Online

11/17/2012

FILE - In this July 27, 2011 file photo, Range Resources site manager Don Robinson stands near the well head by the drill that goes into the shale at a well site in Washington, Pa. Energy companies and environmental groups are both wondering how President Barack Obama's reelection will impact the boom in shale natural gas drilling.

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WLNE-TV - Online

11/17/2012

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

Gas drilling boom presents Obama with historic choices on jobs, energy, environment
Duluth News Tribune - Online, The

11/17/2012

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Yahoo! Finance

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Dallas News | myFOXdfw.com Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices KDFW-TV - Online

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
WBBH-TV - Online

11/17/2012

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KENS-TV - Online

11/17/2012

Posted on November 17, 2012 at 4:31 PM

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WOWK-TV - Online

11/17/2012

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
KVVU-TV - Online

11/17/2012

Saturday, November 17, 2012 5:03 PM EST Updated:

Saturday, November 17, 2012 7:53 PM EST

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

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Sarasota Herald-Tribune - Online

11/17/2012

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WTVT-TV - Online

11/17/2012

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Charleston Gazette, The

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November 17, 2012

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By The Associated Press

The Associated Press

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Article Preview

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Denver Post - Online, The

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KTVB-TV - Online

11/17/2012

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Hawaii News Now

11/17/2012

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Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
Advocate - Online, The

11/17/2012

KEVIN BEGOS, Associated Press Updated 8:44 p.m., Saturday, November 17, 2012

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El Paso Inc. - Online

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Keith Srakocic

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on

Saturday, November 17, 2012 5:36 pm.

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
Las Vegas Sun - Online

11/17/2012

Saturday, Nov. 17, 2012 | 2:19 p.m.

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By The Associated Press

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Advertiser

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Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
KFMB-TV - Online

11/17/2012

Associated Press

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FOX 35 News OrlandoGas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
WOFL-TV - Online

11/17/2012

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KEVIN BEGOS | Associated Press
Journal Gazette - Online, The

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Austin American-Statesman - Online

11/17/2012

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Lexington Herald-Leader - Online

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

UCLA Headlines November 16, 2012
UCLA News

11/17/2012

UCLA Newsroom

UCLA Headlines November 16, 2012

By Office of Media Relations November 16, 2012

IN THE NEWS:

Gay Vote Helped Obama

An article in Thursday's New York Times about the pivotal role lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender voters played in President Obama's reelection cited poll research conducted by Gary Gates, a senior research fellow with the UCLA School of Law's Williams Institute, on the proportion of LGBT voters who supported the president. Gates was quoted.

The World Loves American Colleges

A blog article in Wednesday's New York Times about the increasing number of students from foreign countries studying at colleges in the United States cited figures on the number of international students at UCLA.

Rodney Dangerfield of Directors

The Los Angeles Times reported Wednesday on "The Signature Style: The Films of Mitchell Leisen," a retrospective series presented by the UCLA Film and Television Archive that begins today at the Hammer Museum.

Sleep Patterns and Aging

An article published Wednesday in Florida's Ft. Myers News-Press about the body's internal clock cited research by Gene Block, UCLA chancellor and professor of psychiatry, biobehavioral sciences and physiological science, and Christopher Colwell, UCLA professor of psychiatry and biobehavioral sciences, showing that in mice, the pattern of activity in the brain region that regulates circadian rhythms begins to decay when the animals hit middle age. Block was quoted.

UCLA Ranked Among Best Colleges

Thursday's Business Insider reports that UCLA has been rated one of the 50 best colleges in America in the publication's fourth annual poll, which is based on a survey of professionals in a variety of industries.

Who Needs Sleep?

Jerome Siegel, professor of psychiatry at the Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior at UCLA and a member of the UCLA Brain Research Institute, was interviewed Thursday on the " PBS NewsHour " about his research suggesting that sleep evolved as a way for animals to conserve energy.

Prof Named to Fracking Panel

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The Associated Press and New York's WNYC-FM reported Thursday that Dr. Richard Jackson, professor and chair of environmental health sciences at UCLA's Fielding School of Public Health, is one of three individuals appointed to review New York state's environmental report on shale gas development using hydraulic fracturing.

Electronic Medical Records

Dr. David Baron, executive director of the UCLA Arthur Ashe Student Health and Wellness Center, was interviewed Thursday on KNX-1070 AM about the increasing use of electronic records in the health care industry and what it means for patient care.

Israel-Palestine Conflict Escalates

Steven Spiegel, professor of political science and director of the UCLA Center for Middle East Development, was interviewed Tuesday on KNX-1070 AM about the escalating violence between Israel and militants in Gaza and the chances for a ceasefire.

QUOTABLE:

Stuart Gabriel

Gabriel, the Arden Realty Professor of Finance at the UCLA Anderson School of Management and director of the Ziman Center for Real Estate at UCLA, was quoted Wednesday in a Los Angeles Times article about October home sales in Southern California.

Sean Hecht

Hecht, executive director of UCLA's Environmental Law Center, is quoted today in an Inside EPA Weekly Report article about a lawsuit filed by the California Chamber of Commerce challenging a key part of the state's greenhouse gas cap-and-trade program.

Eugene Volokh

Volokh, the Gary T. Schwartz Professor of Law at the UCLA School of Law, is quoted today in a New York Times article about a federal appeals court ruling that Michigan's voter-approved ban on affirmative action is unconstitutional.

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Olympian - Online, The

11/17/2012

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Sify.com

11/17/2012

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Source :

Last Updated: Sun, Nov 18, 2012 06:15 hrs

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MSN Money (US)

11/17/2012

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Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
WHIZ-TV - Online

11/17/2012

Saturday, November 17, 2012 - 04:58 PM

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Chicago News and Weather | FOX 32 NewsGas drilling presents Obama with historic choices WFLD-TV - Online

11/17/2012

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Anchorage Daily News - Online

11/17/2012

FILE - In this July 27, 2011 file photo, Range Resources site manager Don Robinson stands near the well head by the drill that goes into the shale at a well site in Washington, Pa. Energy companies and environmental groups are both wondering how President Barack Obama's reelection will impact the boom in shale natural gas drilling.

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
Fort Worth Star-Telegram - Online

11/17/2012

Life & Arts

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A

By KEVIN BEGOS

Associated Press

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AP Photo

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Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
Ventura County Star - Online

11/17/2012

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78° Cloudy | West Palm Beach Weather

Updated: 5:06 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 17, 2012 | Posted: 4:58 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 17, 2012

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Associated Press

FILE - In this July 27, 2011 file photo, Range Resources site manager Don Robinson stands near the well head by the drill that goes into the shale at a well site in Washington, Pa. Energy companies and environmental groups are both wondering how President Barack Obama's reelection will impact the boom in shale natural gas drilling. (AP Photo/Keith Srakocic, File)

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Video from around the world

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

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Northern Star - Online, The

11/17/2012

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Keith Srakocic

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FILE - In this July 27, 2011 file photo, Range Resources site manager Don Robinson stands near the well head by the drill that goes into the shale at a well site in Washington, Pa. Energy companies and environmental groups are both wondering how President Barack Obama's reelection will impact the boom in shale natural gas drilling. (AP Photo/Keith Srakocic, File)

Posted: Saturday, November 17, 2012 3:58 pm | Updated: 6:03 pm, Sat Nov 17, 2012.

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Associated Press

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WSLS-TV - Online

11/17/2012

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Knoxville News-Sentinel - Online, The

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Sacramento Bee - Online, The

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Keith Srakocic, File / AP Photo

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WLNS-TV - Online

11/17/2012

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WFSB-TV - Online

11/17/2012

11/17/2012

Saturday, November 17, 2012 5:03 PM EST Updated:

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WAVE-TV - Online

11/17/2012

Associated Press

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WNEM-TV - Online

11/17/2012

By KEVIN BEGOS

Associated Press

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ABC News - Online

11/17/2012

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WSMV-TV - Online

11/17/2012

Saturday, November 17, 2012 5:03 PM EST Updated:

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Houston Chronicle - Online

11/17/2012

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Bradenton Herald - Online

11/17/2012

FILE - In this July 27, 2011 file photo, Range Resources site manager Don Robinson stands near the well head by the drill that goes into the shale at a well site in Washington, Pa. Energy companies and environmental groups are both wondering how President Barack Obama's reelection will impact the boom in shale natural gas drilling.

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KUSI-TV - Online

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Republican - Online, The

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KCAU-TV - Online

11/17/2012

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Associated Press

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MyMotherLode.com

11/17/2012

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

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El Paso Times - Online

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By

KEVIN BEGOS Associated Press

Associated Press

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Summit Daily News - Online

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Gainesville Sun - Online, The

11/17/2012

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Omaha World-Herald - Online

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Keith Srakocic

STF

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The Associated Press

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Associated Press

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Do not use threatening language. Talk of violence won't be tolerated.

No racial, gender or sexual-orientation name-calling.

Do not attack other commenters for their views. Do not libel or defame anyone or violate their privacy.

Keep your comments succinct and stay on topic. Comments that bear no relation to the story may be deleted.

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November 17, 2012

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By The Associated Press

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Article Preview

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11/17/2012

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

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WHNS-TV - Online

11/17/2012

Saturday, November 17, 2012 5:03 PM EST Updated:

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

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WECT-TV - Online

11/17/2012

By KEVIN BEGOS

Associated Press

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Washington Post - Online

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KPTV-TV - Online

11/17/2012

Saturday, November 17, 2012 5:03 PM EST Updated:

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WIS-TV - Online

11/17/2012

By KEVIN BEGOS

Associated Press

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Gas drilling boom presents Obama with historic choices on jobs, energy, environment
Star Tribune - Online

11/17/2012

FILE- In this April 15, 2009 file photo, an unidentified worker steps through the maze of hoses being used at a remote fracking site being run by Halliburton for natural-gas producer Williams in Rulison, Colo. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said, for the first time, on Thursday Dec. 8, 2011, that a controversial method of improving the productivity of oil and gas wells in causing groundwater pollution and contaminating water wells., commonly called fracking.

Photo: David Zalubowski, Associated Press

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Frac Sand Fever is a periodic Star Tribune series on the sand mining boom in Minnesota and Wisconsin as "hydro-fracking" revolutionizes the nation's oil and gas industry.

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Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
Daily Times - Online, The

11/17/2012

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KEITH SRAKOCIC | THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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WSOC-TV - Online

11/17/2012

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WHEC-TV - Online

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WMDT-TV - Online

11/17/2012

By KEVIN BEGOS

Associated Press

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Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
KIRO-TV - Online

11/17/2012

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Central Florida News 13 - Online

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WHBF-TV - Online

11/17/2012

By KEVIN BEGOS

Associated Press

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
News-Times - Online, The

11/17/2012

KEVIN BEGOS, Associated Press Updated 5:37 p.m., Saturday, November 17, 2012

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Gadsden Times - Online, The

11/17/2012

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KSWT-TV - Online

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WSB-TV - Online

11/17/2012

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Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
KFVS-TV - Online

11/17/2012

By KEVIN BEGOS

Associated Press

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11/17/2012

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WOI-TV - Online

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Kansas City Star - Online

11/17/2012

FILE - In this July 27, 2011 file photo, Range Resources site manager Don Robinson stands near the well head by the drill that goes into the shale at a well site in Washington, Pa. Energy companies and environmental groups are both wondering how President Barack Obama's reelection will impact the boom in shale natural gas drilling.

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Breitbart.com

11/17/2012

AP 11/17/2012 9:58:45 PM

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Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
KRXI-TV - Online

11/17/2012

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Gas drilling boom presents Obama with historic choices on jobs, energy, environment
Morning Call - Online

11/17/2012

KEVIN BEGOS Associated Press AP

3:00 p.m. EST, November 17, 2012

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

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KHOU-TV - Online

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Telegraph - Online, The

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
Tri-City Herald - Online

11/17/2012

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WAGA-TV - Online

11/17/2012

Saturday, November 17, 2012 5:03 PM EST Updated:

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Idaho Statesman - Online

11/17/2012

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By KEVIN BEGOS

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
WQOW-TV - Online

11/17/2012

By KEVIN BEGOS

Associated Press

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

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Fort Worth Star-Telegram - Online

11/17/2012

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Sky-Hi Daily News - Online

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FOX 10 News - Phoenix, AZ | KSAZ-TVGas drilling presents Obama with historic choices KSAZ-TV - Online

11/17/2012

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Saturday, November 17, 2012 5:03 PM EST Updated:

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Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
Beaumont Enterprise - Online

11/17/2012

KEVIN BEGOS, Associated Press Updated 4:37 p.m., Saturday, November 17, 2012

FILE - In this July 27, 2011 file photo, Range Resources site manager Don Robinson stands near the well head by the drill that goes into the shale at a well site in Washington, Pa. Energy companies and environmental groups are both wondering how President Barack Obama's reelection will impact the boom in shale natural gas drilling. Photo: Keith Srakocic / AP

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
WFTV-TV - Online

11/17/2012

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KAIT-TV - Online

11/17/2012

By KEVIN BEGOS

Associated Press

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

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CBSNews.com

11/17/2012

AP / November 17, 2012, 5:10 PM

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KSLA-TV - Online

11/17/2012

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Belleville News-Democrat - Online

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Vida En El Valle - Online

11/17/2012

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KOB-TV - Online

11/17/2012

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Bay News 9 - Online

11/17/2012

FILE - In this July 27, 2011 file photo, Range Resources site manager Don Robinson stands near the well head by the drill that goes into the shale at a well site in Washington, Pa. Energy companies and environmental groups are both wondering how President Barack Obama's reelection will impact the boom in shale natural gas drilling. (AP Photo/Keith Srakocic, File)

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

Fox 2 News HeadlinesGas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
WJBK-TV - Online

11/17/2012

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Saturday, November 17, 2012 5:03 PM EST Updated:

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KTIV-TV - Online

11/17/2012

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WAOW-TV - Online

11/17/2012

By KEVIN BEGOS

Associated Press

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
Vail Daily - Online, The

11/17/2012

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KFDA-TV - Online

11/17/2012

By KEVIN BEGOS

Associated Press

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WKRN-TV - Online

11/17/2012

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KTBC-TV - Online

11/17/2012

Saturday, November 17, 2012 5:03 PM EST Updated:

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Kansas City Star - Online

11/17/2012

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Salon.com

11/17/2012

Saturday, Nov 17, 2012 10:00 PM UTC

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KXXV-TV - Online

11/17/2012

By KEVIN BEGOS

Associated Press

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Denver Post - Online, The

11/17/2012

Associated Press

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FILE - In this July 27, 2011 file photo, Range Resources site manager Don Robinson stands near the well head by the drill that goes into the shale at a well site in Washington, Pa. Energy companies and environmental groups are both wondering how President Barack Obama's reelection will impact the boom in shale natural gas drilling.

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

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KATV-TV - Online

11/17/2012

By KEVIN BEGOS

Associated Press

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WVUE-TV - Online

11/17/2012

Saturday, November 17, 2012 5:03 PM EST Updated:

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NPR - Online

11/17/2012

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by The Associated Press

PITTSBURGH November 17, 2012, 05:07 pm ET

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
Times Union

11/17/2012

KEVIN BEGOS, Associated Press Updated 5:09 p.m., Saturday, November 17, 2012

FILE - In this July 27, 2011 file photo, Range Resources site manager Don Robinson stands near the well head by the drill that goes into the shale at a well site in Washington, Pa. Energy companies and environmental groups are both wondering how President Barack Obama's reelection will impact the boom in shale natural gas drilling. (Keith Srakocic / AP)

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KOLD-TV - Online

11/17/2012

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KSL-TV - Online

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By Kevin Begos

November 17th, 2012 @ 2:58pm

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EPA?fracking study offers end to noise, foes'propaganda

November 16, 2012

Salem News

Americans have been drilling wells for oil and gas for more than a century and a half. Hydraulic fracturing - or fracking - has been in use to augment well production for decades.

Yet it has been only during the past few years that a gusher of propaganda about fracking has surfaced. Incredibly, some public officials, such as those in New York state, have allowed it to dictate policy.

What about the facts on fracking and other oil and gas industry practices? A variety of studies indicate there is little or no danger of groundwater being contaminated by chemicals used in fracking, as the industry points out.

Nevertheless, the Environmental Protection Agency has launched a comprehensive study of fracking. Last week, EPA official George Paulson said a progress report on the study should be released by the end of this year. A final report is due in 2014, he added.

Good. The EPA's progress report should give scientists, the gas and oil industry, and those worried about fracking opportunities to check the agency's methodology. EPA officials, sometimes accused of bowing to the demands of radical environmentalists rather than basing policy on science, should welcome the oversight.

There indeed are some valid concerns about fracking, primarily involving well casings used to keep chemicals out of groundwater. But rejecting the practice altogether, in view of what appears to be an excellent environmental record, makes no sense. The EPA study should provide solid, science-based guidance that will safeguard the environment while allowing Americans to get at the gigantic supplies of natural gas underneath our feet.

Salem News

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Eyes on Obama over natural gas drilling policies
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11/17/2012

Eyes on Obama over natural gas drilling policies

Posted: Saturday, November 17, 2012 1:45 pm | Updated: 1:46 pm, Sat Nov 17, 2012.

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Posted in News

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Saturday, November 17, 2012 1:45 pm.

Updated: 1:46 pm.

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Facts, not fear, needed in fracking debate
Southern Illinoisan - Online

11/17/2012

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2012-11-16T01:00:00Z Facts, not fear, needed in fracking debate

Kyna Legner

thesouthern.com

Fear has always been the crutch for those who are misinformed, and this is clearly the case with groups calling for a moratorium on hydraulic fracturing in Illinois.

It's understandable why some folks could be fooled into thinking hydraulic fracturing — a process used to access oil and natural gas deposits trapped in deep shale rock — is unsafe. They're inundated daily with scary headlines about how the process will poison our water supplies or even cause the next drought, and no one wants that!

The truth, though, is the scientific and regulatory communities have strongly affirmed the safety of this important process. Here in Illinois we have more than a century's worth of experience developing oil and natural gas, and we've been using proven well completion procedures like hydraulic fracturing for decades. In fact, hydraulic fracturing has been used tens of thousands of times in our state without a single proven case of water contamination.

Across the country, hydraulic fracturing has been safely deployed more than 1.2 million times over a span of more than 60 years. And as state regulators from Alaska to Alabama and everywhere in between will tell you, there are zero confirmed cases of water contamination resulting from the process.

Federal officials and independent experts, including at the U.S. EPA, the U.S. Department of Energy and Ground Water Protection Council, have all stated hydraulic fracturing is safe and does not contaminate water supplies. Experts at MIT and Stanford have stated that geology, operating standards and regulations prevent hydraulic fracturing from interfering with groundwater.

Need more proof? Here's what Lisa Jackson, U.S. EPA administrator, said earlier this year: "In no case have we made a definitive determination that the fracking process has caused chemicals to enter groundwater."

Despite claims to the contrary, the industry is not keeping the public in the dark about the chemicals it uses during hydraulic fracturing. Anyone can view a list of the additives used during hydraulic fracturing — including on a well-by-well basis — by visiting www.fracfocus.org , a website that has been praised for "providing transparency to the American people" by the Obama administration. But it is worth noting more than 99 percent of hydraulic fracturing fluid is, in fact, water and sand.

And what about water use? Yes, as the name suggests, hydraulic fracturing requires water. But the volume is much smaller than we use for other industries, including agriculture, golf courses and even car washes. In fact, a 2009 report for the U.S. Department of Energy concluded the water required for hydraulic fracturing would be about 0.8 percent of the total water demand in a given area — and that was on the high end.

It doesn't sound so scary when the whole truth is presented, does it?

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And what will we get from continuing to allow the responsible use of this technology, which has been proven safe by experts across the country?

A recent study from IHS Global Insight projected shale gas development could support more than 60,000 jobs in our state by 2035, representing more than $4 billion in total labor income for hardworking Illinoisans. The added economic activity would also facilitate significant growth in new tax revenue.

We can also see from other states that the growth potential from shale is enormous, and if we can realize even a fraction of what those states have been able to achieve, the Illinois economy will benefit considerably.

For example, the Eagle Ford shale in Texas supported 47,000 jobs in 2011 and helped generate more than $3 billion in salaries and benefits. Development also added more than $257 million in new revenue to local governments, funding public services like schools and hospitals, and emergency responders like police and firefighters.

Our unemployment rate in Illinois is 8.8 percent — well above the national average — and our government in Springfield is suffering from a budget deficit of epic proportions. We should not turn our backs on the possibility of responsible economic growth. The facts clearly show shale development can be done safely and has the potential to grow our economy, not just in Southern Illinois but throughout the state.

A ban or moratorium on hydraulic fracturing would only serve to advance the interests of a small but vocal group of activists, desperate to sell fear because the facts are simply not on their side.

That's why our focus must be on a strong but fair regulatory regime — guided and informed by facts.

KYNA LEGNER is the field director for Illinois Energy In Depth, a research, education and public outreach campaign focusing on the responsible development of energy resources.

Recommendations

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Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
Middletown Journal - Online

11/17/2012

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AkronNewsNow.com

11/17/2012

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Chillicothe Gazette - Online

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ANALYSIS: Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
Times Herald-Record - Online

11/17/2012

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Energy companies and environmental groups are both wondering how President Barack Obama's reelection will impact the boom in shale natural gas drilling. Range Resources site manager Don Robinson stands near the well head by the drill that goes into the shale at a well site in Washington, Pa. The Associated Press

By KEVIN BEGOS

The Associated Press

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Newark Advocate - Online

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President Barack Obama waves as he leaves the White House in Washington, Saturday, Nov. 17, 2012, for a trip to Southeast Asia. / AP Photo/Manuel Balce Ceneta

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Times Leader - Online

11/17/2012

FILE - In this July 27, 2011 file photo, Range Resources site manager Don Robinson stands near the well head by the drill that goes into the shale at a well site in Washington, Pa. Energy companies and environmental groups are both wondering how President Barack Obama's reelection will impact the boom in shale natural gas drilling. (AP Photo/Keith Srakocic, File) AP

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News-Herald - Online

11/17/2012

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KFOX-TV - Online

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Dayton Daily News - Online

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Daily Journal - Online

11/17/2012

Gas drilling boom presents Obama with historic choices on jobs, energy, environment

KEVIN BEGOS Associated Press

First Posted: November 17, 2012 - 11:13 am

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Fremont News Messenger - Online

11/17/2012

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WPXI-TV - Online

11/17/2012

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Daily Record - Online, The

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Crescent-News - Online

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Associated Press Published: November 17, 2012 11:32AM

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Review - Online, The

11/17/2012

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Daily Jeffersonian - Online, The

11/17/2012

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KEVIN BEGOS

Associated Press Published: November 17, 2012 11:32AM

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Bucyrus Telegraph-Forum - Online

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Daily Journal - Online

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WTOP-FM - Online

11/17/2012

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Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
Tribune - Online

11/17/2012

Gas drilling boom presents Obama with historic choices on jobs, energy, environment

KEVIN BEGOS Associated Press

First Posted: November 17, 2012 - 11:13 am

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Record-Courier - Online

11/17/2012

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Associated Press Published: November 17, 2012 11:32AM

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WTOV-TV - Online

11/17/2012

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State Journal - Online, The

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Denver Post - Online, The

11/17/2012

KEVIN BEGOS Associated Press

Associated Press

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KTVU-TV - Online

11/17/2012

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San Antonio Express-News - Online

11/17/2012

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Evening Sun - Online, The

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Loophole Lets Toxic Oil Water Flow Over Indian Land
Northeast Indiana Public Radio

11/17/2012

Thu November 15, 2012

Loophole Lets Toxic Oil Water Flow Over Indian Land

By Elizabeth Shogren

Next image Previous image

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The air reeks so strongly of rotten eggs that tribal leader Wes Martel hesitates to get out of the car at an oil field on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming. He already has a headache from the fumes he smelled at another oil field.

Martel is giving me a tour of one of a dozen oil and gas fields on the reservation. These operations have the federal government's permission to dump wastewater on the land — so much that it creates streams that flow into natural creeks and rivers. And this water contains toxic chemicals, including known carcinogens and radioactive material, according to documents obtained by NPR through Freedom of Information Act requests.

The fumes hitting Martel's nose are hydrogen sulfide, which can be deadly. So Martel makes sure the wind is at his back before walking over to a pit the size of several tennis courts. Pipes are emptying dirty brown water that came up from oil wells into the pit, which is completely covered in goopy black oil.

The oil is supposed to float to the surface, and then a truck will vacuum it up. Any solid stuff should fall on the bottom of the pit, before the water rushes out and forms a stream. But there are still chemicals in the water — some from the earth, some from the oil, and some the companies add to make the oil flow faster.

About a half-mile from the pit, Martel stops the car on a bridge over that stream of murky gray water. A shiny film covers the water in some places.

"I wish a lot of people could see this," says Martel, the vice chairman of the Eastern Shoshone Business Council, the tribal government. "This is something that's going on in the reservation: This don't look too cool."

In most of the country, this would be illegal. Most oil fields reinject wastewater far underground, where it cannot cause harm.

So why is this wastewater being released into a desert wilderness of sagebrush-covered foothills and sandstone cliffs that blaze with reds and oranges?

The few cows grazing nearby provide a clue.

"You can see the tracks into the water here," says Martel. "This is one of their watering holes."

Inside EPA, Distress Over Dumping Loophole

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

Without the wastewater, this area would be bone dry most of the year.

In the 1970s, when the Environmental Protection Agency was banning oil companies from dumping their wastewater, ranchers, especially in Wyoming, made a fuss. They argued that their livestock needs water, even dirty water.

So the EPA made an exception, a loophole, for the arid West. If oil companies demonstrate that ranchers or wildlife use the water, the companies can release it.

Off the reservation, Western states get to decide what oil companies must do with wastewater; over time, states' rules have become stricter than the EPA's. Some states have all but outlawed dumping.

But on the Wind River Reservation, the EPA controls whether companies can release wastewater on a case-by-case basis.

The EPA refused multiple requests for interviews, but in a statement, the agency said it was evaluating the permits it gives some of the companies to expel this water on the reservation.

"EPA is reviewing new information associated with these permits and intends to meet with the Tribes in upcoming weeks to discuss next steps," the statement reads.

The responses to NPR's two Freedom of Information Act requests include emails between staffers, correspondence with the companies, results of water-quality tests, the permits, and documents justifying each permit. Most of this information had not been public before.

The documents show hints of mutiny inside the EPA. Some EPA staffers clearly are appalled by the wastewater releases.

One wrote in an email to colleagues: "Can we get together and discuss a strategic approach for sending our message of concern? I have attached pictures of this ridiculousness."

Another staffer warns that the chemicals in the water could have "irrevocable human health and environmental impacts."

The documents also show recent detective work that some EPA staffers did to try to figure out what chemicals companies are putting in the water. Their research reveals that some of the waste streams sometimes include chemicals from hydraulic fracturing, an engineering technique designed to increase the flow of wells. They also include chemicals whose warning labels clearly state "toxic to aquatic organisms," "prevent material from entering sewers or waterways," and warnings about cancer and birth defects at low levels.

The documents suggest that at least some people inside the EPA are advocating for stricter rules. But much of this debate has been kept secret. The EPA refused to give NPR 757 documents about the loophole, claiming they can be kept secret because they are between the EPA and its attorneys or among EPA staffers.

'We Should Know Better By Now'

Experts, including scientists at the U.S. Geological Survey, say it's very rare for oil field water to be released into drainages or streams because it nearly always contains harmful chemicals.

"It's a very uncommon situation in the United States and, I believe, most of the rest of the world," said John Veil, a retired wastewater expert at the Department of Energy's Argonne National Laboratory, who now works as a consultant.

In one analysis that Veil did for Argonne, he found that 98 percent of the water that companies pump up with oil is

reinjected deep underground. Veil says it's usually far too salty to discharge.

Some scientists were alarmed when they learned about the oil field wastewater releases, especially given that it is happening on tribal land.

"I was shocked when I heard this," says Rob Jackson, a Duke University environmental scientist. "I was very surprised this was allowed. It's just something that we should know better by now. We should know that dumping our waste onto the surface of the ground is a bad solution."

Other experts agreed that the chemicals in the water raise concerns. However, some scientists, including staffers from the U.S. Geological Survey, felt uncomfortable commenting for the record without doing their own testing.

Jackson reviewed many of the EPA documents released to NPR, including analyses of the chemicals in the wastewater streams and warning labels for some of the chemical treatments that companies add to the wells.

He stresses that they include hazardous air pollutants such as hydrochloric acid and naphthalene, and carcinogens like benzene and ethyl benzene.

"There are many things in this water that you don't want in the environment or in people's drinking water. You don't need to be a genius to know this is a bad idea," Jackson says.

He urges the EPA to consider the consequences of its policy and how it looks.

"Are we doing something on tribal lands we wouldn't allow somewhere else? I think that's something we have to be asking ourselves."

On The Reservation, Dead Ducklings, Dangerous Fumes

Outside the reservation, Western states decide how oil field waste is handled — and their rules are stricter than the EPA's. For instance, off the reservation, the state of Wyoming requires companies to inject wastewater deep underground and out of harm's way if they've added toxic chemicals to the wells. Other states have set tougher water quality standards that have nearly eliminated these releases.

On the Wind River Reservation, these oil field wastewater streams have flowed for several decades without attracting much interest, even from the tribes, according to Wes Martel and other officials of the two tribes that share the reservation, the Eastern Shoshoni and Northern Arapaho.

"Most of our elders were very trusting, very trusting people. They were glad they had the opportunity to get some revenue. Most of them were just thinking, 'We're being watched over, and things are being taken care of,' " says Martel, 65, who was in tribal government many years ago and was elected two years ago to return to government.

But in 2005, the Wind River Environmental Quality Commission sampled the water downstream of some of the oil fields. Researchers found toxic levels of some chemicals, stretches of streams that were lifeless, and streambeds splotched with black ooze, white crystals and purple growths. They recorded water temperatures as high as 125 degrees, and found dead ducklings, according to a draft report prepared by the tribes' environmental department.

During tours of four of the oil fields earlier this fall, I witnessed visible violations of the plain language of the permits that the EPA gave these companies to discharge wastewater. For instance, I saw streambeds covered in white crystals and rock-like formations below outfall pipes. The permits prohibit visible deposits in the receiving waters or shoreline. They also prohibit any visible foam or sheen — I saw both. At the wastewater discharge site at one oil field, company officials

warned us to leave after a few minutes because of the danger of respiratory distress or death from hydrogen sulfide fumes.

The companies were reluctant to talk. One agreed to meet at its oil field on the reservation but backed out the night before. Others failed to return multiple phone calls. Houston-based Marathon Oil Corporation, which runs three oil fields on the reservation, agreed to an interview but refused to be recorded.

"As far as I know, there has never been concerns and opposition for the quality of the water that I'm aware about," says Bob Whisonant, Rocky Mountain operations manager for Marathon Oil, which has three oil fields on the reservation.

Whisonant stresses that the water from his oil fields meets EPA's requirements.

"We're really fortunate within Wyoming that the water is extremely fresh, very suitable for livestock and agriculture purposes. That's why we're able to discharge," Whisonant says.

But the EPA's permits, which are reissued every several years, tell a different story. Even the state of Wyoming, which is known to be pro-industry, questioned the fact that the EPA's requirements didn't seem to protect aquatic life. The EPA's response was that the tribes had not adopted their own water quality standards.

The EPA permits acknowledge that oil field water may not meet the agency's own water quality criteria.

The agency requires only minimal water testing at most of the oil fields, and it does not do its own testing to verify the companies' claims; nor does it sample water quality in the streams receiving the wastewater.

In 2007, the EPA required one company to test aquatic animals to see if they'd die in the water flowing from one oil field — it's a standard test of water quality known as whole effluent toxicity. The minnows and bugs in the sample died within an hour. The EPA asked the company to figure out what was killing the animals and propose remedies, but it let the company go on releasing the water for years. Five years later, the company, Marathon, says it is waiting for the EPA to OK a plan to lower high levels of sulfide in the water.

Wes Martel says he's been pushing the EPA to thoroughly study the wastewater and then require the companies to purify it or inject it underground.

He worries about water quality and wildlife — and about food safety, too. Oil field water abounds on the reservation, and the cows that graze there will eventually end up on dinner plates.

"So it really makes you wonder: What impacts is this having on not only aquatic life, but our wildlife?" Martel says.

"You've got to wonder, what types of chemicals are those beef retaining? And when that goes to the slaughterhouse, what's in your steak?"

Ranchers Still Want The Water

But Eastern Shoshone member Darwin Griebel, one of a handful of ranchers whose livestock use the oil field water, pooh -poohs Martel's concerns.

"Animals drink it. People aren't going to drink it. Hell with the quality of the water," says Griebel.

Griebel has known Martel for nearly 60 years, since they were in elementary school and slept over at each others' houses. But he says they don't agree on this issue.

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Griebel says his cows haven't suffered health problems from drinking the water, and the impurities clear up after the streams have run for a while. (The tribes' water study backs up that idea: Concentrations of various harmful chemicals tend to decrease the farther you get from the oil fields.)

What's most concerning to Griebel is that the water has been crucial to his family's business for generations. Without it, he says: "There would be no water for the cows. There would be no water for the deer, the antelope. Nothing. It would put us out of business is what it would do."

But Martel says that if the EPA does not put a stop to this, the tribes will step in.

If the oil companies say that reinjecting or cleaning the water would be so expensive that it would no longer be profitable to pump oil, Martel knows what his response will be: "Good riddance."

"We'll take it over ourselves and do it right," he says.

Martel dreams of putting tribal companies in charge of their oil fields. Then the tribes would get all the profits, instead of just the royalties the companies pay them. They'd also be able to protect water quality for future generations.

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Transcript

MELISSA BLOCK, HOST:

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

Residents doing their own digging
Allied News - Online

11/17/2012

November 16, 2012

Residents doing their own digging

Effort under way to monitor water quality

BUTLER, LAWRENCE, MERCER COUNTIES -

Heather and David DeSuta of Worth Township, Butler County, have taken it upon themselves to learn more about fracking since a neighbor has an active well, which smelled so strongly of gas one night they filed a report.

"There's not really any communication from Shell," said Mrs. DeSuta, whose family includes their two young children.

They can see the well through the trees at the edge of their five-acre property; the drilling site is on West Liberty Road farmland owned by William and Dee Dee Drake, who have leased part of their property to Shell Exploration & Production Co., LP of Warrendale.

"I don't like having an industrial site near my house," Mrs. DeSuta said, adding she and her husband were approached by Shell to lease their land for drilling rights; they turned them down.

One night at the beginning of October, she noticed an odor outside that smelled like gas or oil, which worried her since she wasn't sure if she was supposed to smell anything coming from the drill site.

"I haven't smelled it since," she said.

She filed a report with the state Department of Environmental Protection, the Environmental Protection Agency and Shell.

Shell told her a tank had a leak while DEP said there was no leak; EPA didn't respond but the different answers have left the DeSutas confused.

"You're kind of on your own," she said of the Internet research they've been doing and trying to find others who live near an active well to compare notes. A group called Marcellus Outreach Butler has also been helpful.

Allied News also contacted DEP regarding the Drake well after the DeSutas filed their report. The odors were investigated by field staffers, who said Shell told them the smell happened during flowback before they burned the gas, said Gary Clark, DEP spokesperson.

Flowback refers to the fluid that comes back out of the well during the hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking" process, where sand, water and lubricants are pumped into the well to break up the Marcellus Shale deposits, he said.

At the Drake well, a small amount of unwanted gas was burned from the top of a tall stack, creating the odor, which is expected to be minimal to non-existent.

The DeSutas may have been able to smell the gas that night if there was little to no wind, Clark said.

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But the DeSutas are continuing to do their homework because they're concerned about how the nearby fracking will impact their property value and water supply.

Mrs. DeSuta on Oct. 24 attended a water quality monitoring workshop at Westminster College hosted by a watchdog group called Truth in Fracking Alliance of Lawrence and Mercer Counties.

"It was encouraging to see how many people turned up," she said, adding the workshop got her interested in possibly getting trained to test water quality.

Carrie Hahn, leader of Truth in Fracking, was also pleased with the 30 people who came to learn more about testing streams and creeks near where they live.

"Water quality is a big one," she said of a common concern among the attendees.

A representative from the Alliance for Aquatic Resource Monitoring, or ALLARM, based out of Dickinson College in Carlisle, also spoke, saying their group is putting together a more comprehensive website that will allow people to easily report their water testing findings.

Some Westminster students under the direction of Dr. Helen Boylan, associate professor of chemistry, are also getting involved and planning their own website, Hahn said.

"Westminster College is very active and involved to monitor air and water quality," she said, adding Boylan is applying for grants to help with testing.

Truth in Fracking expects to schedule more workshops and training sessions in the coming months. They're looking for 15 to 30 people willing to help monitor streams and creeks, especially Mercer County residents since that area is one of the last to start the fracking process, Hahn said.

She also recommends homeowners who live near an active well to test their own water using a "Tier 3" test, one step up from the test gas companies use on drill sites and neighboring properties.

For more information related to the efforts of Truth in Fracking Alliance of Lawrence and Mercer Counties, find them on Facebook or visit these websites run by the Alliance for Aquatic Resource Monitoring, or ALLARM, based out of Dickinson College in Carlisle: www.blogs.dickinson.edu/marcellusmonitoring or www.dickinson.edu/ALLARM

Marcellus Outreach Butler also has information for Butler County residents at www.marcellusoutreachbutler.org

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Local News

Business stars shine at awards

Grove City had a homemade, star-studded event on Halloween - and it was anything but frightful.

November 16, 2012

1 Photo

Ex-LHS principal cleared

Although she lost her job over allegations that she gave two former students cans of beer, the former Lakeview High School principal has not given up on the hope of serving in education, now that she has been cleared of the criminal charges.

November 16, 2012

1 Photo

Off-season in OBX good time to be a beach bum

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Access to Confidential Business Information by Eastern Research Group TMCnet.com

11/17/2012

[November 16, 2012]

Nov 16, 2012 (FIND, Inc. via COMTEX) -- SUMMARY: EPA has authorized its contractor, Eastern Research Group (ERG) of Chantilly, VA, to access information which has been submitted to EPA under all sections of the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA). Some of the information may be claimed or determined to be Confidential Business Information (CBI).

DATES: Access to the confidential data occurred on or about September 26, 2012.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For technical information contact: Leigh DeHaven, Office of Research and Development (8104R), Office of Science Policy, Environmental Protection Agency, 1200 Pennsylvania Ave. NW., [Page Number 68770] Washington, DC 20460-0001; telephone number: (202) 564-1974; fax number: (202) 565-2911; email address: dehaven.leigh@epa.gov.

For general information contact: The TSCA-Hotline, ABVI-Goodwill, 422 South Clinton Ave., Rochester, NY 14620; telephone number: (202) 554-1404; email address: TSCA-Hotline@epa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: I. General Information A. Does this notice apply to me This action is directed to the public in general. This action may, however, be of interest to all who manufacture, process, or distribute industrial chemicals. Since other entities may also be interested, the Agency has not attempted to describe all the specific entities that may be affected by this action. If you have any questions regarding the applicability of this action to a particular entity, consult the technical person listed under FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT.

B. How can I get copies of this document and other related information EPA has established a docket for this action under docket identification (ID) number EPA-HQ-OPPT-2003-0004. All documents in the docket are listed in the docket index available at http://www.regulations.gov. Although listed in the index, some information is not publicly available, e.g., CBI or other information whose disclosure is restricted by statute. Certain other material, such as copyrighted material, will be publicly available only in hard copy. Publicly available docket materials are available electronically at http://www.regulations.gov, or, if only available in hard copy, at the OPPT Docket. The OPPT Docket is located in the EPA Docket Center (EPA/DC) at Rm. 3334, EPA West Bldg., 1301 Constitution Ave. NW., Washington, DC. The EPA/DC Public Reading Room hours of operation are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding legal holidays. The telephone number of the EPA/DC Public Reading Room is (202) 566-1744, and the telephone number for the OPPT Docket is (202) 566-0280. Docket visitors are required to show photographic identification, pass through a metal detector, and sign the EPA visitor log. All visitor bags are processed through an X-ray machine and subject to search. Visitors will be provided an EPA/DC badge that must be visible at all times in the building and returned upon departure.

II. What action is the agency taking Under EPA Contract Number EP-C-12-021, contractor ERG of 14555 Avion Parkway, Suite 200, Chantilly, VA, will assist the EPA in data analysis of data and reports provided by industry on hydraulic fracturing. The work includes preparation of technical analysis and technical information; and report preparation.

In accordance with 40 CFR 2.306(j), EPA has determined that under EPA Contract Number EP-C-12-021, ERG will require access to CBI submitted to EPA under all sections of TSCA to perform successfully the duties specified under the contract. ERG's personnel will be given access to information submitted to EPA under all sections of TSCA. Some of the information may be claimed or determined to be CBI.

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EPA is issuing this notice to inform all submitters of information under all sections of TSCA that EPA may provide ERG access to these CBI materials on a need-to-know basis only. All access to TSCA CBI under this contract will take place at EPA Headquarters and ERG's Chantilly, VA site, in accordance with EPA's TSCA CBI Protection Manual. Notice was also sent to each affected company by email on September 18, 2012, and receipt of this email has been confirmed by representatives of each company.

Access to TSCA data, including CBI, will continue until September 26, 2017. If the contract is extended, this access will also continue for the duration of the extended contract without further notice.

ERG's personnel will be required to sign nondisclosure agreements and will be briefed on appropriate security procedures before they are permitted access to TSCA CBI.

List of Subjects Environmental protection, Confidential business information.

Dated: October 24, 2012.

Matthew G. Leopard, Director, Information Management Division, Office of Pollution Prevention and Toxics.

[FR Doc. 2012-27854 Filed 11-15-12; 8:45 am] BILLING CODE 6560-50-P Vol. 77, No. 222 [EPA-HQ-OPPT-2003-0004; FRL-9365-8] Notices

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
Associated Press (AP) - Cheyenne Bureau

11/17/2012

PITTSBURGH_Energy companies, environmental groups, and even Hollywood stars are watching to see what decisions President Barack Obama makes about regulating or promoting natural gas drilling.

The stakes are huge. Business leaders don't want government regulations to slow the flow of hundreds of billions of dollars of clean, cheap domestic energy over the next few decades. Environmental groups see that same tide as a potential threat, not just to air and water, but to renewable energy. And on a strategic level, diplomats envision a future when natural gas helps make the U.S. less beholden to imports.

Some say the unexpected drilling boom presents historic options _ and risks _ for the Obama administration.

"It's a tough choice. The president is in a real bind," said Charles Ebinger, director of the energy security initiative at the Brookings Institution, a Washington, D.C., nonprofit. "I think the question is what does he want his legacy to be?"

Ebinger said that if Obama fully embraced the boom in gas drilling the nation could see "incredible" job gains that could lead to "a re-industrialization of America." Possibilities like that are tempting to any president, and perhaps even more so in the current economy.

"But really embracing this stuff is going to bring him squarely in conflict with some of his environmental supporters. It's not without some possible peril, particularly if he gets to be seen too cozy with the oil and gas folks," Ebinger said.

Hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, has made it possible to tap into deep reserves of oil and gas but has also raised concerns about pollution. Large volumes of water, along with sand and hazardous chemicals, are injected underground to break rock apart and free the oil and gas.

Environmental groups and some scientists say there hasn't been enough research on water and air pollution issues. The industry and many federal and state officials say the practice is safe when done properly, and that many rules on air pollution and disclosure of the chemicals used in fracking are being strengthened.

The Sierra Club is already trying to slow the gas rush, which began in Texas and has expanded to Pennsylvania, Colorado and other states. It's started a nationwide "Beyond Natural Gas" campaign to push for more regulation on an industry it describes as "Dirty, Dangerous and Run Amok."

"We need to avoid replacing one set of problems with a new but very different set of problems," said Michael Brune, the Sierra Club's executive director, referring to coal and natural gas. Investing in green energy makes more economic and environmental sense, he said.

The Sierra Club knows natural gas will be a part of the nation's energy future. "How much a part is a big fight right now," Brune said.

Such arguments have resonated with many environmental groups, and with actors and musicians who are lending their star power to anti-drilling efforts.

The Hollywood film Promised Land is scheduled for release in December, starring Matt Damon, with a story line about drilling from best-selling novelist Dave Eggers. But even before its release, critics pounced on the fact that some

financing for the project came from the United Arab Emirates _ a country that stands to lose money if the U.S. gets more of its energy needs at home.

Brune agreed that "you have to acknowledge that there are benefits to home-grown energy."

Critics say many states haven't been tough enough on the industry, which has objected to the idea of national drilling regulations. Some state officials oppose such proposals, too.

"Yes, we are concerned," said Patrick Henderson, energy executive for Pa. Gov. Tom Corbett. "Upwards of 10 federal agencies are seeking to put their proverbial nose under the tent with regard to oil and gas development." He added that federal intrusion "is a surefire way to impede job growth. We'll be vigilant of proposed federal rulemakings."

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is conducting one major national review of drilling and potential drinking water impacts, but it won't be finished until 2014.

Jack Gerard, president of the American Petroleum Institute, which lobbies for the industry in Washington, is hoping Obama's campaign rhetoric doesn't change.

"He has evolved on the oil and the gas issue, and today, he gives it a full-throated endorsement in terms of the need to produce it to create jobs, get our economy back on track," Gerard said in a postelection conference call.

Most experts agree that Obama faces four big choices about the gas boom: whether to back nationwide EPA rules; whether to keep pressuring coal-fired power plants to reduce emissions (which benefits gas as an alternative fuel); whether to allow large-scale exports of liquefied natural gas; and whether to support a national push to use compressed gas in commercial vehicles.

One expert in Texas predicted that Obama won't go to extremes.

"I don't think the administration will do anything to halt development," said Kenneth Medlock III, a professor at Rice University's Center for Energy Studies in Houston, adding that there will be "some attempts" to move regulations into federal hands.

Medlock expects Obama to keep the pressure on the coal industry, but go slowly on the natural gas export issue. The industry says exports have the potential to be highly profitable, but some members of Congress fear exports will just drive up domestic prices, depriving consumers and other industries of the benefits of cheap natural gas.

Others see an opportunity for the president to stake out a middle ground.

"A lot of the industry guys are pretty shaken by the anti-fracking movement," said Michael Shellenberger, president of the Breakthrough Institute, an Oakland nonprofit that promotes new ways to address environmental issues. "That might make them a bit more open to regulatory oversight."

Shellenberger said natural gas could also be a "big opportunity" for Obama as part of a broader campaign to address greenhouse gas emissions.

Ebinger agreed, saying that "if we really pushed tax credits to get diesel out of long-distance trucks" that could lead to massive carbon dioxide reductions. But at some point, Obama will have to make tough decisions. "I don't think the president can punt this one," he said.

Whatever Obama does, "it will definitely drive a bunch of people crazy" in the environmental community, Shellenberger

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said.

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Loophole Lets Toxic Oil Water Flow Over Indian Land | WSKG.org
www.wskg.com

11/16/2012

You may need: Adobe Flash Player .

By:

Elizabeth Shogren

Every month, oil and gas operations dump millions of gallons of wastewater on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming. Under a long-standing EPA loophole, it's perfectly legal. Internal agency documents obtained by NPR show the water contains toxic chemicals, including known carcinogens and radioactive materials, that end up in natural rivers.

The air reeks so strongly of rotten eggs that tribal leader Wes Martel hesitates to get out of the car at an oil field on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming. He already has a headache from the fumes he smelled at another oil field.

Martel is giving me a tour of one of a dozen oil and gas fields on the reservation. These operations have the federal government's permission to dump wastewater on the land — so much that it creates streams that flow into natural creeks and rivers. And this water contains toxic chemicals, including known carcinogens and radioactive material, according to documents obtained by NPR through Freedom of Information Act requests.

The fumes hitting Martel's nose are hydrogen sulfide, which can be deadly. So Martel makes sure the wind is at his back before walking over to a pit the size of several tennis courts. Pipes are emptying dirty brown water that came up from oil wells into the pit, which is completely covered in goopy black oil.

The oil is supposed to float to the surface, and then a truck will vacuum it up. Any solid stuff should fall on the bottom of the pit, before the water rushes out and forms a stream. But there are still chemicals in the water — some from the earth, some from the oil, and some the companies add to make the oil flow faster.

About a half-mile from the pit, Martel stops the car on a bridge over that stream of murky gray water. A shiny film covers the water in some places.

"I wish a lot of people could see this," says Martel, the vice chairman of the Eastern Shoshone Business Council, the tribal government. "This is something that's going on in the reservation: This don't look too cool."

In most of the country, this would be illegal. Most oil fields reinject wastewater far underground, where it cannot cause harm.

So why is this wastewater being released into a desert wilderness of sagebrush-covered foothills and sandstone cliffs that blaze with reds and oranges?

The few cows grazing nearby provide a clue.

"You can see the tracks into the water here," says Martel. "This is one of their watering holes."

Inside EPA, Distress Over Dumping Loophole

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Without the wastewater, this area would be bone dry most of the year.

In the 1970s, when the Environmental Protection Agency was banning oil companies from dumping their wastewater, ranchers, especially in Wyoming, made a fuss. They argued that their livestock needs water, even dirty water.

So the EPA made an exception, a loophole, for the arid West. If oil companies demonstrate that ranchers or wildlife use the water, the companies can release it.

Off the reservation, Western states get to decide what oil companies must do with wastewater; over time, states' rules have become stricter than the EPA's. Some states have all but outlawed dumping.

But on the Wind River Reservation, the EPA controls whether companies can release wastewater on a case-by-case basis.

The EPA refused multiple requests for interviews, but in a statement, the agency said it was evaluating the permits it gives some of the companies to expel this water on the reservation.

"EPA is reviewing new information associated with these permits and intends to meet with the Tribes in upcoming weeks to discuss next steps," the statement reads.

The responses to NPR's two Freedom of Information Act requests include emails between staffers, correspondence with the companies, results of water-quality tests, the permits, and documents justifying each permit. Most of this information had not been public before.

The documents show hints of mutiny inside the EPA. Some EPA staffers clearly are appalled by the wastewater releases.

One wrote in an email to colleagues: "Can we get together and discuss a strategic approach for sending our message of concern? I have attached pictures of this ridiculousness."

Another staffer warns that the chemicals in the water could have "irrevocable human health and environmental impacts."

The documents also show recent detective work that some EPA staffers did to try to figure out what chemicals companies are putting in the water. Their research reveals that some of the waste streams sometimes include chemicals from hydraulic fracturing, an engineering technique designed to increase the flow of wells. They also include chemicals whose warning labels clearly state "toxic to aquatic organisms," "prevent material from entering sewers or waterways," and warnings about cancer and birth defects at low levels.

The documents suggest that at least some people inside the EPA are advocating for stricter rules. But much of this debate has been kept secret. The EPA refused to give NPR 757 documents about the loophole, claiming they can be kept secret because they are between the EPA and its attorneys or among EPA staffers.

'We Should Know Better By Now'

Experts, including scientists at the U.S. Geological Survey, say it's very rare for oil field water to be released into drainages or streams because it nearly always contains harmful chemicals.

"It's a very uncommon situation in the United States and, I believe, most of the rest of the world," said John Veil, a retired wastewater expert at the Department of Energy's Argonne National Laboratory, who now works as a consultant.

In one analysis that Veil did for Argonne, he found that 98 percent of the water that companies pump up with oil is

reinjected deep underground. Veil says it's usually far too salty to discharge.

Some scientists were alarmed when they learned about the oil field wastewater releases, especially given that it is happening on tribal land.

"I was shocked when I heard this," says Rob Jackson, a Duke University environmental scientist. "I was very surprised this was allowed. It's just something that we should know better by now. We should know that dumping our waste onto the surface of the ground is a bad solution."

Other experts agreed that the chemicals in the water raise concerns. However, some scientists, including staffers from the U.S. Geological Survey, felt uncomfortable commenting for the record without doing their own testing.

Jackson reviewed many of the EPA documents released to NPR, including analyses of the chemicals in the wastewater streams and warning labels for some of the chemical treatments that companies add to the wells.

He stresses that they include hazardous air pollutants such as hydrochloric acid and naphthalene, and carcinogens like benzene and ethyl benzene.

"There are many things in this water that you don't want in the environment or in people's drinking water. You don't need to be a genius to know this is a bad idea," Jackson says.

He urges the EPA to consider the consequences of its policy and how it looks.

"Are we doing something on tribal lands we wouldn't allow somewhere else? I think that's something we have to be asking ourselves."

On The Reservation, Dead Ducklings, Dangerous Fumes

Outside the reservation, Western states decide how oil field waste is handled — and their rules are stricter than the EPA's. For instance, off the reservation, the state of Wyoming requires companies to inject wastewater deep underground and out of harm's way if they've added toxic chemicals to the wells. Other states have set tougher water quality standards that have nearly eliminated these releases.

On the Wind River Reservation, these oil field wastewater streams have flowed for several decades without attracting much interest, even from the tribes, according to Wes Martel and other officials of the two tribes that share the reservation, the Eastern Shoshoni and Northern Arapaho.

"Most of our elders were very trusting, very trusting people. They were glad they had the opportunity to get some revenue. Most of them were just thinking, 'We're being watched over, and things are being taken care of,' " says Martel, 65, who was in tribal government many years ago and was elected two years ago to return to government.

But in 2005, the Wind River Environmental Quality Commission sampled the water downstream of some of the oil fields. Researchers found toxic levels of some chemicals, stretches of streams that were lifeless, and streambeds splotched with black ooze, white crystals and purple growths. They recorded water temperatures as high as 125 degrees, and found dead ducklings, according to a draft report prepared by the tribes' environmental department.

During tours of four of the oil fields earlier this fall, I witnessed visible violations of the plain language of the permits that the EPA gave these companies to discharge wastewater. For instance, I saw streambeds covered in white crystals and rock-like formations below outfall pipes. The permits prohibit visible deposits in the receiving waters or shoreline. They also prohibit any visible foam or sheen — I saw both. At the wastewater discharge site at one oil field, company officials

warned us to leave after a few minutes because of the danger of respiratory distress or death from hydrogen sulfide fumes.

The companies were reluctant to talk. One agreed to meet at its oil field on the reservation but backed out the night before. Others failed to return multiple phone calls. Houston-based Marathon Oil Corporation, which runs three oil fields on the reservation, agreed to an interview but refused to be recorded.

"As far as I know, there has never been concerns and opposition for the quality of the water that I'm aware about," says Bob Whisonant, Rocky Mountain operations manager for Marathon Oil, which has three oil fields on the reservation.

Whisonant stresses that the water from his oil fields meets EPA's requirements.

"We're really fortunate within Wyoming that the water is extremely fresh, very suitable for livestock and agriculture purposes. That's why we're able to discharge," Whisonant says.

But the EPA's permits, which are reissued every several years, tell a different story. Even the state of Wyoming, which is known to be pro-industry, questioned the fact that the EPA's requirements didn't seem to protect aquatic life. The EPA's response was that the tribes had not adopted their own water quality standards.

The EPA permits acknowledge that oil field water may not meet the agency's own water quality criteria.

The agency requires only minimal water testing at most of the oil fields, and it does not do its own testing to verify the companies' claims; nor does it sample water quality in the streams receiving the wastewater.

In 2007, the EPA required one company to test aquatic animals to see if they'd die in the water flowing from one oil field — it's a standard test of water quality known as whole effluent toxicity. The minnows and bugs in the sample died within an hour. The EPA asked the company to figure out what was killing the animals and propose remedies, but it let the company go on releasing the water for years. Five years later, the company, Marathon, says it is waiting for the EPA to OK a plan to lower high levels of sulfide in the water.

Wes Martel says he's been pushing the EPA to thoroughly study the wastewater and then require the companies to purify it or inject it underground.

He worries about water quality and wildlife — and about food safety, too. Oil field water abounds on the reservation, and the cows that graze there will eventually end up on dinner plates.

"So it really makes you wonder: What impacts is this having on not only aquatic life, but our wildlife?" Martel says.

"You've got to wonder, what types of chemicals are those beef retaining? And when that goes to the slaughterhouse, what's in your steak?"

Ranchers Still Want The Water

But Eastern Shoshone member Darwin Griebel, one of a handful of ranchers whose livestock use the oil field water, pooh -poohs Martel's concerns.

"Animals drink it. People aren't going to drink it. Hell with the quality of the water," says Griebel.

Griebel has known Martel for nearly 60 years, since they were in elementary school and slept over at each others' houses. But he says they don't agree on this issue.

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Griebel says his cows haven't suffered health problems from drinking the water, and the impurities clear up after the streams have run for a while. (The tribes' water study backs up that idea: Concentrations of various harmful chemicals tend to decrease the farther you get from the oil fields.)

What's most concerning to Griebel is that the water has been crucial to his family's business for generations. Without it, he says: "There would be no water for the cows. There would be no water for the deer, the antelope. Nothing. It would put us out of business is what it would do."

But Martel says that if the EPA does not put a stop to this, the tribes will step in.

If the oil companies say that reinjecting or cleaning the water would be so expensive that it would no longer be profitable to pump oil, Martel knows what his response will be: "Good riddance."

"We'll take it over ourselves and do it right," he says.

Martel dreams of putting tribal companies in charge of their oil fields. Then the tribes would get all the profits, instead of just the royalties the companies pay them. They'd also be able to protect water quality for future generations.

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Fracking Sand May Pose Health Hazard To Workers, Residents
Huffington Post, The

11/16/2012

The first time Bill Ferullo saw the white plumes drifting from a natural gas fracking site, he got out of his car to take pictures.

"I didn't know what it was," he recalled. "But two minutes later my chest was burning. It burned all night."

In the two years since, Ferullo has watched similar dust clouds travel as far as a mile, he estimates, from gas drilling operations around his home in Bradford County, Pa. He has also since learned what hazards they may carry. One component in particular concerns Ferullo, as well as other residents and environmental health experts: silica sand, a long -known cause of debilitating and deadly diseases such as silicosis and lung cancer.

"At frack sites, silica gets into the air and you get these huge plumes of dust that can be breathed in by workers and anybody nearby, downwind," said Miriam Rotkin-Ellman, scientist at the Natural Resources Defense Council.

"This is in people's backyards," Rotkin-Ellman added. "It doesn't take much silica to cause a health problem."

The process of hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, requires blasting large volumes of water, chemicals and silica sand into bedrock. Up to 4 million pounds of the sand is used per well to prop open the newly created fractures in the rock and release natural gas. The recent rapid expansion of natural gas production has saved Americans billions of dollars in energy costs, according to one recent study, but it has raised health concerns ranging from toxic metals contaminating drinking water to large quantities of diesel exhaust pumped into the air.

Exposure to dust containing silica sand is a relative newcomer to that list.

Eric Esswein, a senior industrial hygienist with National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, monitored the exposure of 116 workers at 11 fracking sites and found that 79 percent of air samples had more silica dust than recommended and 31 percent had at least 10 times more than recommended. The highest reading came in with 137 times the U.S. recommended limit of silica -- what Esswein called "occupational hazard of antiquity" during a presentation of his findings at the Institute of Medicine earlier this year.

Silicosis, which has plagued miners and construction workers throughout history, can take years, even decades to appear. Once it does, it is incurable, irreversible and progressive, noted Esswein.

While some natural gas site workers who were studied wore respirators, the devices only protect up to 10 times the recommended limit of silica, explained Rotkin-Ellman. Nearby residents are not provided respirators. Esswein and his team did not study how far the silica sand travels nor any other community-wide impacts.

Prompted by the new findings, the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration, along with the NIOSH, released a joint hazard alert on fracking silica in June. The document included recommendations, such as watering down dusty roads around a well site, but no new regulations for the natural gas industry.

When asked by The Huffington Post if and when revised regulations might be issued that take into account these new findings, OSHA spokesman Jesse Lawder said that the agency had "no update at this time."

Bill Ferullo captures fracking dust rising from a natural gas site near his Pennsylvania home.

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

Travis Windle, spokesman for the Marcellus Shale Coalition, said natural gas companies in Pennsylvania were nevertheless following the government's advice.

"Our industry is absolutely aware of the recommendations laid out by OSHA and NIOSH, and continue to work to further raise the workforce safety bar," said Windle. "These recommendations are not an indication that our industry is somehow unsafe.

"Ensuring the health and safety of employees, contractors and of course those in the communities where we operates is our foremost priority," Windle added. "The nearly 230,000 folks who work across the natural gas industry in Pennsylvania live in these communities, and are raising their families here."

Wes Gillingham of Catskill Mountainkeeper, a grassroots advocacy group, is looking ahead to what may come if New York state opens up its portion of the East's Marcellus Shale formation to fracking. He's concerned that the state's proposed review on fracking impacts won't take into account the newly recognized health risks of fracking sand, or fully evaluate the array of other concerns. The New York Department of Environmental Protection faces a Nov. 29 deadline to complete new regulations for fracking, reported The Associated Press on Friday.

"The silicosis issue from the frack sand is one of many issues that add up to extensive health costs to our communities," said Gillingham. "This cost is many affected lives and the lives of our children."

Of course, the health risks aren't limited to communities around frack wells. Workers and residents can be exposed to airborne silica at several points in the natural gas production process -- which tends to span thousands of miles -- including mining, transportation and offloading.

Mining for fracking's essential sand is rising in tandem with the expansion of natural gas production, with an estimated annual demand in the U.S. of 40 billion pounds, and growing. Many residents in Minnesota and Wisconsin, where the prime crystalline silica is unearthed, are speaking out about their environmental and public health concerns.

As one Wisconsinite told Mother Jones earlier this year: "We don't want our kids to be lab rats for frac-sand mining companies."

Ferullo said he is worried about his own health after breathing the dust. But he's more concerned about the other nearby families with children -- some living as close as 500 feet from a fracking site -- as well as his own grandkids.

"Even my son is now concerned about bringing his daughter up here to visit," he said.

State Lawmakers And Environmental Activists Express Opposition To Hydro Fracking

NEW YORK, NY - JANUARY 11: Opponents of hydraulic fracturing in New York state attend a news conference and rally against hydraulic fracturing, also known as fracking, on January 11, 2012 in New York City. The event, which was held on the steps of City Hall, called for an end to the controversial gas drilling method as environmental groups increasingly warn about contamination of the state's aquifers that could poison its drinking water. (Photo by Spencer Platt/Getty Images)

State Lawmakers And Environmental Activists Express Opposition To Hydro Fracking

NEW YORK, NY - JANUARY 11: Eric Weltman of Food & Water Watch attends a news conference and rally against hydraulic fracturing, also known as fracking, in New York State on January 11, 2012 in New York City. The event, which was held on the steps of City Hall, called for an end to the controversial gas drilling method as environmental groups increasingly warn about contamination of the state's aquifers that could poison its drinking water. (Photo by Spencer

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Platt/Getty Images)

Department Of Environmental Conservation Holds Hydro Fracking Hearing

NEW YORK, NY - NOVEMBER 30: Opponents and supporters of gas-drilling, or fracking, walk into the last of four public hearings on proposed fracking regulations in upstate New York on November 30, 2011 in New York City. Fracking, a process that injects millions of gallons of chemical mixed water into a well in order to release gas, has become a contentious issue in New York as critics of the process belive it contaminates drinking water among other hazards. NewYork City gets much of its drinking water from upstate reservoirs. If the regulations are approved, drilling in the upstate New York Marcellus Shale could begin next year. (Photo by Spencer Platt/Getty Images)

Cuadrilla Shale Fracking Plant

PRESTON, LANCASHIRE - OCTOBER 07: Engineers on the drilling platform of the Cuadrilla shale fracking facility on October 7, 2012 in Preston, Lancashire. The controversial method of extracting gas by pumping high pressure water and chemicals into shale formations deep underground has been blamed for two minor earthquakes in the surrounding region. Environmental campaigners are calling for a halt to the drilling of what Cuadrilla believe could be significant reserves of natural gas. (Photo by Matthew Lloyd/Getty Images)

Cuadrilla Shale Fracking Plant

PRESTON, LANCASHIRE - OCTOBER 07: Engineers at work on the drilling platform of the Cuadrilla shale fracking facility on October 7, 2012 in Preston, Lancashire. The controversial method of extracting gas by pumping high pressure water and chemicals into shale formations deep underground has been blamed for two minor earthquakes in the surrounding region. Environmental campaigners are calling for a halt to the drilling of what Cuadrilla believe could be significant reserves of natural gas. (Photo by Matthew Lloyd/Getty Images)

Cuadrilla Shale Fracking Plant

PRESTON, LANCASHIRE - OCTOBER 07: General views of the Cuadrilla shale fracking facility on October 7, 2012 in Preston, Lancashire. The controversial method of extracting gas by pumping high pressure water and chemicals into shale formations deep underground has been blamed for two minor earthquakes in the surrounding region. Environmental campaigners are calling for a halt to the drilling of what Cuadrilla believe could be significant reserves of natural gas. (Photo by Matthew Lloyd/Getty Images)

Cuadrilla Shale Fracking Plant

PRESTON, LANCASHIRE - OCTOBER 07: Engineers look at the Cuadrilla shale fracking facility on October 7, 2012 in Preston, Lancashire. The controversial method of extracting gas by pumping high pressure water and chemicals into shale formations deep underground has been blamed for two minor earthquakes in the surrounding region. Environmental campaigners are calling for a halt to the drilling of what Cuadrilla believe could be significant reserves of natural gas. (Photo by Matthew Lloyd/Getty Images)

Cuadrilla Shale Fracking Plant

PRESTON, LANCASHIRE - OCTOBER 07: A lump of shale rock on display at the Cuadrilla shale fracking facility on October 7, 2012 in Preston, Lancashire. The controversial method of extracting gas by pumping high pressure water and chemicals into shale formations deep underground has been blamed for two minor earthquakes in the surrounding region. Environmental campaigners are calling for a halt to the drilling of what Cuadrilla believe could be significant reserves of natural gas. (Photo by Matthew Lloyd/Getty Images)

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Cuadrilla Shale Fracking Plant

PRESTON, LANCASHIRE - OCTOBER 07: Engineers on the drilling platform of the Cuadrilla shale fracking facility on October 7, 2012 in Preston, Lancashire. The controversial method of extracting gas by pumping high pressure water and chemicals into shale formations deep underground has been blamed for two minor earthquakes in the surrounding region. Environmental campaigners are calling for a halt to the drilling of what Cuadrilla believe could be significant reserves of natural gas. (Photo by Matthew Lloyd/Getty Images)

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Cuadrilla Shale Fracking Plant

PRESTON, LANCASHIRE - OCTOBER 07: Drill heads on display at the entrance to the Cuadrilla shale fracking facility on October 7, 2012 in Preston, Lancashire. The controversial method of extracting gas by pumping high pressure water and chemicals into shale formations deep underground has been blamed for two minor earthquakes in the surrounding region. Environmental campaigners are calling for a halt to the drilling of what Cuadrilla believe could be significant reserves of natural gas. (Photo by Matthew Lloyd/Getty Images)

Cuadrilla Shale Fracking Plant

PRESTON, LANCASHIRE - OCTOBER 07: An engineer displays a lump of shale rock at the Cuadrilla shale fracking facility on October 7, 2012 in Preston, Lancashire. The controversial method of extracting gas by pumping high pressure water and chemicals into shale formations deep underground has been blamed for two minor earthquakes in the surrounding region. Environmental campaigners are calling for a halt to the drilling of what Cuadrilla believe could be significant reserves of natural gas. (Photo by Matthew Lloyd/Getty Images)

Hydraulic Fracturing Prevention Press Conference

NEW YORK, NY - APRIL 25: Actor/director Mark Ruffalo (C) speaks at the Hydraulic Fracturing prevention press conference urging the protection of the drinking water source of 15 million Americans at Foley Square on April 25, 2011 in New York City. (Photo by D Dipasupil/Getty Images)

Hydraulic Fracturing Prevention Press Conference

NEW YORK, NY - APRIL 25: (L-R) Actor/director Mark Ruffalo, Denise Katzman, Wenonah Hauter, and Water Defense co-founder/campaign director Claire Sandberg attend the Hydraulic Fracturing prevention press conference urging the protection of the drinking water source of 15 million Americans at Foley Square on April 25, 2011 in New York City. (Photo by D Dipasupil/Getty Images)

Josh Fox on Obama, the EPA, and House Republicans Who Had Him Arrested

HuffPost Green Editor Joanna Zelman talks to Josh Fox, director of the documentary 'Gasland,' about hydro-fracking, the EPA, and the House Republicans who had him arrested during a Congressional hearing.

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Game Changer in Green: Mark Ruffalo

The expertise and the grassroots zeal Mark Ruffalo has brought to the issue of fracking is changing the game in green.

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Environment

Loophole Lets Toxic Oil Water Flow Over Indian Land

Originally published on Fri November 16, 2012 9:55 am

By Elizabeth Shogren

Next image Previous image

The air reeks so strongly of rotten eggs that tribal leader Wes Martel hesitates to get out of the car at an oil field on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming. He already has a headache from the fumes he smelled at another oil field.

Martel is giving me a tour of one of a dozen oil and gas fields on the reservation. These operations have the federal government's permission to dump wastewater on the land — so much that it creates streams that flow into natural creeks and rivers. And this water contains toxic chemicals, including known carcinogens and radioactive material, according to documents obtained by NPR through Freedom of Information Act requests.

The fumes hitting Martel's nose are hydrogen sulfide, which can be deadly. So Martel makes sure the wind is at his back before walking over to a pit the size of several tennis courts. Pipes are emptying dirty brown water that came up from oil wells into the pit, which is completely covered in goopy black oil.

The oil is supposed to float to the surface, and then a truck will vacuum it up. Any solid stuff should fall on the bottom of the pit, before the water rushes out and forms a stream. But there are still chemicals in the water — some from the earth, some from the oil, and some the companies add to make the oil flow faster.

About a half-mile from the pit, Martel stops the car on a bridge over that stream of murky gray water. A shiny film covers the water in some places.

"I wish a lot of people could see this," says Martel, the vice chairman of the Eastern Shoshone Business Council, the tribal government. "This is something that's going on in the reservation: This don't look too cool."

In most of the country, this would be illegal. Most oil fields reinject wastewater far underground, where it cannot cause harm.

So why is this wastewater being released into a desert wilderness of sagebrush-covered foothills and sandstone cliffs that blaze with reds and oranges?

The few cows grazing nearby provide a clue.

"You can see the tracks into the water here," says Martel. "This is one of their watering holes."

Inside EPA, Distress Over Dumping Loophole

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

Without the wastewater, this area would be bone dry most of the year.

In the 1970s, when the Environmental Protection Agency was banning oil companies from dumping their wastewater, ranchers, especially in Wyoming, made a fuss. They argued that their livestock needs water, even dirty water.

So the EPA made an exception, a loophole, for the arid West. If oil companies demonstrate that ranchers or wildlife use the water, the companies can release it.

Off the reservation, Western states get to decide what oil companies must do with wastewater; over time, states' rules have become stricter than the EPA's. Some states have all but outlawed dumping.

But on the Wind River Reservation, the EPA controls whether companies can release wastewater on a case-by-case basis.

The EPA refused multiple requests for interviews, but in a statement, the agency said it was evaluating the permits it gives some of the companies to expel this water on the reservation.

"EPA is reviewing new information associated with these permits and intends to meet with the Tribes in upcoming weeks to discuss next steps," the statement reads.

The responses to NPR's two Freedom of Information Act requests include emails between staffers, correspondence with the companies, results of water-quality tests, the permits, and documents justifying each permit. Most of this information had not been public before.

The documents show hints of mutiny inside the EPA. Some EPA staffers clearly are appalled by the wastewater releases.

One wrote in an email to colleagues: "Can we get together and discuss a strategic approach for sending our message of concern? I have attached pictures of this ridiculousness."

Another staffer warns that the chemicals in the water could have "irrevocable human health and environmental impacts."

The documents also show recent detective work that some EPA staffers did to try to figure out what chemicals companies are putting in the water. Their research reveals that some of the waste streams sometimes include chemicals from hydraulic fracturing, an engineering technique designed to increase the flow of wells. They also include chemicals whose warning labels clearly state "toxic to aquatic organisms," "prevent material from entering sewers or waterways," and warnings about cancer and birth defects at low levels.

The documents suggest that at least some people inside the EPA are advocating for stricter rules. But much of this debate has been kept secret. The EPA refused to give NPR 757 documents about the loophole, claiming they can be kept secret because they are between the EPA and its attorneys or among EPA staffers.

'We Should Know Better By Now'

Experts, including scientists at the U.S. Geological Survey, say it's very rare for oil field water to be released into drainages or streams because it nearly always contains harmful chemicals.

"It's a very uncommon situation in the United States and, I believe, most of the rest of the world," said John Veil, a retired wastewater expert at the Department of Energy's Argonne National Laboratory, who now works as a consultant.

In one analysis that Veil did for Argonne, he found that 98 percent of the water that companies pump up with oil is

reinjected deep underground. Veil says it's usually far too salty to discharge.

Some scientists were alarmed when they learned about the oil field wastewater releases, especially given that it is happening on tribal land.

"I was shocked when I heard this," says Rob Jackson, a Duke University environmental scientist. "I was very surprised this was allowed. It's just something that we should know better by now. We should know that dumping our waste onto the surface of the ground is a bad solution."

Other experts agreed that the chemicals in the water raise concerns. However, some scientists, including staffers from the U.S. Geological Survey, felt uncomfortable commenting for the record without doing their own testing.

Jackson reviewed many of the EPA documents released to NPR, including analyses of the chemicals in the wastewater streams and warning labels for some of the chemical treatments that companies add to the wells.

He stresses that they include hazardous air pollutants such as hydrochloric acid and naphthalene, and carcinogens like benzene and ethyl benzene.

"There are many things in this water that you don't want in the environment or in people's drinking water. You don't need to be a genius to know this is a bad idea," Jackson says.

He urges the EPA to consider the consequences of its policy and how it looks.

"Are we doing something on tribal lands we wouldn't allow somewhere else? I think that's something we have to be asking ourselves."

On The Reservation, Dead Ducklings, Dangerous Fumes

Outside the reservation, Western states decide how oil field waste is handled — and their rules are stricter than the EPA's. For instance, off the reservation, the state of Wyoming requires companies to inject wastewater deep underground and out of harm's way if they've added toxic chemicals to the wells. Other states have set tougher water quality standards that have nearly eliminated these releases.

On the Wind River Reservation, these oil field wastewater streams have flowed for several decades without attracting much interest, even from the tribes, according to Wes Martel and other officials of the two tribes that share the reservation, the Eastern Shoshoni and Northern Arapaho.

"Most of our elders were very trusting, very trusting people. They were glad they had the opportunity to get some revenue. Most of them were just thinking, 'We're being watched over, and things are being taken care of,' " says Martel, 65, who was in tribal government many years ago and was elected two years ago to return to government.

But in 2005, the Wind River Environmental Quality Commission sampled the water downstream of some of the oil fields. Researchers found toxic levels of some chemicals, stretches of streams that were lifeless, and streambeds splotched with black ooze, white crystals and purple growths. They recorded water temperatures as high as 125 degrees, and found dead ducklings, according to a draft report prepared by the tribes' environmental department.

During tours of four of the oil fields earlier this fall, I witnessed visible violations of the plain language of the permits that the EPA gave these companies to discharge wastewater. For instance, I saw streambeds covered in white crystals and rock-like formations below outfall pipes. The permits prohibit visible deposits in the receiving waters or shoreline. They also prohibit any visible foam or sheen — I saw both. At the wastewater discharge site at one oil field, company officials

warned us to leave after a few minutes because of the danger of respiratory distress or death from hydrogen sulfide fumes.

The companies were reluctant to talk. One agreed to meet at its oil field on the reservation but backed out the night before. Others failed to return multiple phone calls. Houston-based Marathon Oil Corporation, which runs three oil fields on the reservation, agreed to an interview but refused to be recorded.

"As far as I know, there has never been concerns and opposition for the quality of the water that I'm aware about," says Bob Whisonant, Rocky Mountain operations manager for Marathon Oil, which has three oil fields on the reservation.

Whisonant stresses that the water from his oil fields meets EPA's requirements.

"We're really fortunate within Wyoming that the water is extremely fresh, very suitable for livestock and agriculture purposes. That's why we're able to discharge," Whisonant says.

But the EPA's permits, which are reissued every several years, tell a different story. Even the state of Wyoming, which is known to be pro-industry, questioned the fact that the EPA's requirements didn't seem to protect aquatic life. The EPA's response was that the tribes had not adopted their own water quality standards.

The EPA permits acknowledge that oil field water may not meet the agency's own water quality criteria.

The agency requires only minimal water testing at most of the oil fields, and it does not do its own testing to verify the companies' claims; nor does it sample water quality in the streams receiving the wastewater.

In 2007, the EPA required one company to test aquatic animals to see if they'd die in the water flowing from one oil field — it's a standard test of water quality known as whole effluent toxicity. The minnows and bugs in the sample died within an hour. The EPA asked the company to figure out what was killing the animals and propose remedies, but it let the company go on releasing the water for years. Five years later, the company, Marathon, says it is waiting for the EPA to OK a plan to lower high levels of sulfide in the water.

Wes Martel says he's been pushing the EPA to thoroughly study the wastewater and then require the companies to purify it or inject it underground.

He worries about water quality and wildlife — and about food safety, too. Oil field water abounds on the reservation, and the cows that graze there will eventually end up on dinner plates.

"So it really makes you wonder: What impacts is this having on not only aquatic life, but our wildlife?" Martel says.

"You've got to wonder, what types of chemicals are those beef retaining? And when that goes to the slaughterhouse, what's in your steak?"

Ranchers Still Want The Water

But Eastern Shoshone member Darwin Griebel, one of a handful of ranchers whose livestock use the oil field water, pooh -poohs Martel's concerns.

"Animals drink it. People aren't going to drink it. Hell with the quality of the water," says Griebel.

Griebel has known Martel for nearly 60 years, since they were in elementary school and slept over at each others' houses. But he says they don't agree on this issue.

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

Griebel says his cows haven't suffered health problems from drinking the water, and the impurities clear up after the streams have run for a while. (The tribes' water study backs up that idea: Concentrations of various harmful chemicals tend to decrease the farther you get from the oil fields.)

What's most concerning to Griebel is that the water has been crucial to his family's business for generations. Without it, he says: "There would be no water for the cows. There would be no water for the deer, the antelope. Nothing. It would put us out of business is what it would do."

But Martel says that if the EPA does not put a stop to this, the tribes will step in.

If the oil companies say that reinjecting or cleaning the water would be so expensive that it would no longer be profitable to pump oil, Martel knows what his response will be: "Good riddance."

"We'll take it over ourselves and do it right," he says.

Martel dreams of putting tribal companies in charge of their oil fields. Then the tribes would get all the profits, instead of just the royalties the companies pay them. They'd also be able to protect water quality for future generations.

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Transcript

MELISSA BLOCK, HOST:

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

Hydraulic Fracturing
Environmental Protection

11/16/2012

Hydraulic fracturing is a process associated with deep natural gas extraction. Millions of gallons of water, sand and chemicals are injected, under high pressure, into a well. The pressure fractures the shale and opens fissures that enable natural gas to flow more freely out of the well.

Typically, 80 to 300 tons of chemicals may be used.

In 2005, the Bush/Cheney Energy Bill exempted natural gas drilling from the Safe Drinking Water Act. Companies do not have to disclose the chemicals used during hydraulic fracturing, but independent scientists have identified volatile organic compounds, such as benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene and xylene. As such, the wastewater can be toxic and may cause various chronic health issues and contaminate the air, water wells or surface water.

The Fracturing Responsibility and Awareness of Chemicals Act (H.R. 2766), (S. 1215), introduced in 2009, aims to close this loophole by repealing the exemption and require the disclosure of the chemicals involved with hydraulic fracturing. This bill has not yet been passed.

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Methane
National Geographic - Online

11/16/2012

Burn natural gas and it warms your house. But let it leak, from fracked wells or the melting Arctic, and it warms the whole planet.

The last rays of sun filter through the snow-covered spruces along the shore of Goldstream Lake, just outside Fairbanks, Alaska. Out on the lake Katey Walter Anthony stares at the black ice beneath her feet and at the white bubbles trapped inside it. Large and small, in layer upon layer, they spread out in every direction, like stars in the night sky. Walter Anthony, an ecologist at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, grabs a heavy ice pick and wraps the rope handle around her wrist. A graduate student holds a lighted match above a large bubble; Walter Anthony plunges the pick into it.

Gas rushing from the hole ignites with a whoomp that staggers her. "My job's the worst, because usually you catch on fire," she says, smiling. In the gathering twilight she and her team ignite one bubble after another.

The flames confirm that the bubbles are methane, the main component of natural gas. By counting and measuring them, Walter Anthony is trying to gauge how much methane is rising from Goldstream Lake—and from the millions of similar lakes that now occupy nearly a third of the Arctic region. The Arctic has warmed much faster than the rest of the planet in recent decades, and as the permafrost has melted, old lakes have grown and new ones have formed. Methane bubbles from their muddy depths in a way that is hard to quantify—until the first clear ice of fall captures a snapshot of the emissions from an entire lake.

Sometimes as Walter Anthony walks that ice, in Alaska, Greenland, or Siberia, a stamp of her boot is enough to release an audible sigh. Some lakes, she says, have "hot spots" where the methane bubbling is so strong that ice never forms, leaving open holes big enough to spot from an airplane. "It could be 10 or 30 liters of methane per day from one little hole, and it does that all year," she says. "And then you realize there are hundreds of spots like that and millions of lakes." By venting methane into the atmosphere, the lakes are amplifying the global warming that created them: Methane is a potent greenhouse gas. Carbon dioxide is the main one, because the atmosphere holds 200 times as much of it. But a given amount of methane traps at least 25 times as much heat—unless you burn it first. Then it enters the atmosphere as CO_2.

That's the other side of this Jekyll-and-Hyde story: A lot of methane is being burned these days. In the past decade the technology called hydraulic fracturing, "fracking" for short, has enabled drillers in the United States to extract natural gas from deeply buried shales they couldn't tap before. Natural gas supplies have surged; prices have plummeted. Fracking is now spreading around the world, and it's controversial. The gas boom has degraded landscapes and polluted water. But it has also had environmental benefits. Natural gas burns much cleaner than coal. In part because American power plants have been switching from coal to cheap gas, U.S. emissions of CO_2 from fossil fuels fell last year, even as the world set another record.

The catch is, methane emissions are rising. What's coming out of Arctic lakes is troubling, Walter Anthony says, because some of it seems to be coming not from bottom mud but from deeper geologic reservoirs that had hitherto been securely capped by permafrost—and that contain hundreds of times more methane than is in the atmosphere now. Still, most methane emissions today come from lower latitudes, and most are related more directly to human activities. A growing amount seems to be leaking, for instance, from gas wells and pipelines. Just how warm Earth gets this century will hinge in part on how we balance the good and bad of methane—on how much of it we capture and burn, and how much we inadvertently let loose.

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Methane is the simplest hydrocarbon—a single carbon atom surrounded by four hydrogen atoms. It usually forms when larger organic molecules are broken down, either by microbes or by heat. The microbes produce it when they eat dead plant matter in wet, oxygen-poor environments. They're the source of the methane bubbling up from Goldstream Lake; from swamps and marshes all over; from human-made rice fields, landfills, and manure lagoons; and from the stomachs of cows and other ruminants. Termites emit a lot of methane too.

Most of the natural gas we tap for fuel, however, was formed not by microbes but by heat and pressure deep underground—as oil and coal were, and often in the same places. In coal mines methane is an explosion hazard; in oil fields it was long considered a nuisance to be burned off or, worse, vented directly into the atmosphere. Liquid oil was more valuable as fuel and much easier to transport to markets. Then pipelines built during the post–World War II construction boom made gas more transportable. The energy industry began to exploit massive natural gas reservoirs in places like Russia, Qatar, and Iran.

The United States produces the bulk of its own gas, but U.S. production peaked in 1973. By 2005 the country seemed to be running short, and the industry was building expensive new tanker terminals to import liquefied natural gas. The fracking boom changed that. Since 2005 gas production from deep shales has increased more than tenfold; it now accounts for more than a third of total production, which last year surpassed the 1973 record. Within a decade, according to a Department of Energy (DOE) forecast, the U.S. will become a net exporter of gas.

Estimates of how much gas is locked up in shales and how long the boom can last have varied widely. In 2011 DOE put the amount of "unproved resources" of shale gas at 827 trillion cubic feet; in 2012 it cut that estimate by more than 40 percent. Production from fracked wells has declined faster than DOE analysts had expected. So some critics believe the boom is a bubble that will soon burst. But DOE still projects that U.S. gas production will rise rapidly and that shale gas will make up half the total by 2035.

And deep shales are not the last methane source. DOE and the industry are trying to figure out how to tap the largest one of all—the methane hydrates that lie frozen under vast areas of seafloor and Arctic permafrost. Worldwide, hydrates may contain more energy than all other fossil fuels combined. They're usually snow-white and look like ice, but they're strange stuff, and extracting the methane is tricky. Each molecule is trapped in a cage of water molecules that's stable only at high pressure and low temperatures; change either just a bit, and the cage crumbles. The escaping methane balloons in volume by a factor of 164.

Oil companies working on continental margins have to take care that extracting oil through an overlying hydrate layer does not disrupt it and perhaps damage the well. Climate scientists worry that global warming could destabilize hydrate layers, on land or at sea, triggering a massive methane release that would amplify the warming. A few scientists take seriously a catastrophic scenario in which the release happens rapidly, within a human lifetime, and the planet's temperature spikes.

The atmospheric methane concentration has risen nearly 160 percent since preindustrial times, to 1.8 parts per million. For a few years, from 1999 to about 2006, it seemed to level off. Some researchers credit Asian rice farmers, who began draining their paddies during the growing season to conserve water—which reduced methane emissions as well. Another theory credits the oil industry, which started capturing and selling methane it used to simply vent. Since 2006, though, atmospheric methane has been rising again. Many observers believe it's no coincidence that the number of wells punched into deep shales has been soaring too.

The largest U.S. shale formation, the Marcellus, lies about a mile under the Appalachian Mountains, in an arc that runs from West Virginia to New York through Ohio and Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania stretch is pretty country: rolling hills and pastures and, in the northwest, the forests of the Pennsylvania Wilds, which boast some 2,000 trout streams and one of the darkest night skies in the East.

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These days tank trucks, sand haulers, flatbeds stacked with pipe, and cement mixers rumble continually over the winding two-lane roads. Here and there in patches cut from forest or farm are flattened, four-acre mounds of fresh dirt. For a few weeks at a time tall derricks rise from these drill pads, and the trucks and trailers congregate around them. Contaminated water from the new wells pours into tank trucks or into lagoons lined with dark plastic. The derricks soon disappear, but the wells stay, connected by clusters of green pipes and valves to permanent new pipelines, condensate tanks, and compressor stations. Much of Pennsylvania has been transformed since 2008.

The boom's roots go back to the 1980s and to Texas, where a wildcatter named George Mitchell, facing dwindling reserves, began probing the Barnett Shale near Dallas. Black shales, the compressed mud of ancient seas, were known as petroleum source rocks. But over geologic time much of the oil and gas had migrated out of the shales into porous sandstone traps—and that's where the industry sank its wells. Wells ending in shale never yielded much; the shales were too dense and impermeable to allow gas to flow.

Mitchell Energy's workaround, developed over 20 years with support from DOE, became the recipe for the fracking boom. It has two parts. First, drill down to the shale, then continue drilling horizontally for a mile or so inside it; that puts more gas close to the well. Second, inject millions of gallons of water, chemical lubricants, and sand at high pressure to shatter the shale, allowing methane to rush into the well.

The gas from fracked wells has benefited consumers; 55 percent of the homes in the U.S. have gas heat, and prices last winter reached a ten-year low. In Pennsylvania the boom has revived businesses; created some 18,000 jobs, by the state's reckoning; and paid millions of dollars in lease-signing bonuses and royalties. However, some landowners who leased their land to gas companies have since had second thoughts.

Sherry Vargson is one. In 2008 Chesapeake Energy began drilling on her family's 197-acre dairy farm in Granville Summit, in northeastern Pennsylvania. In June 2010, after a crew had been working on the well, Vargson turned on her kitchen tap to find it backed up with what she thought was air. "It was like drawing a glass of Alka-Seltzer, very sizzly and bubbly," she recalls. Testing showed the water contained more than twice the methane that's considered an explosion threat. Chesapeake has been supplying her with bottled water ever since, while arguing that the contamination is natural. Meanwhile Vargson's monthly royalty checks have shrunk from more than $1,000 to less than $100, as production from the gas well has plummeted.

The industry's main argument in attempting to reassure a worried public in Pennsylvania and elsewhere has been that shales typically lie thousands of feet below drinking-water aquifers. So contamination, whether by shale gas or fracking wastewater—which contains fracking chemicals, salt, heavy metals, and radioactive elements leached from the rock—should be physically impossible. The argument makes intuitive sense, but the jury is still out. Duke University scientists have recently reported evidence that fluids—albeit not fracking fluids—have migrated upward from the Marcellus Shale through natural fissures.

In an earlier study the Duke researchers sampled 60 private water wells in northeastern Pennsylvania and found no sign of fracking fluids. But they did find that methane levels were on average 17 times higher in wells near drilling sites and that some of the methane had the chemical signature of shale gas. It may have leaked into the shallow aquifers, they said, through faulty casings around the gas wells. The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) also blamed faulty casings in 2009 when it fined Cabot Oil & Gas for contaminating the drinking supplies of 19 homes in Dimock Township, 60 miles east of the Vargson farm. In that case the methane came not from the shale but from shallow deposits traversed by the gas wells. DEP has also fined gas companies for mishandling fracking wastewater and allowing spills that polluted creeks and rivers.

In Pennsylvania and elsewhere, shale-gas drilling has raced far ahead of efforts to understand and limit its impact. So far, however, its impact seems much smaller than that of coal mining—which in Pennsylvania has caused far worse river pollution, in West Virginia has lopped the tops off numerous mountains, and in the U.S. still kills hundreds of miners a

year, mostly through black lung disease. The comparison is relevant because cheap natural gas is reducing coal burning. As recently as 2007, coal generated nearly half of U.S. electricity. Last March its share fell to 34 percent.

John Hanger, a Pennsylvania lawyer who helped author the state's renewable-energy standards, ran the DEP from 2008 to early 2011. Though he tightened regulations on the gas industry and handed out substantial fines, he was attacked by opponents who wanted a complete halt to fracking. Hanger believes such critics are missing the big picture. "The massive switching from coal to gas has done more to clean Pennsylvania's air, and America's air, than probably any other single thing we've ever done," he says.

Unlike coal, natural gas burns without spewing sulfur dioxide, mercury, or particulates into the air or leaving ash behind. And it emits only half as much carbon dioxide. The greenhouse gas inventory compiled by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) shows that the nation's CO_2 emissions in 2010 were lower than in 2005 by just over 400 million metric tons, or 7 percent. (Preliminary data for 2011 indicate a further decrease.) Reduced emissions from power plants, mostly because many have switched from coal to gas, accounted for a bit over a third of that.

Some environmentalists who once welcomed shale gas with precisely that expectation changed their minds after watching the boom in Pennsylvania. But Hanger hopes it spreads around the world, as it seems likely to. "In China they're sitting on potentially huge supplies of shale gas," he says. "It would be an enormous climate benefit if China were to substitute gas for some of its coal burning. And it's an immediate benefit—you don't have to wait until 2040 or 2050."

Unless too much methane leaks into the atmosphere. As U.S. CO_2 emissions fell between 2005 and 2010, methane emissions rose. By 2010, EPA says, the rise was equivalent in global warming potential to around 40 million metric tons of CO_2 annually, which means it offset 10 percent of the CO_2 decline. More than half of that methane increase, says EPA, came from the natural gas industry—the country's biggest emitter.

Judging by EPA's numbers, fracking still seems like a clear win for the climate. But some scientists, notably Robert Howarth and his coworkers at Cornell University, believe EPA has underestimated methane emissions and, more important, the global warming potential of each methane molecule. They argue that methane leaking from wells, pipes, compressors, and storage tanks actually makes shale gas worse for the climate than coal. Other researchers question Howarth's approach. The debate persists in part because methane numbers are so uncertain.

New rules issued by EPA this year will require the gas industry to measure its emissions and also to reduce them. One of the biggest leaks occurs when a fracked well is completed and high-pressure fracking fluids surge back up the well, bringing methane with them. The new rules will require gas companies to start capturing that methane by 2015, using technology that's already required in Wyoming, Colorado, and parts of Texas.

Some experts consider methane capture a great opportunity: an easier way than controlling CO_2 to slow global warming, at least in the short term, because small amounts of methane make a big difference and because it's a valuable fuel. China, for instance, the world's largest coal producer, vents huge amounts of methane from its mines to prevent explosions. In the 1990s, when Egyptian geologist Mohamed El-Ashry headed the Global Environment Facility, an agency created by the United Nations and the World Bank, it devoted ten million dollars to projects that siphoned methane from several Chinese mines and delivered it as fuel to thousands of nearby households. Hundreds of such projects await funding worldwide, El-Ashry says.

Drew Shindell, a climate scientist at NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, recently led a global team of scientists in analyzing seven methane-reduction strategies, from draining rice fields to capturing the gas that escapes from landfills and gas wells. Unlike CO_2, methane affects human health, because it's a precursor of smog. When health impacts are included, Shindell's group found, the benefits of methane controls outweigh the costs by at least 3 to 1, and in some cases by as much as 20 to 1.

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"There are some sources that are difficult, if not impossible, to control," says Shindell. "The Arctic emissions—I'd probably vote those as being near impossible. But then you have long-distance gas pipelines, and we know exactly how to control leaks from those: put in and maintain high-quality seals. And there are other places, especially in oil, gas, and coal production. It's really straightforward to get a substantial fraction of methane emissions under control."

Last spring, as the annual thaw began in Alaska, Katey Walter Anthony heard from her friend Bill Wetzen, who owns Goldstream Lake and sometimes brings her coffee out on the ice. When Wetzen bought the property 20 years ago, he built his bungalow about 20 yards from the lake; by last year it was nearly at the water's edge. Now, Wetzen said, with the permafrost thawing beneath it, the walls and floors were tearing apart. He was going to have to move.

Also last spring, DOE-funded researchers on Alaska's North Slope successfully tested a method of extracting methane from buried hydrates. Though the process "may take years" to become economically viable, said the DOE press release, "the same could be said of the early shale gas research ... that the Department backed in the 1970s and 1980s." If even a small fraction of methane hydrates becomes recoverable, DOE estimates, that could double U.S. gas resources.

Some of the methane bubbling from Arctic lakes, Walter Anthony says, might come from hydrates. Around 56 million years ago, in the Paleocene, a long planetary warming culminated in a sudden temperature spike of 9°F; many scientists suspect a massive destabilization of methane hydrates. Most, including Walter Anthony, do not think such a catastrophe is likely now. But Arctic methane could add a lot to global warming over the next few centuries.

"If we could only capture it, it would make a great energy source," Walter Anthony says.

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Loophole Lets Toxic Oil Water Flow Over Indian Land

November 15, 2012

by: Elizabeth Shogren, NPR

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Martel is giving me a tour of one of a dozen oil and gas fields on the reservation. These operations have the federal government's permission to dump wastewater on the land — so much that it creates streams that flow into natural creeks and rivers. And this water contains toxic chemicals, including known carcinogens and radioactive material, according to documents obtained by NPR through Freedom of Information Act requests.

The fumes hitting Martel's nose are hydrogen sulfide, which can be deadly. So Martel makes sure the wind is at his back before walking over to a pit the size of several tennis courts. Pipes are emptying dirty brown water that came up from oil wells into the pit, which is completely covered in goopy black oil.

The oil is supposed to float to the surface, and then a truck will vacuum it up. Any solid stuff should fall on the bottom of the pit, before the water rushes out and forms a stream. But there are still chemicals in the water — some from the earth, some from the oil, and some the companies add to make the oil flow faster.

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In most of the country, this would be illegal. Most oil fields reinject wastewater far underground, where it cannot cause harm.

So why is this wastewater being released into a desert wilderness of sagebrush-covered foothills and sandstone cliffs that blaze with reds and oranges?

The few cows grazing nearby provide a clue.

"You can see the tracks into the water here," says Martel. "This is one of their watering holes."

Inside EPA, Distress Over Dumping Loophole

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Without the wastewater, this area would be bone dry most of the year.

Credit: Stephanie d'Otreppe/NPR

In the 1970s, when the Environmental Protection Agency was banning oil companies from dumping their wastewater, ranchers, especially in Wyoming, made a fuss. They argued that their livestock needs water, even dirty water.

So the EPA made an exception, a loophole, for the arid West. If oil companies demonstrate that ranchers or wildlife use the water, the companies can release it.

Off the reservation, Western states get to decide what oil companies must do with wastewater; over time, states' rules have become stricter than the EPA's. Some states have all but outlawed dumping.

But on the Wind River Reservation, the EPA controls whether companies can release wastewater on a case-by-case basis.

The EPA refused multiple requests for interviews, but in a statement, the agency said it was evaluating the permits it gives some of the companies to expel this water on the reservation.

"EPA is reviewing new information associated with these permits and intends to meet with the Tribes in upcoming weeks to discuss next steps," the statement reads.

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The documents show hints of mutiny inside the EPA. Some EPA staffers clearly are appalled by the wastewater releases.

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Another staffer warns that the chemicals in the water could have "irrevocable human health and environmental impacts."

The documents also show recent detective work that some EPA staffers did to try to figure out what chemicals companies are putting in the water. Their research reveals that some of the waste streams sometimes include chemicals from hydraulic fracturing, an engineering technique designed to increase the flow of wells. They also include chemicals whose warning labels clearly state "toxic to aquatic organisms," "prevent material from entering sewers or waterways," and warnings about cancer and birth defects at low levels.

The documents suggest that at least some people inside the EPA are advocating for stricter rules. But much of this debate has been kept secret. The EPA refused to give NPR 757 documents about the loophole, claiming they can be kept secret because they are between the EPA and its attorneys or among EPA staffers.

'We Should Know Better By Now'

Experts, including scientists at the U.S. Geological Survey, say it's very rare for oil field water to be released into drainages or streams because it nearly always contains harmful chemicals.

"It's a very uncommon situation in the United States and, I believe, most of the rest of the world," said John Veil, a retired wastewater expert at the Department of Energy's Argonne National Laboratory, who now works as a consultant.

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In one analysis that Veil did for Argonne, he found that 98 percent of the water that companies pump up with oil is reinjected deep underground. Veil says it's usually far too salty to discharge.

Some scientists were alarmed when they learned about the oil field wastewater releases, especially given that it is happening on tribal land.

"I was shocked when I heard this," says Rob Jackson, a Duke University environmental scientist. "I was very surprised this was allowed. It's just something that we should know better by now. We should know that dumping our waste onto the surface of the ground is a bad solution."

Other experts agreed that the chemicals in the water raise concerns. However, some scientists, including staffers from the U.S. Geological Survey, felt uncomfortable commenting for the record without doing their own testing.

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He stresses that they include hazardous air pollutants such as hydrochloric acid and naphthalene, and carcinogens like benzene and ethyl benzene.

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He urges the EPA to consider the consequences of its policy and how it looks.

"Are we doing something on tribal lands we wouldn't allow somewhere else? I think that's something we have to be asking ourselves."

On The Reservation, Dead Ducklings, Dangerous Fumes

Outside the reservation, Western states decide how oil field waste is handled — and their rules are stricter than the EPA's. For instance, off the reservation, the state of Wyoming requires companies to inject wastewater deep underground and out of harm's way if they've added toxic chemicals to the wells. Other states have set tougher water quality standards that have nearly eliminated these releases.

On the Wind River Reservation, these oil field wastewater streams have flowed for several decades without attracting much interest, even from the tribes, according to Wes Martel and other officials of the two tribes that share the reservation, the Eastern Shoshoni and Northern Arapaho.

"Most of our elders were very trusting, very trusting people. They were glad they had the opportunity to get some revenue. Most of them were just thinking, 'We're being watched over, and things are being taken care of,' " says Martel, 65, who was in tribal government many years ago and was elected two years ago to return to government.

But in 2005, the Wind River Environmental Quality Commission sampled the water downstream of some of the oil fields. Researchers found toxic levels of some chemicals, stretches of streams that were lifeless, and streambeds splotched with black ooze, white crystals and purple growths. They recorded water temperatures as high as 125 degrees, and found dead ducklings, according to a draft report prepared by the tribes' environmental department.

During tours of four of the oil fields earlier this fall, I witnessed visible violations of the plain language of the permits that the EPA gave these companies to discharge wastewater. For instance, I saw streambeds covered in white crystals and

rock-like formations below outfall pipes. The permits prohibit visible deposits in the receiving waters or shoreline. They also prohibit any visible foam or sheen — I saw both. At the wastewater discharge site at one oil field, company officials warned us to leave after a few minutes because of the danger of respiratory distress or death from hydrogen sulfide fumes.

The companies were reluctant to talk. One agreed to meet at its oil field on the reservation but backed out the night before. Others failed to return multiple phone calls. Houston-based Marathon Oil Corporation, which runs three oil fields on the reservation, agreed to an interview but refused to be recorded.

"As far as I know, there has never been concerns and opposition for the quality of the water that I'm aware about," says Bob Whisonant, Rocky Mountain operations manager for Marathon Oil, which has three oil fields on the reservation.

Whisonant stresses that the water from his oil fields meets EPA's requirements.

"We're really fortunate within Wyoming that the water is extremely fresh, very suitable for livestock and agriculture purposes. That's why we're able to discharge," Whisonant says.

But the EPA's permits, which are reissued every several years, tell a different story. Even the state of Wyoming, which is known to be pro-industry, questioned the fact that the EPA's requirements didn't seem to protect aquatic life. The EPA's response was that the tribes had not adopted their own water quality standards.

The EPA permits acknowledge that oil field water may not meet the agency's own water quality criteria.

The agency requires only minimal water testing at most of the oil fields, and it does not do its own testing to verify the companies' claims; nor does it sample water quality in the streams receiving the wastewater.

In 2007, the EPA required one company to test aquatic animals to see if they'd die in the water flowing from one oil field — it's a standard test of water quality known as whole effluent toxicity. The minnows and bugs in the sample died within an hour. The EPA asked the company to figure out what was killing the animals and propose remedies, but it let the company go on releasing the water for years. Five years later, the company, Marathon, says it is waiting for the EPA to OK a plan to lower high levels of sulfide in the water.

Wes Martel says he's been pushing the EPA to thoroughly study the wastewater and then require the companies to purify it or inject it underground.

He worries about water quality and wildlife — and about food safety, too. Oil field water abounds on the reservation, and the cows that graze there will eventually end up on dinner plates.

"So it really makes you wonder: What impacts is this having on not only aquatic life, but our wildlife?" Martel says.

"You've got to wonder, what types of chemicals are those beef retaining? And when that goes to the slaughterhouse, what's in your steak?"

Ranchers Still Want The Water

But Eastern Shoshone member Darwin Griebel, one of a handful of ranchers whose livestock use the oil field water, pooh -poohs Martel's concerns.

"Animals drink it. People aren't going to drink it. Hell with the quality of the water," says Griebel.

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Griebel has known Martel for nearly 60 years, since they were in elementary school and slept over at each others' houses. But he says they don't agree on this issue.

Griebel says his cows haven't suffered health problems from drinking the water, and the impurities clear up after the streams have run for a while. (The tribes' water study backs up that idea: Concentrations of various harmful chemicals tend to decrease the farther you get from the oil fields.)

What's most concerning to Griebel is that the water has been crucial to his family's business for generations. Without it, he says: "There would be no water for the cows. There would be no water for the deer, the antelope. Nothing. It would put us out of business is what it would do."

But Martel says that if the EPA does not put a stop to this, the tribes will step in.

If the oil companies say that reinjecting or cleaning the water would be so expensive that it would no longer be profitable to pump oil, Martel knows what his response will be: "Good riddance."

"We'll take it over ourselves and do it right," he says.

Martel dreams of putting tribal companies in charge of their oil fields. Then the tribes would get all the profits, instead of just the royalties the companies pay them. They'd also be able to protect water quality for future generations.

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Loophole Lets Toxic Oil Water Flow Over Indian Land
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by: Elizabeth Shogren , NPR

Every month, oil and gas operations dump millions of gallons of wastewater on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming. Under a long-standing EPA loophole, it's perfectly legal. Internal agency documents obtained by NPR show the water contains toxic chemicals, including known carcinogens and radioactive materials, that end up in natural rivers.

Loading the player ...

by Elizabeth Shogren

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Loophole Lets Toxic Oil Water Flow Over Indian Land
Minnesota Public Radio - Online

11/16/2012

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by Elizabeth Shogren, National Public Radio

November 15, 2012

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Broadcast Dates

All Things Considered, November 15, 2012

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

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NPR - Online

11/16/2012

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Credit: Stephanie d'Otreppe/NPR

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EPA study should offer chance to review fracking
Fairmont Sentinel

11/16/2012

Americans have been drilling wells for oil and gas for more than a century and a half. Hydraulic fracturing - or fracking - has been in use to augment well production for decades.

Yet it has been only during the past few years that a gusher of propaganda about fracking has surfaced. Incredibly, some public officials, have allowed it to dictate policy.

What about the facts on fracking and other oil and gas industry practices? A variety of studies indicate there is little or no danger of groundwater being contaminated by chemicals used in fracking, as the industry points out.

Nevertheless, the Environmental Protection Agency has launched a comprehensive study of fracking. Last week, EPA official George Paulson said a progress report on the study should be released by the end of this year. A final report is due in 2014, he added.

Good. The EPA's progress report should give scientists, the gas and oil industry, and those worried about fracking opportunities to check the agency's methodology. EPA officials, sometimes accused of bowing to the demands of radical environmentalists rather than basing policy on science, should welcome the oversight.

There indeed are some valid concerns about fracking, primarily involving well casings used to keep chemicals out of groundwater. But rejecting the practice altogether, in view of what appears to be an excellent environmental record, makes no sense. The EPA study should provide solid, science-based guidance that will safeguard the environment while allowing Americans to get at the gigantic supplies of natural gas underneath our feet.

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EPA Finds Fracking Study Optimistic
frackingscience.com

11/16/2012

Top officials at the EPA find the fracking study optimistic about the future. The nationwide project examined natural gas hydraulic fracturing and potential drinking water impacts. According to the Huffington Post, the study will help scientists and the public identify the key issue to focus on.

Glenn Paulson, the EPA's science advisor, said that a progress report on the study should be released before the end of the year, and the final report released in 2014. Paulson said the study of fracking and drinking water "is one of the most aggressive public outreach programs in EPA history."

"I think the drinking water study is going to be useful to local governments, and state governments, too," Paulson said. He added that "a lot of people have their minds made up" about fracking, even though many aspects of research are still in the early stages.

The EPA says in the project overview that natural gas "plays a key role in our nation's clean energy future" but that serious concerns have been raised about potential impacts to the environment and human health.

Dan Alfaro, a spokesman for Energy in Depth, believes the EPA study will show that gas drilling and fracking are safe.

"There have been numerous studies and a multitude of research on oil and natural gas extraction methods," Alfaro said. The EPA study "will confirm once again previous findings that current industry practices used in development are safe, responsible and effective means of extracting and producing our natural energy resources."

Bernard Goldstein, retired professor at the University of Pittsburgh School of Public Health, said that three years ago researcher had very little data. Today, there is an abundance of research. Goldstein even praised Shell Oil Co., for explaining the steps it takes to protect the environment and public health.

"I thought the industry presentation by Shell was superb," Goldstein said, adding that Paulson, of the EPA, is "the right kind of person" to make sure that health is included in the research being done on gas drilling.

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Shale Game | Canadian Underwriter
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Mandatory field.

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Shale Game

Hydraulic fracturing (or "fracking"), a process used in natural gas extraction, is raising a lot of questions about long-term environmental risks. Among these questions is whether or not existing insurance programs are up to the task of covering the risk. Some view the area as full of potential for innovative approaches to covering this type of exposure.

By: Angela Stelmakowich, Editor

2012-08-01

Hydraulic fracturing, widely known as fracking, is meant to promote accessibility, affordability and profitability in the dogged pursuit of energy sources that can be packaged and sold. But what are the risks of coaxing - some would say forcing - natural gas from shale deep underground to the surface? Does fracking fit comfortably within well-entrenched insurance products for the oil and gas sector, or will it require a new form of risk transfer? Identifying insurance products that respond to risks associated with fracking may be a mix of art and science, since there are still many outstanding questions about just what those risks are.

Fracking, really, is an example of "What is old is new again." In existence for well over a half-century, it involves injecting pressurized water containing chemical additives into geologic formations - in this case, shale - to create micro-fractures artificially. Adding sand (proppant) prevents fractures from closing, thereby allowing natural gas to escape when the pressure is released and fluids return to surface.

Natural Resources Canada reports potential and producing shale gas resources in this country are found in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, although most current drilling and production is in northeast British Columbia. "The extraction of natural gas at commercially viable rates has become possible only because of the recent combination of two techniques: horizontal drilling and multi-stage hydraulic fracturing," the department notes. "The assessment of shale gas potential has led to a complete redrawing of the North American energy map."

Shale gas is still in its nascent stages here at home, but the United States has more than 40,000 producing wells. A recent investor presentation by Valero Energy Corp., one of the largest independent refiners south of the border, notes that abundant and growing U.S. shale oil and Canadian production will provide a feedstock cost advantage, which will increase in the future.

"It's remarkable how the industry has shifted in such a short time period and more change is expected to come with technological innovation as a key driver," Scott Bolton, PwC's Canadian energy leader, said in May 2011 following the release of the Canadian Annual Energy Survey report. "Now, we're trying to deal with a wave of shale gas production that will be flowing to market for decades to come."

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Joe Restoule, president and director of the William H. McGannon Foundation and vice president of strategic opportunities for NOVA Chemicals, appears equally bullish. "It's as important as the oil sands," Restoule says. "I don't think we've discovered its potential."

FULL BORE

Also not yet discovered is the full spectrum of risks associated with fracking and insurance coverage required to mitigate these exposures. As the use of fracking increases, its public profile has drawn some negative publicity. In the United States, in particular, fracking has been the subject of numerous studies, lawsuits and protest movements. Consequently, regulators are investigating the environmental and other risks of fracking.

Natural Resources Canada reports that hydraulic fracturing is permitted only well below the deepest freshwater aquifers. But this does not seem to have eased concerns that fracking can foul water supplies.

"When the treatment fluid returns to the surface, it is alleged that there is a serious risk of pollution, either from a blowout or from any storage pits in which the well fluid is stored," notes Willis' Energy Market Review, released in

April 2012.

"Contaminants of concern to drinking water include fracturing fluid chemicals and degradation products, and naturally occurring materials in the geologic formations (e.g. metals, radionuclides) that are mobilized and brought to the surface during the hydraulic fracturing process," notes a fact sheet from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The link between fracking and water contamination, if any, is currently being evaluated as part of an EPA study.

The Energy Institute at the University of Texas at Austin conducted a review of available evidence and drew the following conclusions:

• hydraulic fracturing of shale formations has no direct connection to reports of groundwater contamination;

• overall, surface spills of fracturing fluids pose greater risks to groundwater sources than from hydraulic fracturing itself; and

• the lack of baseline studies in areas of shale gas development makes it difficult to evaluate the long-term, cumulative effects and risks associated with hydraulic fracturing.

The outstanding questions relating to the environment have the insurance industry focusing on longer-term risk solutions. The Willis review notes that three keys areas of the insurance market are particularly affected by hydraulic fracking operations:

• operator's extra expense: indemnifies the assured's costs of regaining control of a well following a blowout, including the re-drilling of the well and the cost of clean-up of any resulting seepage and pollution;

• comprehensive general liability and excess umbrella liability cover: in essence, these cover the assured for damage to third-party property and bodily injury arising out of the assured's operations; and

• environmental impairment liability: covers the assured from legal liabilities related to pollution conditions arising out of the assured's operations or general pollution conditions at the site itself.

MANAGING FRACKING RISKS

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Traditional insurance packages for oil and gas activities might focus on general liability and the protection against "sudden and accidental" events that it provides. Information from Chartis notes that basic elements of a comprehensive insurance program include:

• insurance of property against named risks (to protect against such risks as fire, explosion, action of water and natural disaster);

• insurance of machinery and equipment from damage (includes errors in equipment design or installation, overheating, power supply disruptions and human error); and

• insurance against business interruption (financial loss caused by partial or full stoppage of the enterprise as a result of events insured under the previous two sections).

Shale gas drilling essentially adds a new element to the mix: environmental impairment liability. Zurich reports that risks include potential chemical spills causing pollution of local pond and irrigation canals; natural gas or fracturing chemicals seeping into the water table because of an inadequate casing cementing; natural gas leaching into municipal drinking water; inappropriate disposal of fracturing mixture; and high water volume required for shale gas fracturing.

Mary Ann Susavidge, managing executive underwriter for XL Group's environmental insurance unit, says "both general liability and environmental impairment coverage are appropriate for oil and gas operators, as there are events that can occur on drill sites that clearly fall outside of the time element coverage provided by general liability."

Whereas general liability covers only sudden and accidental events, the following coverages can be used for both gradual as well as sudden and accidental pollution events. Contractor's pollution liability, for example, offers coverage for both sudden and accidental and gradual pollution conditions resulting from trade contractors performing services at drilling sites (this includes risks related to site infrastructure, hauling raw materials or hauling waste materials). Pollution legal liability provides sudden and accidental and gradual coverage for pollution conditions for site operators and non-working interests at both oil and gas well sites.

"Regulators and the public would expect companies to be adequately insured in the event that something unforeseen occurs, either at the time or as a latent issue," says Restoule.

DEVELOPING PICTURE

It's tough to silence all "what ifs?" given the scant number of frackingrelated claims. "In Canada thus far, we have not seen any large or substantive claim that is uninsurable," Restoule says. "What we've seen are small claims, and certainly we've not had any sort of frequency of loss in the fracturing arena. There haven't been enough test points in the insurance industry to tell us whether it's adequate or not."

Restoule says he's not aware of any trends among reported claims. "The losses are similar to any other industry: it's human error, it's mechanical breakdown or failure and act of God."

Canada is not without incidents, of course. Last January 13, for example, hydraulic fracturing operations appear to have affected a nearby oil well, resulting in a release of fracturing fluids, notes Alberta's Energy Resources Conservation Board. There were no injuries or any confirmed effects on wildlife, but both wells were shut down and a clean-up had to be done, the board reports.

The United States has more claims experience, including through lawsuits. "If there's any concern from the insurance market," says Jeffrey Hanneman, director of Aon Environmental Services Group, it has been around the negative

publicity associated with claims related to contaminated drinking water. "If this trend continues, do we see more claims?" he asks. "What's the frequency of those claims? What is the severity of those claims? There really haven't been a lot of claims that have gone from lawsuit to settlement. So it's hard to gauge from a loss standpoint what a typical loss should cost."

That said, notes John O'Brien, president of Ironshore Environmental, "to date our losses don't match with anything that people would look at and say, ‘Fracking causes this.' So my losses don't look like a Spike Lee movie at all."

NEW OPPORTUNITIES

In the absence of an established claims history, the insurance industry has room to consider product opportunities, Restoule says. "What new products do they offer that's unique to the fracking industry?"

Susavidge adds: "Policy language is currently consistent with the potential exposures. However, a gap may exist for emerging issues that have yet to be quantified. This has been true for many industries/exposures over the 25-year evolution of environmental insurance."

Hanneman suggests "the amount of coverage available for anything pollution-related from a casualty standpoint, from general liability and excess liability, is very narrow." He takes the view that fracking-related gradual pollution coverage would best go it alone.

"What we've seen from the large national, international insurance companies has been a mixed bag to date regarding who will offer standalone pollution coverage to owners and operators of wells where fracking is being done," Hanneman says.

Probably five or six carriers will "write that coverage on a primary basis," he reports. "Some might be more comfortable writing it as an excess layer on top of another carrier writing the primary pollution. You have some markets that, while they write environmental coverage for energy risks, will not write it for anyone conducting hydraulic fracturing. It's just a matter of appetite."

A pollution policy offering "gradual accidental coverage" that does not have defined reporting provisions can help to bridge the coverage gap created by shale gas exploration and production, notes information from Zurich. Sudden accidental coverage in a gas operator's general liability insurance often has "a defined reporting and discovery period - sometimes as little as 72 hours for discovery and 30 days for reporting," it adds.

Environmental impairment opens the door to new issues. The matter of "location, location, location" may be a costly one should an incident occur, Restoule says, citing the example of a pipeline leak in a remote area.

Response crews would need to be deployed, usually from large centres, equipment would need to be sent and people would need to be fed, housed and demobilized. Underwriters report the costs "are just huge in these remote areas," Restoule says. One might believe claims in remote areas "should be relatively benign and should not be significant, but I am told that that is not the case."

Another consideration is the cost of defending, a consideration distinguishable from whether or not an insured is ultimately held liable. An Aon Exposure Alert points to new environmental products that offer enhancements meant to fill in the gaps left by casualty and control of well insurance. One such product provides gradual pollution coverage (including defence and investigation costs), affirmative coverage for hydraulic fracturing fluids, coverage for evacuation expenses and image restoration expenses, and blanket insured contract definition for non-operating assets.

Getting into the game in situations in which fracking plays a central role is not necessarily attractive to all. Some

companies may choose to opt out completely, while others may wait for a clearer picture of risk to develop, both in the short- and long-terms.

Asked if XL has seen insurers exclude fracturing from their policies, Susavidge answers yes, primarily in the Marcellus shale region in the United States. In the U.S., the Marcellus area runs through New York, northern and western Pennsylvania, eastern Ohio, western Maryland, and throughout most of West Virginia. In Canada, it can be found below Lake Erie, stretching into southern Ontario, including Port Stanley, Long Point and St. Thomas.

"For various risks, carriers have considered and continue to consider the impact of potential adverse accumulations of risk in particular geographies," Susavidge points out.

Commenting on the environmental market, O'Brien says he is seeing insurance companies choosing not to "write any exposure in that space."

At the same time, a whole lot of new clients - some of whom were not previously involved in the environmental space - need or want cover. "The genesis, I think, of this becoming a market where people want to buy environmental insurance is really partially due to the media," O'Brien says. "But also, and I think even more importantly, due to Deep Water Horizon - even though Deep Water Horizon is not a fracking-related loss."

The breadth of the liability spectrum for these types of losses may be spurring some organizations to consider: "What sort of things do we invest in that have these same patterns of liability?"

ALLOCATING RISK

Given the potential for negative longterm environmental effects related to fracking, what is the next move for risk managers involved in this arena?

Restoule expects this question will be among the issues discussed as part of an upcoming forum in Calgary on the myths and realities of fracking. "Do we understand the technical risks associated with the activity?" he asks. "Do we understand what coverages are available and, more importantly, what coverages are not available? How is risk allocated between the driller, the operator and the owner?"

Restoule advises companies needing fracking-related coverage to differentiate themselves through good practice.

At Encana Corporation, for example, "every natural gas well has an engineered steel casing system that is cemented externally to prevent any fluids from moving from the well bore to groundwater aquifers," notes an FAQ from the company. "The case design and cementing program conform to a written, engineered design which is specific to each well."

Canadian operators and drillers are trying to educate underwriters about the risk assessments that their operations are performing, in addition to "their technology, their techniques and, more importantly, the safety precautions they are implementing in terms of risk mitigation and risk control," Restoule says.

"To quantify whether or not prospects meet our underwriting criteria in the oil and gas arena, we analyze areas such as baseline screening processes, integrity management processes, emergency response programs, well construction protocol, pad site and pond construction, as well as vendor selection and contractual language," Susavidge says. All of these factors are considered to address groundwater, soil and emission risk at a drill site, she adds.

"Premiums are based on risk," says Susavidge. "Simply stated, a marginal operator that does no hydraulic fracturing will still receive a higher premium than a solid operator that engages in hydraulic fracturing of wells."

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Hanneman sees well count as a key factor influencing premium. "If you're a very small operator, in U.S. dollars you might see a minimum premium of $25,000 to $50,000 if you have a handful of wells and you're buying a low limit like $1 million," he says. For clients with a large number of wells and buying $25 million, $50 million or more in limits, premiums are "going to run $200,000 to $500,000 depending on the number of wells and ultimate limits purchased."

Best practices publications, historical claims/loss information and continuing technology improvements, among other things, offer sufficient "knowledge to identify oil and gas operators that are operating in a safe and prudent manner," Susavidge says. "This information forms a basis for criteria to price this risk properly based on the analytics," she notes. "What is difficult to quantify is the social and political risk in different geographies."

Still up in the air is the influence of the EPA study on fracking and water supplies, expected perhaps late this year or early next. "The social and legal reaction to the report may influence the availability of coverage," Susavidge suggests. "We expect that will take some time to develop."

Plenty of market capacity is available right now, Hanneman reports. That said, "some markets are still definitely in a wait-and-see pattern as to whether or not they want to offer environmental coverage for this class of risk."

Although certain opportunities have been created, "I can tell you that there has been some contraction as of late," O'Brien reports. "I think that really has to do more with fear of the unknown than anything else."

PUBLIC DISPLAY

Restoule believes that risks associated with fracking activities go beyond hazard and operational risk. "We're tending to forget about the ERM [enterprise risk management] process and that of reputation and brand, and how do you manage that as a driller and as an operator," he says. "Is there a black swan event in there? I don't know. It's taking the risk management process across the enterprise and not just focus on operation and hazard."

Another issue to consider is how water resources may influence business viability. Restoule points to discussions in the U.S. about current drought conditions and a requirement that frackers reuse water. That is indeed an issue for frackers, he says, because the process may increase the costs of operations.

The EPA reports the volume of water needed for hydraulic fracturing varies by site and type of formation: 50,000 to 350,000 gallons of water may be required to fracture one well in a coal bed formation, while two million to five million gallons of water may be necessary to fracture one horizontal well in a shale formation.

"At the price of natural gas, could it impair the whole economics by introducing these closed waste water disposal and reuse systems?" Restoule asks. "In Canada, we haven't faced that problem yet. But you can bet that the closed disposal system is something that is, in my opinion, probably a good risk mitigation measure and I could see it being imposed upon us."

Several provincial and state jurisdictions have opted not to jump on the hydraulic fracturing bandwagon at this time. For example, Quebec has said "No" so far.

Meanwhile in Nova Scotia, hydraulic fracturing will have to wait until at least mid-2014 to enter that province as it completes its review. Citing public concerns over drinking water integrity, Nova Scotia's provincial energy minister, Charlie Parker, said last April: "We will take time to learn from jurisdictions with significantly more experience in this area than Nova Scotia."

Restoule views the moratorium in Quebec as based on the desire for disclosure of chemicals used in fracking fluids. "If

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we were able to achieve transparency and educate the public on the technologies and the chemicals used in fracking, I think they could dispel that," he says.

Hanneman agrees, suggesting that this sort of disclosure "erases uncertainty and mystery." He expects that "you're going to see a trend toward more eco-friendly constituents in the fluids, anyway, just as a best practice."

Encana reports that it prohibits the use of any hydraulic fracturing fluid products containing diesel, 2-Butoxyethanol or benzene. "Our Responsible Products Program helps ensure that the hydraulic fracturing fluid products we use in our operations are as safe, effective and as environmentally responsible as possible," the company states.

Despite the reviews, the concerns and the rhetoric, fracking may be here to stay, subject to prohibitions or elevated expenses. As claims currently stand, Restoule says that insurance is available and affordable. Asked if he thinks that could change, he replies that everything is subject to change based upon frequency and severity. "It's really, truly supply and demand, isn't it?"

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Loophole Lets Toxic Oil Water Flow Over Indian Land
WFAE-FM - Online

11/16/2012

Thu November 15, 2012

Loophole Lets Toxic Oil Water Flow Over Indian Land

By Elizabeth Shogren

Next image Previous image

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The air reeks so strongly of rotten eggs that tribal leader Wes Martel hesitates to get out of the car at an oil field on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming. He already has a headache from the fumes he smelled at another oil field.

Martel is giving me a tour of one of a dozen oil and gas fields on the reservation. These operations have the federal government's permission to dump wastewater on the land — so much that it creates streams that flow into natural creeks and rivers. And this water contains toxic chemicals, including known carcinogens and radioactive material, according to documents obtained by NPR through Freedom of Information Act requests.

The fumes hitting Martel's nose are hydrogen sulfide, which can be deadly. So Martel makes sure the wind is at his back before walking over to a pit the size of several tennis courts. Pipes are emptying dirty brown water that came up from oil wells into the pit, which is completely covered in goopy black oil.

The oil is supposed to float to the surface, and then a truck will vacuum it up. Any solid stuff should fall on the bottom of the pit, before the water rushes out and forms a stream. But there are still chemicals in the water — some from the earth, some from the oil, and some the companies add to make the oil flow faster.

About a half-mile from the pit, Martel stops the car on a bridge over that stream of murky gray water. A shiny film covers the water in some places.

"I wish a lot of people could see this," says Martel, the vice chairman of the Eastern Shoshone Business Council, the tribal government. "This is something that's going on in the reservation: This don't look too cool."

In most of the country, this would be illegal. Most oil fields reinject wastewater far underground, where it cannot cause harm.

So why is this wastewater being released into a desert wilderness of sagebrush-covered foothills and sandstone cliffs that blaze with reds and oranges?

The few cows grazing nearby provide a clue.

"You can see the tracks into the water here," says Martel. "This is one of their watering holes."

Inside EPA, Distress Over Dumping Loophole

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Without the wastewater, this area would be bone dry most of the year.

In the 1970s, when the Environmental Protection Agency was banning oil companies from dumping their wastewater, ranchers, especially in Wyoming, made a fuss. They argued that their livestock needs water, even dirty water.

So the EPA made an exception, a loophole, for the arid West. If oil companies demonstrate that ranchers or wildlife use the water, the companies can release it.

Off the reservation, Western states get to decide what oil companies must do with wastewater; over time, states' rules have become stricter than the EPA's. Some states have all but outlawed dumping.

But on the Wind River Reservation, the EPA controls whether companies can release wastewater on a case-by-case basis.

The EPA refused multiple requests for interviews, but in a statement, the agency said it was evaluating the permits it gives some of the companies to expel this water on the reservation.

"EPA is reviewing new information associated with these permits and intends to meet with the Tribes in upcoming weeks to discuss next steps," the statement reads.

The responses to NPR's two Freedom of Information Act requests include emails between staffers, correspondence with the companies, results of water-quality tests, the permits, and documents justifying each permit. Most of this information had not been public before.

The documents show hints of mutiny inside the EPA. Some EPA staffers clearly are appalled by the wastewater releases.

One wrote in an email to colleagues: "Can we get together and discuss a strategic approach for sending our message of concern? I have attached pictures of this ridiculousness."

Another staffer warns that the chemicals in the water could have "irrevocable human health and environmental impacts."

The documents also show recent detective work that some EPA staffers did to try to figure out what chemicals companies are putting in the water. Their research reveals that some of the waste streams sometimes include chemicals from hydraulic fracturing, an engineering technique designed to increase the flow of wells. They also include chemicals whose warning labels clearly state "toxic to aquatic organisms," "prevent material from entering sewers or waterways," and warnings about cancer and birth defects at low levels.

The documents suggest that at least some people inside the EPA are advocating for stricter rules. But much of this debate has been kept secret. The EPA refused to give NPR 757 documents about the loophole, claiming they can be kept secret because they are between the EPA and its attorneys or among EPA staffers.

'We Should Know Better By Now'

Experts, including scientists at the U.S. Geological Survey, say it's very rare for oil field water to be released into drainages or streams because it nearly always contains harmful chemicals.

"It's a very uncommon situation in the United States and, I believe, most of the rest of the world," said John Veil, a retired wastewater expert at the Department of Energy's Argonne National Laboratory, who now works as a consultant.

In one analysis that Veil did for Argonne, he found that 98 percent of the water that companies pump up with oil is

reinjected deep underground. Veil says it's usually far too salty to discharge.

Some scientists were alarmed when they learned about the oil field wastewater releases, especially given that it is happening on tribal land.

"I was shocked when I heard this," says Rob Jackson, a Duke University environmental scientist. "I was very surprised this was allowed. It's just something that we should know better by now. We should know that dumping our waste onto the surface of the ground is a bad solution."

Other experts agreed that the chemicals in the water raise concerns. However, some scientists, including staffers from the U.S. Geological Survey, felt uncomfortable commenting for the record without doing their own testing.

Jackson reviewed many of the EPA documents released to NPR, including analyses of the chemicals in the wastewater streams and warning labels for some of the chemical treatments that companies add to the wells.

He stresses that they include hazardous air pollutants such as hydrochloric acid and naphthalene, and carcinogens like benzene and ethyl benzene.

"There are many things in this water that you don't want in the environment or in people's drinking water. You don't need to be a genius to know this is a bad idea," Jackson says.

He urges the EPA to consider the consequences of its policy and how it looks.

"Are we doing something on tribal lands we wouldn't allow somewhere else? I think that's something we have to be asking ourselves."

On The Reservation, Dead Ducklings, Dangerous Fumes

Outside the reservation, Western states decide how oil field waste is handled — and their rules are stricter than the EPA's. For instance, off the reservation, the state of Wyoming requires companies to inject wastewater deep underground and out of harm's way if they've added toxic chemicals to the wells. Other states have set tougher water quality standards that have nearly eliminated these releases.

On the Wind River Reservation, these oil field wastewater streams have flowed for several decades without attracting much interest, even from the tribes, according to Wes Martel and other officials of the two tribes that share the reservation, the Eastern Shoshoni and Northern Arapaho.

"Most of our elders were very trusting, very trusting people. They were glad they had the opportunity to get some revenue. Most of them were just thinking, 'We're being watched over, and things are being taken care of,' " says Martel, 65, who was in tribal government many years ago and was elected two years ago to return to government.

But in 2005, the Wind River Environmental Quality Commission sampled the water downstream of some of the oil fields. Researchers found toxic levels of some chemicals, stretches of streams that were lifeless, and streambeds splotched with black ooze, white crystals and purple growths. They recorded water temperatures as high as 125 degrees, and found dead ducklings, according to a draft report prepared by the tribes' environmental department.

During tours of four of the oil fields earlier this fall, I witnessed visible violations of the plain language of the permits that the EPA gave these companies to discharge wastewater. For instance, I saw streambeds covered in white crystals and rock-like formations below outfall pipes. The permits prohibit visible deposits in the receiving waters or shoreline. They also prohibit any visible foam or sheen — I saw both. At the wastewater discharge site at one oil field, company officials

warned us to leave after a few minutes because of the danger of respiratory distress or death from hydrogen sulfide fumes.

The companies were reluctant to talk. One agreed to meet at its oil field on the reservation but backed out the night before. Others failed to return multiple phone calls. Houston-based Marathon Oil Corporation, which runs three oil fields on the reservation, agreed to an interview but refused to be recorded.

"As far as I know, there has never been concerns and opposition for the quality of the water that I'm aware about," says Bob Whisonant, Rocky Mountain operations manager for Marathon Oil, which has three oil fields on the reservation.

Whisonant stresses that the water from his oil fields meets EPA's requirements.

"We're really fortunate within Wyoming that the water is extremely fresh, very suitable for livestock and agriculture purposes. That's why we're able to discharge," Whisonant says.

But the EPA's permits, which are reissued every several years, tell a different story. Even the state of Wyoming, which is known to be pro-industry, questioned the fact that the EPA's requirements didn't seem to protect aquatic life. The EPA's response was that the tribes had not adopted their own water quality standards.

The EPA permits acknowledge that oil field water may not meet the agency's own water quality criteria.

The agency requires only minimal water testing at most of the oil fields, and it does not do its own testing to verify the companies' claims; nor does it sample water quality in the streams receiving the wastewater.

In 2007, the EPA required one company to test aquatic animals to see if they'd die in the water flowing from one oil field — it's a standard test of water quality known as whole effluent toxicity. The minnows and bugs in the sample died within an hour. The EPA asked the company to figure out what was killing the animals and propose remedies, but it let the company go on releasing the water for years. Five years later, the company, Marathon, says it is waiting for the EPA to OK a plan to lower high levels of sulfide in the water.

Wes Martel says he's been pushing the EPA to thoroughly study the wastewater and then require the companies to purify it or inject it underground.

He worries about water quality and wildlife — and about food safety, too. Oil field water abounds on the reservation, and the cows that graze there will eventually end up on dinner plates.

"So it really makes you wonder: What impacts is this having on not only aquatic life, but our wildlife?" Martel says.

"You've got to wonder, what types of chemicals are those beef retaining? And when that goes to the slaughterhouse, what's in your steak?"

Ranchers Still Want The Water

But Eastern Shoshone member Darwin Griebel, one of a handful of ranchers whose livestock use the oil field water, pooh -poohs Martel's concerns.

"Animals drink it. People aren't going to drink it. Hell with the quality of the water," says Griebel.

Griebel has known Martel for nearly 60 years, since they were in elementary school and slept over at each others' houses. But he says they don't agree on this issue.

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Griebel says his cows haven't suffered health problems from drinking the water, and the impurities clear up after the streams have run for a while. (The tribes' water study backs up that idea: Concentrations of various harmful chemicals tend to decrease the farther you get from the oil fields.)

What's most concerning to Griebel is that the water has been crucial to his family's business for generations. Without it, he says: "There would be no water for the cows. There would be no water for the deer, the antelope. Nothing. It would put us out of business is what it would do."

But Martel says that if the EPA does not put a stop to this, the tribes will step in.

If the oil companies say that reinjecting or cleaning the water would be so expensive that it would no longer be profitable to pump oil, Martel knows what his response will be: "Good riddance."

"We'll take it over ourselves and do it right," he says.

Martel dreams of putting tribal companies in charge of their oil fields. Then the tribes would get all the profits, instead of just the royalties the companies pay them. They'd also be able to protect water quality for future generations.

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OH ends moratorium on fracking permits
WCPO-TV - Online

11/16/2012

Ohio ends moratorium on new fracking permits

Posted: 11/13/2012

By: JULIE CARR SMYTH , Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) - Ohio began issuing its first new permits Tuesday for deep injection of chemically-laced wastewater from oil and gas drilling since a New Year's Eve quake in Youngstown prompted an unofficial statewide moratorium.

Rick Simmers, head of the state's Division of Oil and Gas Resources, said the first four new permits went out Tuesday to sites in Athens, Portage and Washington counties. He said another 28 sites will be permitted in small batches of five or under in coming months.

"We never had an official moratorium on issuing the permits, but we've asked the companies to work cooperatively with us as we upgrade our statutes and rules to make them even more stringent, and the companies have," Simmer said in an interview with The Associated Press.

He said state natural resources officials now believe new regulations include ample safeguards — including the ability to order or conduct seismic testing before, during and after drilling — to protect against future quakes.

Millions of gallons of wastewater from the drilling technique hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, are injected deep into the earth at such wells. The practice has been ridiculed and protested by environmental groups, and defended by well operators as safe and responsible.

Gov. John Kasich imposed a moratorium within a seven-mile radius of a Youngstown deep-injection site after a series of a dozen quakes that included a 4.0 magnitude tremor later linked to activity there. Simmers said Tuesday would mark an end to formal restrictions in the area, but that the offending well and those in the vicinity have no foreseeable plans to operate.

D&L Energy in Youngstown, the well's operator in northeast Ohio, sought state permission in February to re-open the shuttered well to conduct independent research to prove the well didn't cause the quakes. But Simmers said the company hasn't yet presented adequate information needed to be re-opened.

Kasich also issued an executive order this summer giving Simmers authority to order preliminary tests at proposed well sites, to prevent drilling where tests fail, and to restrict injection pressure. The state also can order installation of automatic shut-off valves and monitor for leakage.

Simmers said the EPA turned well oversight over to Ohio years ago because the state's regulations surpass those of the federal government.

The first round of new wells permitted Tuesday included one in Athens County's Troy Township, one in Portage County's Deerfield Township and two in Washington County's Newport Township. One of the Washington County wells was previously operated as an oil and gas production well.

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Loophole Lets Toxic Oil Water Flow Over Indian Land
Northwest Public Radio - Online

11/16/2012

Dirty water from the oil wells flows through oil-caked pipes into a settling pit where trucks vacuum off the oil. A net covers the pit to keep out birds and other wildlife. Streams of this wastewater flow through the reservation and join natural creeks and rivers.

More than 40 years ago, the EPA banned oil companies from releasing wastewater into the environment, but made an exception for the arid West. If livestock and wildlife can use the water, companies can release it. Cows like these grazing near a stream of waste on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming are supposedly the reason the EPA lets oil companies release their waste into the environment.

The EPA requires that the wastewater streams show no obvious sheen and no solid deposits. But both were visible near oil fields on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming.

White crystal-like deposits line a streambed where this oil field water is flowing. Researchers for the tribes have also found black oozes, purple growths, dead ducklings and lifeless stretches of streams.

In most oil fields, the water that companies pump up with the oil gets reinjected deep underground. But the federal government allows a dozen oil fields on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming to pump streams of this wastewater onto the land.

Rancher Darwin Griebel says his cows need the oil field water, and his business depends on it.

Wes Martel, vice chairman for the Eastern Shoshone Business Council, stands near a murky gray stream full of oil field wastewater. He's concerned about the effects the wastewater has on wildlife, water quality and, since cows drink it, he wonders: "What's in your steak?"

Internal EPA documents released to NPR show some EPA staffers have been trying to figure out what is in the wastewater released by oil companies. There are lots of chemicals. Some leave solid residues like these white and gray mounds. Danger signs near this outflow pipe warn that poisonous gas fumes from the water can cause respiratory irritation or suffocation.

Dirty water from the oil wells flows through oil-caked pipes into a settling pit where trucks vacuum off the oil. A net covers the pit to keep out birds and other wildlife. Streams of this wastewater flow through the reservation and join natural creeks and rivers.

Originally published on Thu November 15, 2012 5:16 pm

The air reeks so strongly of rotten eggs that tribal leader Wes Martel hesitates to get out of the car at an oil field on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming. He already has a headache from the fumes he smelled at another oil field.

Martel is giving me a tour of one of a dozen oil and gas fields on the reservation. These operations have the federal government's permission to dump wastewater on the land — so much that it creates streams that flow into natural creeks and rivers. And this water contains toxic chemicals, including known carcinogens and radioactive material, according to documents obtained by NPR through Freedom of Information Act requests.

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

The fumes hitting Martel's nose are hydrogen sulfide, which can be deadly. So Martel makes sure the wind is at his back before walking over to a pit the size of several tennis courts. Pipes are emptying dirty brown water that came up from oil wells into the pit, which is completely covered in goopy black oil.

The oil is supposed to float to the surface, and then a truck will vacuum it up. Any solid stuff should fall on the bottom of the pit, before the water rushes out and forms a stream. But there are still chemicals in the water — some from the earth, some from the oil, and some the companies add to make the oil flow faster.

About a half-mile from the pit, Martel stops the car on a bridge over that stream of murky gray water. A shiny film covers the water in some places.

"I wish a lot of people could see this," says Martel, the vice chairman of the Eastern Shoshone Business Council, the tribal government. "This is something that's going on in the reservation: This don't look too cool."

In most of the country, this would be illegal. Most oil fields reinject wastewater far underground, where it cannot cause harm.

So why is this wastewater being released into a desert wilderness of sagebrush-covered foothills and sandstone cliffs that blaze with reds and oranges?

The few cows grazing nearby provide a clue.

"You can see the tracks into the water here," says Martel. "This is one of their watering holes."

Inside EPA, Distress Over Dumping Loophole

Without the wastewater, this area would be bone dry most of the year.

In the 1970s, when the Environmental Protection Agency was banning oil companies from dumping their wastewater, ranchers, especially in Wyoming, made a fuss. They argued that their livestock needs water, even dirty water.

So the EPA made an exception, a loophole, for the arid West. If oil companies demonstrate that ranchers or wildlife use the water, the companies can release it.

Off the reservation, Western states get to decide what oil companies must do with wastewater; over time, states' rules have become stricter than the EPA's. Some states have all but outlawed dumping.

But on the Wind River Reservation, the EPA controls whether companies can release wastewater on a case-by-case basis.

The EPA refused multiple requests for interviews, but in a statement, the agency said it was evaluating the permits it gives some of the companies to expel this water on the reservation.

"EPA is reviewing new information associated with these permits and intends to meet with the Tribes in upcoming weeks to discuss next steps," the statement reads.

The responses to NPR's two Freedom of Information Act requests include emails between staffers, correspondence with the companies, results of water-quality tests, the permits, and documents justifying each permit. Most of this information had not been public before.

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The documents show hints of mutiny inside the EPA. Some EPA staffers clearly are appalled by the wastewater releases.

One wrote in an email to colleagues: "Can we get together and discuss a strategic approach for sending our message of concern? I have attached pictures of this ridiculousness."

Another staffer warns that the chemicals in the water could have "irrevocable human health and environmental impacts."

The documents also show recent detective work that some EPA staffers did to try to figure out what chemicals companies are putting in the water. Their research reveals that some of the waste streams sometimes include chemicals from hydraulic fracturing, an engineering technique designed to increase the flow of wells. They also include chemicals whose warning labels clearly state "toxic to aquatic organisms," "prevent material from entering sewers or waterways," and warnings about cancer and birth defects at low levels.

The documents suggest that at least some people inside the EPA are advocating for stricter rules. But much of this debate has been kept secret. The EPA refused to give NPR 757 documents about the loophole, claiming they can be kept secret because they are between the EPA and its attorneys or among EPA staffers.

'We Should Know Better By Now'

Experts, including scientists at the U.S. Geological Survey, say it's very rare for oil field water to be released into drainages or streams because it nearly always contains harmful chemicals.

"It's a very uncommon situation in the United States and, I believe, most of the rest of the world," said John Veil, a retired wastewater expert at the Department of Energy's Argonne National Laboratory, who now works as a consultant.

In one analysis that Veil did for Argonne, he found that 98 percent of the water that companies pump up with oil is reinjected deep underground. Veil says it's usually far too salty to discharge.

Some scientists were alarmed when they learned about the oil field wastewater releases, especially given that it is happening on tribal land.

"I was shocked when I heard this," says Rob Jackson, a Duke University environmental scientist. "I was very surprised this was allowed. It's just something that we should know better by now. We should know that dumping our waste onto the surface of the ground is a bad solution."

Other experts agreed that the chemicals in the water raise concerns. However, some scientists, including staffers from the U.S. Geological Survey, felt uncomfortable commenting for the record without doing their own testing.

Jackson reviewed many of the EPA documents released to NPR, including analyses of the chemicals in the wastewater streams and warning labels for some of the chemical treatments that companies add to the wells.

He stresses that they include hazardous air pollutants such as hydrochloric acid and naphthalene, and carcinogens like benzene and ethyl benzene.

"There are many things in this water that you don't want in the environment or in people's drinking water. You don't need to be a genius to know this is a bad idea," Jackson says.

He urges the EPA to consider the consequences of its policy and how it looks.

"Are we doing something on tribal lands we wouldn't allow somewhere else? I think that's something we have to be

asking ourselves."

On The Reservation, Dead Ducklings, Dangerous Fumes

Outside the reservation, Western states decide how oil field waste is handled — and their rules are stricter than the EPA's. For instance, off the reservation, the state of Wyoming requires companies to inject wastewater deep underground and out of harm's way if they've added toxic chemicals to the wells. Other states have set tougher water quality standards that have nearly eliminated these releases.

On the Wind River Reservation, these oil field wastewater streams have flowed for several decades without attracting much interest, even from the tribes, according to Wes Martel and other officials of the two tribes that share the reservation, the Eastern Shoshoni and Northern Arapaho.

"Most of our elders were very trusting, very trusting people. They were glad they had the opportunity to get some revenue. Most of them were just thinking, 'We're being watched over, and things are being taken care of,' " says Martel, 65, who was in tribal government many years ago and was elected two years ago to return to government.

But in 2005, the Wind River Environmental Quality Commission sampled the water downstream of some of the oil fields. Researchers found toxic levels of some chemicals, stretches of streams that were lifeless, and streambeds splotched with black ooze, white crystals and purple growths. They recorded water temperatures as high as 125 degrees, and found dead ducklings, according to a draft report prepared by the tribes' environmental department.

During tours of four of the oil fields earlier this fall, I witnessed visible violations of the plain language of the permits that the EPA gave these companies to discharge wastewater. For instance, I saw streambeds covered in white crystals and rock-like formations below outfall pipes. The permits prohibit visible deposits in the receiving waters or shoreline. They also prohibit any visible foam or sheen — I saw both. At the wastewater discharge site at one oil field, company officials warned us to leave after a few minutes because of the danger of respiratory distress or death from hydrogen sulfide fumes.

The companies were reluctant to talk. One agreed to meet at its oil field on the reservation but backed out the night before. Others failed to return multiple phone calls. Houston-based Marathon Oil Corporation, which runs three oil fields on the reservation, agreed to an interview but refused to be recorded.

"As far as I know, there has never been concerns and opposition for the quality of the water that I'm aware about," says Bob Whisonant, Rocky Mountain operations manager for Marathon Oil, which has three oil fields on the reservation.

Whisonant stresses that the water from his oil fields meets EPA's requirements.

"We're really fortunate within Wyoming that the water is extremely fresh, very suitable for livestock and agriculture purposes. That's why we're able to discharge," Whisonant says.

But the EPA's permits, which are reissued every several years, tell a different story. Even the state of Wyoming, which is known to be pro-industry, questioned the fact that the EPA's requirements didn't seem to protect aquatic life. The EPA's response was that the tribes had not adopted their own water quality standards.

The EPA permits acknowledge that oil field water may not meet the agency's own water quality criteria.

The agency requires only minimal water testing at most of the oil fields, and it does not do its own testing to verify the companies' claims; nor does it sample water quality in the streams receiving the wastewater.

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In 2007, the EPA required one company to test aquatic animals to see if they'd die in the water flowing from one oil field — it's a standard test of water quality known as whole effluent toxicity. The minnows and bugs in the sample died within an hour. The EPA asked the company to figure out what was killing the animals and propose remedies, but it let the company go on releasing the water for years. Five years later, the company, Marathon, says it is waiting for the EPA to OK a plan to lower high levels of sulfide in the water.

Wes Martel says he's been pushing the EPA to thoroughly study the wastewater and then require the companies to purify it or inject it underground.

He worries about water quality and wildlife — and about food safety, too. Oil field water abounds on the reservation, and the cows that graze there will eventually end up on dinner plates.

"So it really makes you wonder: What impacts is this having on not only aquatic life, but our wildlife?" Martel says.

"You've got to wonder, what types of chemicals are those beef retaining? And when that goes to the slaughterhouse, what's in your steak?"

Ranchers Still Want The Water

But Eastern Shoshone member Darwin Griebel, one of a handful of ranchers whose livestock use the oil field water, pooh -poohs Martel's concerns.

"Animals drink it. People aren't going to drink it. Hell with the quality of the water," says Griebel.

Griebel has known Martel for nearly 60 years, since they were in elementary school and slept over at each others' houses. But he says they don't agree on this issue.

Griebel says his cows haven't suffered health problems from drinking the water, and the impurities clear up after the streams have run for a while. (The tribes' water study backs up that idea: Concentrations of various harmful chemicals tend to decrease the farther you get from the oil fields.)

What's most concerning to Griebel is that the water has been crucial to his family's business for generations. Without it, he says: "There would be no water for the cows. There would be no water for the deer, the antelope. Nothing. It would put us out of business is what it would do."

But Martel says that if the EPA does not put a stop to this, the tribes will step in.

If the oil companies say that reinjecting or cleaning the water would be so expensive that it would no longer be profitable to pump oil, Martel knows what his response will be: "Good riddance."

"We'll take it over ourselves and do it right," he says.

Martel dreams of putting tribal companies in charge of their oil fields. Then the tribes would get all the profits, instead of just the royalties the companies pay them. They'd also be able to protect water quality for future generations.

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EPA?fracking study offers end to noise, foes'propaganda
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11/16/2012

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November 16, 2012

Salem News

Americans have been drilling wells for oil and gas for more than a century and a half. Hydraulic fracturing - or fracking - has been in use to augment well production for decades.

Yet it has been only during the past few years that a gusher of propaganda about fracking has surfaced. Incredibly, some public officials, such as those in New York state, have allowed it to dictate policy.

What about the facts on fracking and other oil and gas industry practices? A variety of studies indicate there is little or no danger of groundwater being contaminated by chemicals used in fracking, as the industry points out.

Nevertheless, the Environmental Protection Agency has launched a comprehensive study of fracking. Last week, EPA official George Paulson said a progress report on the study should be released by the end of this year. A final report is due in 2014, he added.

Good. The EPA's progress report should give scientists, the gas and oil industry, and those worried about fracking opportunities to check the agency's methodology. EPA officials, sometimes accused of bowing to the demands of radical environmentalists rather than basing policy on science, should welcome the oversight.

There indeed are some valid concerns about fracking, primarily involving well casings used to keep chemicals out of groundwater. But rejecting the practice altogether, in view of what appears to be an excellent environmental record, makes no sense. The EPA study should provide solid, science-based guidance that will safeguard the environment while allowing Americans to get at the gigantic supplies of natural gas underneath our feet.

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State issues four new deep injection-well permits

November 14, 2012

By JULIE CARR SMYTH - AP Statehouse Correspondent

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Associated Press

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Rick Simmers, head of the state's Division of Oil and Gas Resources, said the first four new permits went out Tuesday to sites in Athens, Portage and Washington counties. He said another 28 sites will be permitted in small batches of five or under in coming months.

"We never had an official moratorium on issuing the permits, but we've asked the companies to work cooperatively with us as we upgrade our statutes and rules to make them even more stringent, and the companies have," Simmer said in an interview with The Associated Press.

He said state natural resources officials now believe new regulations include ample safeguards - including the ability to order or conduct seismic testing before, during and after drilling - to protect against future quakes.

Millions of gallons of wastewater from the drilling technique hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, are injected deep into the earth at such wells. The practice has been ridiculed and protested by environmental groups, and defended by well operators as safe and responsible.

Gov. John Kasich imposed a moratorium within a seven-mile radius of a Youngstown deep-injection site after a series of a dozen quakes that included a 4.0 magnitude tremor later linked to activity there. Simmers said Tuesday would mark an end to formal restrictions in the area, but that the offending well and those in the vicinity have no foreseeable plans to operate.

D&L Energy in Youngstown, the well's operator in northeast Ohio, sought state permission in February to re-open the shuttered well to conduct independent research to prove the well didn't cause the quakes. But Simmers said the company hasn't yet presented adequate information needed to be re-opened.

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Kasich also issued an executive order this summer giving Simmers authority to order preliminary tests at proposed well sites, to prevent drilling where tests fail, and to restrict injection pressure. The state also can order installation of automatic shut-off valves and monitor for leakage.

Simmers said the EPA turned well oversight over to Ohio years ago because the state's regulations surpass those of the federal government.

The first round of new wells permitted Tuesday included one in Athens County's Troy Township, one in Portage County's Deerfield Township and two in Washington County's Newport Township. One of the Washington County wells was previously operated as an oil and gas production well.

Morning Journal News

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Morning Journal News

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Study to flesh out fracking's impact on drinking water
Vernal Express - Online

11/16/2012

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Study to flesh out fracking's impact on drinking water

By Mary Bernard, Vernal Express

The Environmental Protection Agency announced plans to study the effect of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water nationwide.

Published in the Federal Register on Nov. 5 the EPA states the study arose in response to public concern.

While the agency is soliciting public involvement the EPA said it will give preference to peer-reviewed literature sources.

This will be a two-year study. It will follow the entire cycle of hydraulic fracturing fluid from water acquisition to chemical mixing to injection to flowback management and disposal

Read the full story in the Nov. 21 Vernal Express.

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Loophole Lets Toxic Oil Water Flow Over Indian Land
KUOW-FM - Online

11/16/2012

Thu November 15, 2012

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By Elizabeth Shogren

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During tours of four of the oil fields earlier this fall, I witnessed visible violations of the plain language of the permits that the EPA gave these companies to discharge wastewater. For instance, I saw streambeds covered in white crystals and rock-like formations below outfall pipes. The permits prohibit visible deposits in the receiving waters or shoreline. They also prohibit any visible foam or sheen — I saw both. At the wastewater discharge site at one oil field, company officials

warned us to leave after a few minutes because of the danger of respiratory distress or death from hydrogen sulfide fumes.

The companies were reluctant to talk. One agreed to meet at its oil field on the reservation but backed out the night before. Others failed to return multiple phone calls. Houston-based Marathon Oil Corporation, which runs three oil fields on the reservation, agreed to an interview but refused to be recorded.

"As far as I know, there has never been concerns and opposition for the quality of the water that I'm aware about," says Bob Whisonant, Rocky Mountain operations manager for Marathon Oil, which has three oil fields on the reservation.

Whisonant stresses that the water from his oil fields meets EPA's requirements.

"We're really fortunate within Wyoming that the water is extremely fresh, very suitable for livestock and agriculture purposes. That's why we're able to discharge," Whisonant says.

But the EPA's permits, which are reissued every several years, tell a different story. Even the state of Wyoming, which is known to be pro-industry, questioned the fact that the EPA's requirements didn't seem to protect aquatic life. The EPA's response was that the tribes had not adopted their own water quality standards.

The EPA permits acknowledge that oil field water may not meet the agency's own water quality criteria.

The agency requires only minimal water testing at most of the oil fields, and it does not do its own testing to verify the companies' claims; nor does it sample water quality in the streams receiving the wastewater.

In 2007, the EPA required one company to test aquatic animals to see if they'd die in the water flowing from one oil field — it's a standard test of water quality known as whole effluent toxicity. The minnows and bugs in the sample died within an hour. The EPA asked the company to figure out what was killing the animals and propose remedies, but it let the company go on releasing the water for years. Five years later, the company, Marathon, says it is waiting for the EPA to OK a plan to lower high levels of sulfide in the water.

Wes Martel says he's been pushing the EPA to thoroughly study the wastewater and then require the companies to purify it or inject it underground.

He worries about water quality and wildlife — and about food safety, too. Oil field water abounds on the reservation, and the cows that graze there will eventually end up on dinner plates.

"So it really makes you wonder: What impacts is this having on not only aquatic life, but our wildlife?" Martel says.

"You've got to wonder, what types of chemicals are those beef retaining? And when that goes to the slaughterhouse, what's in your steak?"

Ranchers Still Want The Water

But Eastern Shoshone member Darwin Griebel, one of a handful of ranchers whose livestock use the oil field water, pooh -poohs Martel's concerns.

"Animals drink it. People aren't going to drink it. Hell with the quality of the water," says Griebel.

Griebel has known Martel for nearly 60 years, since they were in elementary school and slept over at each others' houses. But he says they don't agree on this issue.

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

Griebel says his cows haven't suffered health problems from drinking the water, and the impurities clear up after the streams have run for a while. (The tribes' water study backs up that idea: Concentrations of various harmful chemicals tend to decrease the farther you get from the oil fields.)

What's most concerning to Griebel is that the water has been crucial to his family's business for generations. Without it, he says: "There would be no water for the cows. There would be no water for the deer, the antelope. Nothing. It would put us out of business is what it would do."

But Martel says that if the EPA does not put a stop to this, the tribes will step in.

If the oil companies say that reinjecting or cleaning the water would be so expensive that it would no longer be profitable to pump oil, Martel knows what his response will be: "Good riddance."

"We'll take it over ourselves and do it right," he says.

Martel dreams of putting tribal companies in charge of their oil fields. Then the tribes would get all the profits, instead of just the royalties the companies pay them. They'd also be able to protect water quality for future generations.

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Ohio once again issuing permits for injection wells
Tribune Chronicle - Online

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November 14, 2012

The Associated Press

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

Ohio renews issuing permits for injection wells
Repository - Online, The

11/16/2012

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By Julie Carr Smyth

The Associated Press

Posted Nov 13, 2012 @ 04:09 PM

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GAS OFFICIAL SAYS EPA STUDY COULD DRIVE NEW FRACKING RULES UNDER SDWA
Inside EPA Weekly Report

11/16/2012

A key natural gas industry official is suggesting that if EPA decides to make the case for expanding federal oversight of hydraulic fracturing based on results from its upcoming study of the practice, the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) would be the most logical place to do that -- though the industry is opposed to such an approach and Congress would first need to reverse a statutory exemption before the agency could regulate the practice.

Peter Robertson, senior vice president of legislative and regulatory affairs for America's Natural Gas Alliance, said during a Nov. 13 legal webinar that he and others in the industry are closely watching development of EPA's pending study of the potential impacts of fracking on drinking water, a status update of which is due for release next month.

But Robertson sought to highlight what he said is the industry's clean environmental record, and is anticipating that EPA's findings in the study will reflect that.

Speaking during a webinar on "Post-Election Law and Policy Directions for Shale Drilling," sponsored jointly by the American Law Institute Continuing Legal Education and Environmental Law Institute, Robertson reiterated statements made by other oil and gas industry officials that fracking has been effectively regulated by state agencies for decades, saying that he would like to see a study that "highlights that good track record."

His comments echo those of other officials that the study could help gain public trust that fracking is practiced safely and that state regulations are adequate. For example, in September 2010 comments on EPA's draft study plan, Cabot Oil & Gas Corporation says "We believe that EPA will find that these state agencies have the unique training, expertise and understanding of the varying issues of the oil and gas industry in their respective states to make it unnecessary for costly federal regulation of hydraulic fracturing."

However, Robertson, speaking during the Nov. 13 webinar, also stressed that industry is closely watching the study because it could potentially help make a case for a stronger role for federal oversight of fracking. The study could "have potentially significant impacts on state agencies," Robertson said, adding that he expects that state would make an effort to take up any regulatory challenges that would arise as a result of EPA's findings or recommendations.

He said the study's final results, which EPA expects to release in 2014, are expected to "inform this administration and administrations to come on federal policy" for managing fracking.

The agency has grappled with finding existing authority to develop a stronger oversight role in oil and gas production, given that a number of provisions in environmental statutes exempt the industry from some federal regulation.

For example, a 2005 energy law generally bars EPA from regulating fracking activities under SDWA by excluding the practice from the definition of "underground injection" for the purposes of the drinking water law's permitting program.

And while Sen. Robert Casey Jr. (D-PA) introduced a bill in 2011, S. 587, the "Fracturing Responsibility and Awareness of Chemicals Act," to remove the exemption, with a companion bill in the House introduced by Rep. Diana DeGette (D-CO), the legislation has not gained any bipartisan support.

However, Robertson told the law webinar that EPA could likely determine that SDWA is "the best situated to take up challenges for fracking" regulations if it concludes that additional oversight is necessary for the industry to protect groundwater.

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Industry and some states would likely staunchly oppose such an effort, however, assuming that the exemption were revoked. In EPA's pending efforts to promulgate guidance for how regulators should craft SDWA permitting conditions for fracking operations where diesel fuels are injected -- the only type of fracking the agency has authority to regulate -- industry and some states argued that SDWA's underground injection control (UIC) program is an ill-fit for fracking (Inside EPA, May 11).

Environmentalists, however, hope that the EPA study will bolster their longtime claims that fracking poses risks to drinking water and should be regulated under SDWA and other environmental statutes, boosting support for legislation that would end the exemption in the drinking water law.

And Amy Mall, of Natural Resources Defense Council, said during the Nov. 13 webinar that the study is crucial because the scientific research on whether fracking poses a risk to drinking water is incomplete. For example, Mall said, a 2004 Bush EPA study on fracking used in the context of coalbed methane wells "was criticized for not adhering to" proper scientific standards, a concern that industry and Congressional Republicans have raised about the current study (Inside EPA, Oct. 26).

EPA's Office of Research and Development and Office of Water jointly launched the study last year, spurred by a request in EPA's 2010 appropriations bill that the agency examine the possible adverse effects of fracking on drinking water. The study consists largely of two prospective and five retrospective case studies where EPA will examine how fracking in several states interacts with drinking water supplies, along with laboratory analysis, literature reviews and other data.

EPA expects to release a "progress report" in December to outline the current status of the study and float preliminary data ahead of a peer review conducted by a panel of its Science Advisory Board.

The agency is also hosting a series of stakeholder roundtable meetings to host technical discussions on various study components, according to documents recently posted to the agency's website, including well injection, chemical mixing, wastewater treatment and disposal, and potential for flowback spills.

The aim of the roundtable meetings is to "ensure that EPA has access to a broad and balanced range of expertise and data," according to a pre-meeting brief. Relevant documents are available on InsideEPA.com. (Doc ID: 2416169)

The first of these discussions, on water acquisition, was slated for Nov. 14. One of the questions the study is seeking to address is "What are the potential impacts of large volumes water withdrawals from ground and surface waters on drinking water resources?" -- Bridget DiCosmo

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GOP HOUSE EYES 'RIFLE SHOT' EFFORTS TO REVISE KEY ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS
Inside EPA Weekly Report

11/16/2012

A key House GOP staffer says lawmakers are eying options for "rifle shot" piecemeal legislative efforts in the 113th Congress to revise major environmental statues including the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act to ease regulatory burdens, as observers say comprehensive overhaul of energy and environmental laws is unlikely next year.

The incremental approach to amending environmental laws that Republicans have long sought to overhaul will be coupled with ongoing oversight by House committees of EPA policies that GOP lawmakers believe are hindering industries, primarily oil and gas production, said House Energy and Commerce Committee general counsel Michael Bloomquist during a Nov. 13 American Law Institute Continuing Legal Education (ALI CLE) webinar.

Following the elections, Republicans held on to the majority in the House and are likely to continue their series of hearings over the last two years challenging a slew of EPA policies. For example, the House energy panel and its subcommittees have held a series of hearings investigating what it sees as EPA's "war on coal."

Democrats however expanded their majority in the Senate, which further undermines prospects for approving House GOP legislation to limit or scrap key EPA air, water, waste and other policies. The divided Congress could also hinder the potential for both chambers to agree on comprehensive changes to years-old statutes.

Instead, Bloomquist suggested the House GOP strategy will be the rifle shot approach of small changes to laws aimed primarily at easing regulatory requirements, for example by streamlining planning mandates.

Rep. Ed Whitfield (R-KY), chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee's power panel, is slated to hold a Nov. 29 forum to discuss Clean Air Act -- the third of the forums, which are seen as laying the groundwork for potential fixes to the air law next year. Whitfield has cautioned that states and EPA would have to agree on the scope of changes to the air law for it to be a viable option, which might limit prospects for a massive air law overhaul.

Some of the air law planning mandates that could be ripe for the House GOP to target include long-running state complaints about the state implementation plan (SIP) process. Under the air law, states must craft SIPs to detail how they intend to meet EPA air standards, but the process has long drawn criticism for the time and resources required.

The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee is likely also considering options to revise aspects of the Clean Water Act, while the Natural Resources Committee could adopt the same approach to examining ways of streamlining regulatory requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act, Bloomquist said.

During the ALI CLE webinar, Bloomquist also said that House Republicans intend to conduct aggressive oversight activities into Obama administration policies, including extensive background-gathering and hosting hearings to highlight key issues, aimed at tempering what he referred to as "mission creep" by executive agencies, including EPA, where the agency has sought to expand regulations in a way that could hinder energy production.

A priority of the House GOP going into the next Congress starting in January is ensuring that EPA and other federal agencies do not expand federal oversight powers with regard to hydraulic fracturing and other aspects of oil and gas production, which have always been regulated at the state level, Bloomquist said.

"Our view is that the Obama administration wants to assert federal control of oil and gas," he said, reiterating the longstanding Republican and industry viewpoint that such regulations should be handled by states because they are

better positioned to tailor their rules to fit local geology. However, Bloomquist added that keeping oil and gas regulation at the state level also represents "good politics" by providing an opportunity for Republican lawmakers to demonstrate that they favor some environmental regulations of energy activities.

During the ALI CLE webinar, Bloomquist also referenced an Energy & Commerce hearing held last October on legislation seeking to bar EPA from tightening its coarse particulate matter ambient air standard, saying the hearing successfully secured a public commitment from top agency officials that the agency was not seeking to regulate farm dust.

Such hearings are used to "lock in the agency or discourage" a specific policy, Bloomquist said, adding that climate rules and EPA's efforts to exercise its "imminent and substantial endangerment" authority under the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) to enforce against natural gas operators would be likely topics of hearings next year.

EPA, which is barred from directly regulating hydraulic fracturing under SDWA, in a novel use of its emergency authority under the drinking water law issued a Dec. 7, 2010, order to Range Resources, a Texas drilling company whose fracking operations the agency alleged had contaminated drinking water supplies.

The agency later withdrew the order after the company mounted a constitutional challenge, however, prompting GOP criticisms that EPA had acted prematurely in issuing taking emergency enforcement action.

In addition to the Range Resources case, Bloomquist added that House lawmakers could also examine EPA's actions in fracking-related groundwater investigations in Dimock Township, PA, and Pavillion, WY, where the agency used existing Superfund authority to investigate suspected contamination and EPA indicated drilling might be to blame.

"Those are all ways the House can be playing defense," amidst continuing to host hearings that highlight the effectiveness of state regulations at governing oil and gas operations, Bloomquist said. -- Bridget DiCosmo

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

Ohio renews injection-well permitting
State Journal - Online, The

11/15/2012

JULIE CARR SMYTH, AP Statehouse Correspondent

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Ohio renews injection-well permitting
Star-Gazette - Online

11/15/2012

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Loophole Lets Toxic Oil Water Flow Over Indian Land
KUNC-FM - Online

11/15/2012

The air reeks so strongly of rotten eggs that tribal leader Wes Martel hesitates to get out of the car at an oil field on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming. He already has a headache from the fumes he smelled at another oil field.

Martel is giving me a tour of one of a dozen oil and gas fields on the reservation. These operations have the federal government's permission to dump wastewater on the land — so much that it creates streams that flow into natural creeks and rivers. And this water contains toxic chemicals, including known carcinogens and radioactive material, according to documents obtained by NPR through Freedom of Information Act requests.

The fumes hitting Martel's nose are hydrogen sulfide, which can be deadly. So Martel makes sure the wind is at his back before walking over to a pit the size of several tennis courts. Pipes are emptying dirty brown water that came up from oil wells into the pit, which is completely covered in goopy black oil.

The oil is supposed to float to the surface, and then a truck will vacuum it up. Any solid stuff should fall on the bottom of the pit, before the water rushes out and forms a stream. But there are still chemicals in the water — some from the earth, some from the oil, and some the companies add to make the oil flow faster.

About a half-mile from the pit, Martel stops the car on a bridge over that stream of murky gray water. A shiny film covers the water in some places.

"I wish a lot of people could see this," says Martel, the vice chairman of the Eastern Shoshone Business Council, the tribal government. "This is something that's going on in the reservation: This don't look too cool."

In most of the country, this would be illegal. Most oil fields reinject wastewater far underground, where it cannot cause harm.

So why is this wastewater being released into a desert wilderness of sagebrush-covered foothills and sandstone cliffs that blaze with reds and oranges?

The few cows grazing nearby provide a clue.

"You can see the tracks into the water here," says Martel. "This is one of their watering holes."

Inside EPA, Distress Over Dumping Loophole

Without the wastewater, this area would be bone dry most of the year.

In the 1970s, when the Environmental Protection Agency was banning oil companies from dumping their wastewater, ranchers, especially in Wyoming, made a fuss. They argued that their livestock needs water, even dirty water.

So the EPA made an exception, a loophole, for the arid West. If oil companies demonstrate that ranchers or wildlife use the water, the companies can release it.

Off the reservation, Western states get to decide what oil companies must do with wastewater; over time, states' rules have become stricter than the EPA's. Some states have all but outlawed dumping.

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But on the Wind River Reservation, the EPA controls whether companies can release wastewater on a case-by-case basis.

The EPA refused multiple requests for interviews, but in a statement, the agency said it was evaluating the permits it gives some of the companies to expel this water on the reservation.

"EPA is reviewing new information associated with these permits and intends to meet with the Tribes in upcoming weeks to discuss next steps," the statement reads.

The responses to NPR's two Freedom of Information Act requests include emails between staffers, correspondence with the companies, results of water-quality tests, the permits, and documents justifying each permit. Most of this information had not been public before.

The documents show hints of mutiny inside the EPA. Some EPA staffers clearly are appalled by the wastewater releases.

One wrote in an email to colleagues: "Can we get together and discuss a strategic approach for sending our message of concern? I have attached pictures of this ridiculousness."

Another staffer warns that the chemicals in the water could have "irrevocable human health and environmental impacts."

The documents also show recent detective work that some EPA staffers did to try to figure out what chemicals companies are putting in the water. Their research reveals that some of the waste streams sometimes include chemicals from hydraulic fracturing, an engineering technique designed to increase the flow of wells. They also include chemicals whose warning labels clearly state "toxic to aquatic organisms," "prevent material from entering sewers or waterways," and warnings about cancer and birth defects at low levels.

The documents suggest that at least some people inside the EPA are advocating for stricter rules. But much of this debate has been kept secret. The EPA refused to give NPR 757 documents about the loophole, claiming they can be kept secret because they are between the EPA and its attorneys or among EPA staffers.

'We Should Know Better By Now'

Experts, including scientists at the U.S. Geological Survey, say it's very rare for oil field water to be released into drainages or streams because it nearly always contains harmful chemicals.

"It's a very uncommon situation in the United States and, I believe, most of the rest of the world," said John Veil, a retired wastewater expert at the Department of Energy's Argonne National Laboratory, who now works as a consultant.

In one analysis that Veil did for Argonne, he found that 98 percent of the water that companies pump up with oil is reinjected deep underground. Veil says it's usually far too salty to discharge.

Some scientists were alarmed when they learned about the oil field wastewater releases, especially given that it is happening on tribal land.

"I was shocked when I heard this," says Rob Jackson, a Duke University environmental scientist. "I was very surprised this was allowed. It's just something that we should know better by now. We should know that dumping our waste onto the surface of the ground is a bad solution."

Other experts agreed that the chemicals in the water raise concerns. However, some scientists, including staffers from

the U.S. Geological Survey, felt uncomfortable commenting for the record without doing their own testing.

Jackson reviewed many of the EPA documents released to NPR, including analyses of the chemicals in the wastewater streams and warning labels for some of the chemical treatments that companies add to the wells.

He stresses that they include hazardous air pollutants such as hydrochloric acid and naphthalene, and carcinogens like benzene and ethyl benzene.

"There are many things in this water that you don't want in the environment or in people's drinking water. You don't need to be a genius to know this is a bad idea," Jackson says.

He urges the EPA to consider the consequences of its policy and how it looks.

"Are we doing something on tribal lands we wouldn't allow somewhere else? I think that's something we have to be asking ourselves."

On The Reservation, Dead Ducklings, Dangerous Fumes

Outside the reservation, Western states decide how oil field waste is handled — and their rules are stricter than the EPA's. For instance, off the reservation, the state of Wyoming requires companies to inject wastewater deep underground and out of harm's way if they've added toxic chemicals to the wells. Other states have set tougher water quality standards that have nearly eliminated these releases.

On the Wind River Reservation, these oil field wastewater streams have flowed for several decades without attracting much interest, even from the tribes, according to Wes Martel and other officials of the two tribes that share the reservation, the Eastern Shoshoni and Northern Arapaho.

"Most of our elders were very trusting, very trusting people. They were glad they had the opportunity to get some revenue. Most of them were just thinking, 'We're being watched over, and things are being taken care of,' " says Martel, 65, who was in tribal government many years ago and was elected two years ago to return to government.

But in 2005, the Wind River Environmental Quality Commission sampled the water downstream of some of the oil fields. Researchers found toxic levels of some chemicals, stretches of streams that were lifeless, and streambeds splotched with black ooze, white crystals and purple growths. They recorded water temperatures as high as 125 degrees, and found dead ducklings, according to a draft report prepared by the tribes' environmental department.

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The companies were reluctant to talk. One agreed to meet at its oil field on the reservation but backed out the night before. Others failed to return multiple phone calls. Houston-based Marathon Oil Corporation, which runs three oil fields on the reservation, agreed to an interview but refused to be recorded.

"As far as I know, there has never been concerns and opposition for the quality of the water that I'm aware about," says Bob Whisonant, Rocky Mountain operations manager for Marathon Oil, which has three oil fields on the reservation.

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Whisonant stresses that the water from his oil fields meets EPA's requirements.

"We're really fortunate within Wyoming that the water is extremely fresh, very suitable for livestock and agriculture purposes. That's why we're able to discharge," Whisonant says.

But the EPA's permits, which are reissued every several years, tell a different story. Even the state of Wyoming, which is known to be pro-industry, questioned the fact that the EPA's requirements didn't seem to protect aquatic life. The EPA's response was that the tribes had not adopted their own water quality standards.

The EPA permits acknowledge that oil field water may not meet the agency's own water quality criteria.

The agency requires only minimal water testing at most of the oil fields, and it does not do its own testing to verify the companies' claims; nor does it sample water quality in the streams receiving the wastewater.

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Wes Martel says he's been pushing the EPA to thoroughly study the wastewater and then require the companies to purify it or inject it underground.

He worries about water quality and wildlife — and about food safety, too. Oil field water abounds on the reservation, and the cows that graze there will eventually end up on dinner plates.

"So it really makes you wonder: What impacts is this having on not only aquatic life, but our wildlife?" Martel says.

"You've got to wonder, what types of chemicals are those beef retaining? And when that goes to the slaughterhouse, what's in your steak?"

Ranchers Still Want The Water

But Eastern Shoshone member Darwin Griebel, one of a handful of ranchers whose livestock use the oil field water, pooh -poohs Martel's concerns.

"Animals drink it. People aren't going to drink it. Hell with the quality of the water," says Griebel.

Griebel has known Martel for nearly 60 years, since they were in elementary school and slept over at each others' houses. But he says they don't agree on this issue.

Griebel says his cows haven't suffered health problems from drinking the water, and the impurities clear up after the streams have run for a while. (The tribes' water study backs up that idea: Concentrations of various harmful chemicals tend to decrease the farther you get from the oil fields.)

What's most concerning to Griebel is that the water has been crucial to his family's business for generations. Without it, he says: "There would be no water for the cows. There would be no water for the deer, the antelope. Nothing. It would put us out of business is what it would do."

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If the oil companies say that reinjecting or cleaning the water would be so expensive that it would no longer be profitable to pump oil, Martel knows what his response will be: "Good riddance."

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Loophole Lets Toxic Oil Water Flow Over Indian Land
Wyoming Public Radio - Online

11/15/2012

Dirty water from the oil wells flows through oil-caked pipes into a settling pit where trucks vacuum off the oil. A net covers the pit to keep out birds and other wildlife. Streams of this wastewater flow through the reservation and join natural creeks and rivers.

More than 40 years ago, the EPA banned oil companies from releasing wastewater into the environment, but made an exception for the arid West. If livestock and wildlife can use the water, companies can release it. Cows like these grazing near a stream of waste on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming are supposedly the reason the EPA lets oil companies release their waste into the environment.

The EPA requires that the wastewater streams show no obvious sheen and no solid deposits. But both were visible near oil fields on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming.

White crystal-like deposits line a streambed where this oil field water is flowing. Researchers for the tribes have also found black oozes, purple growths, dead ducklings and lifeless stretches of streams.

In most oil fields, the water that companies pump up with the oil gets reinjected deep underground. But the federal government allows a dozen oil fields on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming to pump streams of this wastewater onto the land.

Rancher Darwin Griebel says his cows need the oil field water, and his business depends on it.

Wes Martel, vice chairman for the Eastern Shoshone Business Council, stands near a murky gray stream full of oil field wastewater. He's concerned about the effects the wastewater has on wildlife, water quality and, since cows drink it, he wonders: "What's in your steak?"

Internal EPA documents released to NPR show some EPA staffers have been trying to figure out what is in the wastewater released by oil companies. There are lots of chemicals. Some leave solid residues like these white and gray mounds. Danger signs near this outflow pipe warn that poisonous gas fumes from the water can cause respiratory irritation or suffocation.

Dirty water from the oil wells flows through oil-caked pipes into a settling pit where trucks vacuum off the oil. A net covers the pit to keep out birds and other wildlife. Streams of this wastewater flow through the reservation and join natural creeks and rivers.

Originally published on Thu November 15, 2012 2:52 pm

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Martel is giving me a tour of one of a dozen oil and gas fields on the reservation. These operations have the federal government's permission to dump wastewater on the land — so much that it creates streams that flow into natural creeks and rivers. And this water contains toxic chemicals, including known carcinogens and radioactive material, according to documents obtained by NPR through Freedom of Information Act requests.

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The fumes hitting Martel's nose are hydrogen sulfide, which can be deadly. So Martel makes sure the wind is at his back before walking over to a pit the size of several tennis courts. Pipes are emptying dirty brown water that came up from oil wells into the pit, which is completely covered in goopy black oil.

The oil is supposed to float to the surface, and then a truck will vacuum it up. Any solid stuff should fall on the bottom of the pit, before the water rushes out and forms a stream. But there are still chemicals in the water — some from the earth, some from the oil, and some the companies add to make the oil flow faster.

About a half-mile from the pit, Martel stops the car on a bridge over that stream of murky gray water. A shiny film covers the water in some places.

"I wish a lot of people could see this," says Martel, the vice chairman of the Eastern Shoshone Business Council, the tribal government. "This is something that's going on in the reservation: This don't look too cool."

In most of the country, this would be illegal. Most oil fields reinject wastewater far underground, where it cannot cause harm.

So why is this wastewater being released into a desert wilderness of sagebrush-covered foothills and sandstone cliffs that blaze with reds and oranges?

The few cows grazing nearby provide a clue.

"You can see the tracks into the water here," says Martel. "This is one of their watering holes."

Inside EPA, Distress Over Dumping Loophole

Without the wastewater, this area would be bone dry most of the year.

In the 1970s, when the Environmental Protection Agency was banning oil companies from dumping their wastewater, ranchers, especially in Wyoming, made a fuss. They argued that their livestock needs water, even dirty water.

So the EPA made an exception, a loophole, for the arid West. If oil companies demonstrate that ranchers or wildlife use the water, the companies can release it.

Off the reservation, Western states get to decide what oil companies must do with wastewater; over time, states' rules have become stricter than the EPA's. Some states have all but outlawed dumping.

But on the Wind River Reservation, the EPA controls whether companies can release wastewater on a case-by-case basis.

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The responses to NPR's two Freedom of Information Act requests include emails between staffers, correspondence with the companies, results of water-quality tests, the permits, and documents justifying each permit. Most of this information had not been public before.

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The documents show hints of mutiny inside the EPA. Some EPA staffers clearly are appalled by the wastewater releases.

One wrote in an email to colleagues: "Can we get together and discuss a strategic approach for sending our message of concern? I have attached pictures of this ridiculousness."

Another staffer warns that the chemicals in the water could have "irrevocable human health and environmental impacts."

The documents also show recent detective work that some EPA staffers did to try to figure out what chemicals companies are putting in the water. Their research reveals that some of the waste streams sometimes include chemicals from hydraulic fracturing, an engineering technique designed to increase the flow of wells. They also include chemicals whose warning labels clearly state "toxic to aquatic organisms," "prevent material from entering sewers or waterways," and warnings about cancer and birth defects at low levels.

The documents suggest that at least some people inside the EPA are advocating for stricter rules. But much of this debate has been kept secret. The EPA refused to give NPR 757 documents about the loophole, claiming they can be kept secret because they are between the EPA and its attorneys or among EPA staffers.

'We Should Know Better By Now'

Experts, including scientists at the U.S. Geological Survey, say it's very rare for oil field water to be released into drainages or streams because it nearly always contains harmful chemicals.

"It's a very uncommon situation in the United States and, I believe, most of the rest of the world," said John Veil, a retired wastewater expert at the Department of Energy's Argonne National Laboratory, who now works as a consultant.

In one analysis that Veil did for Argonne, he found that 98 percent of the water that companies pump up with oil is reinjected deep underground. Veil says it's usually far too salty to discharge.

Some scientists were alarmed when they learned about the oil field wastewater releases, especially given that it is happening on tribal land.

"I was shocked when I heard this," says Rob Jackson, a Duke University environmental scientist. "I was very surprised this was allowed. It's just something that we should know better by now. We should know that dumping our waste onto the surface of the ground is a bad solution."

Other experts agreed that the chemicals in the water raise concerns. However, some scientists, including staffers from the U.S. Geological Survey, felt uncomfortable commenting for the record without doing their own testing.

Jackson reviewed many of the EPA documents released to NPR, including analyses of the chemicals in the wastewater streams and warning labels for some of the chemical treatments that companies add to the wells.

He stresses that they include hazardous air pollutants such as hydrochloric acid and naphthalene, and carcinogens like benzene and ethyl benzene.

"There are many things in this water that you don't want in the environment or in people's drinking water. You don't need to be a genius to know this is a bad idea," Jackson says.

He urges the EPA to consider the consequences of its policy and how it looks.

"Are we doing something on tribal lands we wouldn't allow somewhere else? I think that's something we have to be

asking ourselves."

On The Reservation, Dead Ducklings, Dangerous Fumes

Outside the reservation, Western states decide how oil field waste is handled — and their rules are stricter than the EPA's. For instance, off the reservation, the state of Wyoming requires companies to inject wastewater deep underground and out of harm's way if they've added toxic chemicals to the wells. Other states have set tougher water quality standards that have nearly eliminated these releases.

On the Wind River Reservation, these oil field wastewater streams have flowed for several decades without attracting much interest, even from the tribes, according to Wes Martel and other officials of the two tribes that share the reservation, the Eastern Shoshoni and Northern Arapaho.

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ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS: A quieter climate skeptic takes top GOP spot on key panel (E&E Daily, 11/14/2012)
Land Letter

11/15/2012

The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee may see its climate change rhetoric dialed back a notch next year as Sen. David Vitter (R-La.) inherits the top GOP spot from noted skeptic James Inhofe (R-Okla.).

While Vitter says he is skeptical that human emissions are playing the chief role in driving climate change, he said in an interview with E E Daily that he is likely to devote less of his energies to climate skepticism than his predecessor did, focusing instead on a suite of issues including water infrastructure legislation, an overhaul to the Toxic Substances Control Act and reforming the highway trust fund.

"I share his intense skepticism," Vitter said of Inhofe. "But I would not expect it to be as much the focus of my time and attention on the committee."

Inhofe, who will become ranking member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, has made climate change his signature issue on the EPW Committee, where he will continue to serve -- and may yet become ranking member of one of its subcommittees. The chairman of the panel until Democrats regained control of the Senate in 2007, Inhofe has visited U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change meetings, appeared on talk shows and written a book to spread his belief that climate change is "a hoax" perpetrated by special interests to control the American economy.

Vitter said he also has serious doubts that human emissions are contributing to climate change, if climate change even exists.

"I certainly think it's significant and not adequately explained away, as folks have tried to do, the scandals that went on in climate science in the last five years and the doctoring of data that went on," he said.

Vitter was referring to the so-called Climategate incident in which climate scientists' emails were stolen from a server at the University of East Anglia's Climatic Research Unit and published out of context. Skeptics have pointed to the incident as proof that scientists manipulated data to show warming where none existed, but several independent investigations have cleared the researchers of wrongdoing.

But Vitter said that recent events have made climate change a less important issue. For one thing, climate change legislation is "dead" in Congress, he said.

And while U.S. EPA will move ahead with regulations under the Clean Air Act, Vitter pledged to use his new post to push back, particularly against rules that are "beyond the proper authority of the administration."

Republicans on both sides of Capitol Hill kept up the drumbeat for four years on what they call EPA's regulatory overreach with the majority-Republican House passing numerous bills to strip the agency of its authorities.

Democrats control the Senate, but Vitter noted that the chamber's Republicans still have ways to hold the Obama administration's feet to the fire on regulation.

"In the Senate we have tools at our disposal that aren't available in the House, like dealing with nominations and other things that the administration needs to pass through the Senate," he said.

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Vitter himself has used the Senate's advise and consent role numerous times to pressure the administration, blocking the confirmations of Interior Department officials and placing a hold on the Interior secretary's pay raise until the agency accelerated its approval of offshore drilling permits.

It is unclear how many confirmations the Senate will be asked to vote on in the second term, but some observers have said Obama might press Cabinet members to stay in part to avoid that battle.

Vitter also cited the Congressional Review Act and riders on appropriations bills as opportunities to combat regulation, particularly if Congress passes stand-alone spending bills rather than continuing resolutions.

Democrats in the Senate have managed to keep such items off spending bills in recent years, but Vitter said Republicans would keep trying.

"I'm not suggesting it's going to be easy, but I'm just saying that that's very much on the table," he said.

Vitter said he would especially oppose any new federal efforts to step up regulation of hydraulic fracturing, a means of natural gas production he said has paid untold dividends for job creation and energy supply.

EPA finalized an air quality rule for oil and natural gas production earlier this year that provides federal regulation for volatile organic compounds from "fracking" for the first time, and some environmentalists have asked EPA to promulgate new rules for methane emissions released during the process.

But Vitter said federal regulation of this kind would be "an enormous mistake."

"I think that's been an enormous positive in the economy in the last few years," he said. "It's been masked a little bit by the recession; but for that process and cheap natural gas, I think you could probably add a point to unemployment at least."

Reaching across the aisle on TSCA reform

Vitter hopes to find a bipartisan consensus to make reforms to the 1976 Toxic Substances Control Act, or TSCA. A bill sponsored by Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.), which would make manufacturers responsible for proving their substances are safe before they enter commerce, cleared the EPW Committee in July.

But Vitter predicted it wouldn't go any further. Lautenberg's proposal "hasn't passed for seven years, and the fundamentals haven't changed," he said. Without a governing majority in the Senate and control of the House, Democrats would have to collaborate more with Republicans, he said.

Vitter, who met with Lautenberg before the markup but did not support his bill, said the two men have "very different core approaches" to TSCA reform. He said he favors a bill that would focus on a more limited segment of the chemical industry.

"I'm going to continue to reach out to Frank and continue to work with Democrats on a bipartisan TSCA bill," he said.

Vitter said he was optimistic that Democrats and Republicans could find common ground on a water infrastructure bill the committee hopes to see enacted next year and that he named as his top priority.

He hoped the measure would include language he sponsored with Sen. Bill Nelson (D-Fla.) that would expedite Army Corps of Engineers flood control projects. Another item on his wish list: reforming industry-funded trust funds for updating ports and dredging waterways to ensure they are dedicated to that purpose.

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Louisiana Oil Gas Association President Don Briggs said in an interview that Vitter was a reliable and knowledgeable ally to his state's petroleum industry, intervening in state and federal issues that are important to industry leaders.

He said that Vitter's new position, along with his knowledge of the Bayou State's energy issues, "gives him a lot of credibility on the Hill in the case of oil and gas issues."

"He comes from a major producing state," Briggs noted. "It would only be natural for him to be keenly aware of issues that involve Louisiana's biggest industry."

Briggs said his membership is very concerned about EPA rules for refining and fracking, which he called "a big issue that is probably around the corner." He said Vitter would prove a formidable critic of those rules.

But he said the senator had sometimes parted ways with the industry, too. Most notably, Briggs said, he jumped on the bandwagon in pushing for punitive damages against BP PLC for its 2010 Gulf of Mexico oil spill, something that industry advocates feared would harm an economically important company.

"David has absolutely gone after them, and holding their feet to the fire," he said.

Briggs said he had told Vitter that wringing money out of BP would "kill off a very, very important company to Louisiana."

Fighter for animal rights

A less well-known area of interest for Vitter is animal rights, but he is the owner of a rescue dog and has worked to prevent animal cruelty since he was a state legislator pushing legislation to criminalize cock fighting.

Wayne Pacelle, CEO of the Humane Society of the United States, pointed out that Vitter had also co-sponsored legislation by Sen. Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) to crack down on puppy mills that breed dogs in inhumane conditions. With Senate EPW Chairwoman Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.), he has sponsored legislation to ban the trade of primates as pets.

"He's really an incredible leader on animal welfare issues in Congress," said Pacelle, though he added that Vitter and the Humane Society had probably parted ways on some wilderness-related legislation.

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OPBmusic.org

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So why is this wastewater being released into a desert wilderness of sage-brush-covered foot hills and sand stone cliffs that blaze with reds and oranges?

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

Whisonant stresses that the water from his oilfields meet EPA's requirements.

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But the EPA's permits, which are reissued every several years, tell a different story. Even the state of Wyoming, which is known to be pro-industry, questioned the fact that the EPA's requirements didn't seem to protect aquatic life. The EPA's response was that the tribes had not adopted their own water quality standards.

The EPA permits acknowledge that oilfield water may not meet the agency's own water quality criteria.

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Wes Martel says he's been pushing the EPA to thoroughly study the wastewater and then require the companies to purify it or inject it underground.

He worries about water quality and wildlife – and about food safety, too. Oilfield water abounds on the reservation, and the cows that graze there will eventually end up on dinner plates.

"So it really makes you wonder: What impacts is this having on not only aquatic life, but our wildlife?" Martel says.

"You've got to wonder, what types of chemicals are those beef retaining? And when that goes to the slaughterhouse, what's in your steak?"

Ranchers Still Want The Water

But Eastern Shoshone member Darwin Griebel, one of a handful of ranchers whose livestock use the oilfield water, pooh poohs Martel's concerns.

"Animals drink it. People aren't going to drink it. Hell with the quality of the water," says Griebel.

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Griebel says his cows haven't suffered health problems from drinking the water and the impurities clear up after the streams have run for a while. (The tribes' water study backs up that idea: Concentrations of various harmful chemicals tend to decrease the farther you get from the oilfields.)

What's most concerning to Griebel is that the water has been crucial to his family's business for generations. Without it, he says: "There would be no water for the cows. There would be no water for the deer, the antelope. Nothing. It would put us out of business is what it would do."

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But Martel says that if the EPA does not put a stop to this, the tribes will step in.

If the oil companies say that re-injecting or cleaning the water would be so expensive that it would no longer be profitable to pump oil, Martel knows what his response will be: "Good riddance."

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Loophole Lets Toxic Oil Water Flow Over Indian Land
KWGS-FM - Online

11/15/2012

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More than 40 years ago, the EPA banned oil companies from releasing wastewater into the environment, but made an exception for the arid West. If livestock and wildlife can use the water, companies can release it. Cows like these grazing near a stream of waste on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming are supposedly the reason the EPA lets oil companies release their waste into the environment.

The EPA requires that the wastewater streams show no obvious sheen and no solid deposits. But both were visible near oil fields on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming.

White crystal-like deposits line a streambed where this oil field water is flowing. Researchers for the tribes have also found black oozes, purple growths, dead ducklings and lifeless stretches of streams.

In most oil fields, the water that companies pump up with the oil gets reinjected deep underground. But the federal government allows a dozen oil fields on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming to pump streams of this wastewater onto the land.

Rancher Darwin Griebel says his cows need the oil field water, and his business depends on it.

Wes Martel, vice chairman for the Eastern Shoshone Business Council, stands near a murky gray stream full of oil field wastewater. He's concerned about the effects the wastewater has on wildlife, water quality and, since cows drink it, he wonders: "What's in your steak?"

Internal EPA documents released to NPR show some EPA staffers have been trying to figure out what is in the wastewater released by oil companies. There are lots of chemicals. Some leave solid residues like these white and gray mounds. Danger signs near this outflow pipe warn that poisonous gas fumes from the water can cause respiratory irritation or suffocation.

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Originally published on Thu November 15, 2012 3:04 pm

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Martel is giving me a tour of one of a dozen oil and gas fields on the reservation. These operations have the federal government's permission to dump wastewater on the land — so much that it creates streams that flow into natural creeks and rivers. And this water contains toxic chemicals, including known carcinogens and radioactive material, according to documents obtained by NPR through Freedom of Information Act requests.

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The fumes hitting Martel's nose are hydrogen sulfide, which can be deadly. So Martel makes sure the wind is at his back before walking over to a pit the size of several tennis courts. Pipes are emptying dirty brown water that came up from oil wells into the pit, which is completely covered in goopy black oil.

The oil is supposed to float to the surface, and then a truck will vacuum it up. Any solid stuff should fall on the bottom of the pit, before the water rushes out and forms a stream. But there are still chemicals in the water — some from the earth, some from the oil, and some the companies add to make the oil flow faster.

About a half-mile from the pit, Martel stops the car on a bridge over that stream of murky gray water. A shiny film covers the water in some places.

"I wish a lot of people could see this," says Martel, the vice chairman of the Eastern Shoshone Business Council, the tribal government. "This is something that's going on in the reservation: This don't look too cool."

In most of the country, this would be illegal. Most oil fields reinject wastewater far underground, where it cannot cause harm.

So why is this wastewater being released into a desert wilderness of sagebrush-covered foothills and sandstone cliffs that blaze with reds and oranges?

The few cows grazing nearby provide a clue.

"You can see the tracks into the water here," says Martel. "This is one of their watering holes."

Inside EPA, Distress Over Dumping Loophole

Without the wastewater, this area would be bone dry most of the year.

In the 1970s, when the Environmental Protection Agency was banning oil companies from dumping their wastewater, ranchers, especially in Wyoming, made a fuss. They argued that their livestock needs water, even dirty water.

So the EPA made an exception, a loophole, for the arid West. If oil companies demonstrate that ranchers or wildlife use the water, the companies can release it.

Off the reservation, Western states get to decide what oil companies must do with wastewater; over time, states' rules have become stricter than the EPA's. Some states have all but outlawed dumping.

But on the Wind River Reservation, the EPA controls whether companies can release wastewater on a case-by-case basis.

The EPA refused multiple requests for interviews, but in a statement, the agency said it was evaluating the permits it gives some of the companies to expel this water on the reservation.

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The documents also show recent detective work that some EPA staffers did to try to figure out what chemicals companies are putting in the water. Their research reveals that some of the waste streams sometimes include chemicals from hydraulic fracturing, an engineering technique designed to increase the flow of wells. They also include chemicals whose warning labels clearly state "toxic to aquatic organisms," "prevent material from entering sewers or waterways," and warnings about cancer and birth defects at low levels.

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'We Should Know Better By Now'

Experts, including scientists at the U.S. Geological Survey, say it's very rare for oil field water to be released into drainages or streams because it nearly always contains harmful chemicals.

"It's a very uncommon situation in the United States and, I believe, most of the rest of the world," said John Veil, a retired wastewater expert at the Department of Energy's Argonne National Laboratory, who now works as a consultant.

In one analysis that Veil did for Argonne, he found that 98 percent of the water that companies pump up with oil is reinjected deep underground. Veil says it's usually far too salty to discharge.

Some scientists were alarmed when they learned about the oil field wastewater releases, especially given that it is happening on tribal land.

"I was shocked when I heard this," says Rob Jackson, a Duke University environmental scientist. "I was very surprised this was allowed. It's just something that we should know better by now. We should know that dumping our waste onto the surface of the ground is a bad solution."

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WKAR-FM - Online

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

Loophole Lets Toxic Oil Water Flow Over Indian Land
WYSO-TV - Online

11/15/2012

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Dirty water from the oil wells flows through oil-caked pipes into a settling pit where trucks vacuum off the oil. A net covers the pit to keep out birds and other wildlife. Streams of this wastewater flow through the reservation and join natural creeks and rivers.

More than 40 years ago, the EPA banned oil companies from releasing wastewater into the environment, but made an exception for the arid West. If livestock and wildlife can use the water, companies can release it. Cows like these grazing near a stream of waste on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming are supposedly the reason the EPA lets oil companies release their waste into the environment.

The EPA requires that the wastewater streams show no obvious sheen and no solid deposits. But both were visible near oil fields on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming.

White crystal-like deposits line a streambed where this oil field water is flowing. Researchers for the tribes have also found black oozes, purple growths, dead ducklings and lifeless stretches of streams.

In most oil fields, the water that companies pump up with the oil gets reinjected deep underground. But the federal government allows a dozen oil fields on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming to pump streams of this wastewater onto the land.

Rancher Darwin Griebel says his cows need the oil field water, and his business depends on it.

Wes Martel, vice chairman for the Eastern Shoshone Business Council, stands near a murky gray stream full of oil field wastewater. He's concerned about the effects the wastewater has on wildlife, water quality and, since cows drink it, he wonders: "What's in your steak?"

Internal EPA documents released to NPR show some EPA staffers have been trying to figure out what is in the wastewater released by oil companies. There are lots of chemicals. Some leave solid residues like these white and gray mounds. Danger signs near this outflow pipe warn that poisonous gas fumes from the water can cause respiratory irritation or suffocation.

Dirty water from the oil wells flows through oil-caked pipes into a settling pit where trucks vacuum off the oil. A net covers the pit to keep out birds and other wildlife. Streams of this wastewater flow through the reservation and join natural creeks and rivers.

The air reeks so strongly of rotten eggs that tribal leader Wes Martel hesitates to get out of the car at an oil field on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming. He already has a headache from the fumes he smelled at another oil field.

Martel is giving me a tour of one of a dozen oil and gas fields on the reservation. These operations have the federal government's permission to dump wastewater on the land — so much that it creates streams that flow into natural creeks and rivers. And this water contains toxic chemicals, including known carcinogens and radioactive material, according to documents obtained by NPR through Freedom of Information Act requests.

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The fumes hitting Martel's nose are hydrogen sulfide, which can be deadly. So Martel makes sure the wind is at his back before walking over to a pit the size of several tennis courts. Pipes are emptying dirty brown water that came up from oil wells into the pit, which is completely covered in goopy black oil.

The oil is supposed to float to the surface, and then a truck will vacuum it up. Any solid stuff should fall on the bottom of the pit, before the water rushes out and forms a stream. But there are still chemicals in the water — some from the earth, some from the oil, and some the companies add to make the oil flow faster.

About a half-mile from the pit, Martel stops the car on a bridge over that stream of murky gray water. A shiny film covers the water in some places.

"I wish a lot of people could see this," says Martel, the vice chairman of the Eastern Shoshone Business Council, the tribal government. "This is something that's going on in the reservation: This don't look too cool."

In most of the country, this would be illegal. Most oil fields reinject wastewater far underground, where it cannot cause harm.

So why is this wastewater being released into a desert wilderness of sagebrush-covered foothills and sandstone cliffs that blaze with reds and oranges?

The few cows grazing nearby provide a clue.

"You can see the tracks into the water here," says Martel. "This is one of their watering holes."

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Without the wastewater, this area would be bone dry most of the year.

In the 1970s, when the Environmental Protection Agency was banning oil companies from dumping their wastewater, ranchers, especially in Wyoming, made a fuss. They argued that their livestock needs water, even dirty water.

So the EPA made an exception, a loophole, for the arid West. If oil companies demonstrate that ranchers or wildlife use the water, the companies can release it.

Off the reservation, Western states get to decide what oil companies must do with wastewater; over time, states' rules have become stricter than the EPA's. Some states have all but outlawed dumping.

But on the Wind River Reservation, the EPA controls whether companies can release wastewater on a case-by-case basis.

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Experts, including scientists at the U.S. Geological Survey, say it's very rare for oil field water to be released into drainages or streams because it nearly always contains harmful chemicals.

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In one analysis that Veil did for Argonne, he found that 98 percent of the water that companies pump up with oil is reinjected deep underground. Veil says it's usually far too salty to discharge.

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"I was shocked when I heard this," says Rob Jackson, a Duke University environmental scientist. "I was very surprised this was allowed. It's just something that we should know better by now. We should know that dumping our waste onto the surface of the ground is a bad solution."

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"Most of our elders were very trusting, very trusting people. They were glad they had the opportunity to get some revenue. Most of them were just thinking, 'We're being watched over, and things are being taken care of,' " says Martel, 65, who was in tribal government many years ago and was elected two years ago to return to government.

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KQED-FM - Online

11/15/2012

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

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WBUR - Online

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Vermont Public Radio - Online

11/15/2012

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More than 40 years ago, the EPA banned oil companies from releasing wastewater into the environment, but made an exception for the arid West. If livestock and wildlife can use the water, companies can release it. Cows like these grazing near a stream of waste on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming are supposedly the reason the EPA lets oil companies release their waste into the environment.

The EPA requires that the wastewater streams show no obvious sheen and no solid deposits. But both were visible near oil fields on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming.

White crystal-like deposits line a streambed where this oil field water is flowing. Researchers for the tribes have also found black oozes, purple growths, dead ducklings and lifeless stretches of streams.

In most oil fields, the water that companies pump up with the oil gets reinjected deep underground. But the federal government allows a dozen oil fields on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming to pump streams of this wastewater onto the land.

Rancher Darwin Griebel says his cows need the oil field water, and his business depends on it.

Wes Martel, vice chairman for the Eastern Shoshone Business Council, stands near a murky gray stream full of oil field wastewater. He's concerned about the effects the wastewater has on wildlife, water quality and, since cows drink it, he wonders: "What's in your steak?"

Internal EPA documents released to NPR show some EPA staffers have been trying to figure out what is in the wastewater released by oil companies. There are lots of chemicals. Some leave solid residues like these white and gray mounds. Danger signs near this outflow pipe warn that poisonous gas fumes from the water can cause respiratory irritation or suffocation.

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Originally published on Thu November 15, 2012 4:04 pm

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

Loophole Lets Toxic Oil Water Flow Over Indian Land
North Country Public Radio - Online

11/15/2012

Nov 15, 2012 (All Things Considered) — Every month, oil and gas operations dump millions of gallons of wastewater on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming. Under a long-standing EPA loophole, it's perfectly legal. Internal agency documents obtained by NPR show the water contains toxic chemicals, including known carcinogens and radioactive materials, that end up in natural rivers.

The air reeks so strongly of rotten eggs that tribal leader Wes Martel hesitates to get out of the car at an oil field on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming. He already has a headache from the fumes he smelled at another oil field.

Martel is giving me a tour of one of a dozen oil and gas fields on the reservation. These operations have the federal government's permission to dump wastewater on the land — so much that it creates streams that flow into natural creeks and rivers. And this water contains toxic chemicals, including known carcinogens and radioactive material, according to documents obtained by NPR through Freedom of Information Act requests.

The fumes hitting Martel's nose are hydrogen sulfide, which can be deadly. So Martel makes sure the wind is at his back before walking over to a pit the size of several tennis courts. Pipes are emptying dirty brown water that came up from oil wells into the pit, which is completely covered in goopy black oil.

The oil is supposed to float to the surface, and then a truck will vacuum it up. Any solid stuff should fall on the bottom of the pit, before the water rushes out and forms a stream. But there are still chemicals in the water — some from the earth, some from the oil, and some the companies add to make the oil flow faster.

About a half-mile from the pit, Martel stops the car on a bridge over that stream of murky gray water. A shiny film covers the water in some places.

"I wish a lot of people could see this," says Martel, the vice chairman of the Eastern Shoshone Business Council, the tribal government. "This is something that's going on in the reservation: This don't look too cool."

In most of the country, this would be illegal. Most oil fields reinject wastewater far underground, where it cannot cause harm.

So why is this wastewater being released into a desert wilderness of sagebrush-covered foothills and sandstone cliffs that blaze with reds and oranges?

The few cows grazing nearby provide a clue.

"You can see the tracks into the water here," says Martel. "This is one of their watering holes."

Inside EPA, Distress Over Dumping Loophole

Without the wastewater, this area would be bone dry most of the year.

In the 1970s, when the Environmental Protection Agency was banning oil companies from dumping their wastewater, ranchers, especially in Wyoming, made a fuss. They argued that their livestock needs water, even dirty water.

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So the EPA made an exception, a loophole, for the arid West. If oil companies demonstrate that ranchers or wildlife use the water, the companies can release it.

Off the reservation, Western states get to decide what oil companies must do with wastewater; over time, states' rules have become stricter than the EPA's. Some states have all but outlawed dumping.

But on the Wind River Reservation, the EPA controls whether companies can release wastewater on a case-by-case basis.

The EPA refused multiple requests for interviews, but in a statement, the agency said it was evaluating the permits it gives some of the companies to expel this water on the reservation.

"EPA is reviewing new information associated with these permits and intends to meet with the Tribes in upcoming weeks to discuss next steps," the statement reads.

The responses to NPR's two Freedom of Information Act requests include emails between staffers, correspondence with the companies, results of water-quality tests, the permits, and documents justifying each permit. Most of this information had not been public before.

The documents show hints of mutiny inside the EPA. Some EPA staffers clearly are appalled by the wastewater releases.

One wrote in an email to colleagues: "Can we get together and discuss a strategic approach for sending our message of concern? I have attached pictures of this ridiculousness."

Another staffer warns that the chemicals in the water could have "irrevocable human health and environmental impacts."

The documents also show recent detective work that some EPA staffers did to try to figure out what chemicals companies are putting in the water. Their research reveals that some of the waste streams sometimes include chemicals from hydraulic fracturing, an engineering technique designed to increase the flow of wells. They also include chemicals whose warning labels clearly state "toxic to aquatic organisms," "prevent material from entering sewers or waterways," and warnings about cancer and birth defects at low levels.

The documents suggest that at least some people inside the EPA are advocating for stricter rules. But much of this debate has been kept secret. The EPA refused to give NPR 757 documents about the loophole, claiming they can be kept secret because they are between the EPA and its attorneys or among EPA staffers.

'We Should Know Better By Now'

Experts, including scientists at the U.S. Geological Survey, say it's very rare for oil field water to be released into drainages or streams because it nearly always contains harmful chemicals.

"It's a very uncommon situation in the United States and, I believe, most of the rest of the world," said John Veil, a retired wastewater expert at the Department of Energy's Argonne National Laboratory, who now works as a consultant.

In one analysis that Veil did for Argonne, he found that 98 percent of the water that companies pump up with oil is reinjected deep underground. Veil says it's usually far too salty to discharge.

Some scientists were alarmed when they learned about the oil field wastewater releases, especially given that it is happening on tribal land.

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"I was shocked when I heard this," says Rob Jackson, a Duke University environmental scientist. "I was very surprised this was allowed. It's just something that we should know better by now. We should know that dumping our waste onto the surface of the ground is a bad solution."

Other experts agreed that the chemicals in the water raise concerns. However, some scientists, including staffers from the U.S. Geological Survey, felt uncomfortable commenting for the record without doing their own testing.

Jackson reviewed many of the EPA documents released to NPR, including analyses of the chemicals in the wastewater streams and warning labels for some of the chemical treatments that companies add to the wells.

He stresses that they include hazardous air pollutants such as hydrochloric acid and naphthalene, and carcinogens like benzene and ethyl benzene.

"There are many things in this water that you don't want in the environment or in people's drinking water. You don't need to be a genius to know this is a bad idea," Jackson says.

He urges the EPA to consider the consequences of its policy and how it looks.

"Are we doing something on tribal lands we wouldn't allow somewhere else? I think that's something we have to be asking ourselves."

On The Reservation, Dead Ducklings, Dangerous Fumes

Outside the reservation, Western states decide how oil field waste is handled — and their rules are stricter than the EPA's. For instance, off the reservation, the state of Wyoming requires companies to inject wastewater deep underground and out of harm's way if they've added toxic chemicals to the wells. Other states have set tougher water quality standards that have nearly eliminated these releases.

On the Wind River Reservation, these oil field wastewater streams have flowed for several decades without attracting much interest, even from the tribes, according to Wes Martel and other officials of the two tribes that share the reservation, the Eastern Shoshoni and Northern Arapaho.

"Most of our elders were very trusting, very trusting people. They were glad they had the opportunity to get some revenue. Most of them were just thinking, 'We're being watched over, and things are being taken care of,' " says Martel, 65, who was in tribal government many years ago and was elected two years ago to return to government.

But in 2005, the Wind River Environmental Quality Commission sampled the water downstream of some of the oil fields. Researchers found toxic levels of some chemicals, stretches of streams that were lifeless, and streambeds splotched with black ooze, white crystals and purple growths. They recorded water temperatures as high as 125 degrees, and found dead ducklings, according to a draft report prepared by the tribes' environmental department.

During tours of four of the oil fields earlier this fall, I witnessed visible violations of the plain language of the permits that the EPA gave these companies to discharge wastewater. For instance, I saw streambeds covered in white crystals and rock-like formations below outfall pipes. The permits prohibit visible deposits in the receiving waters or shoreline. They also prohibit any visible foam or sheen — I saw both. At the wastewater discharge site at one oil field, company officials warned us to leave after a few minutes because of the danger of respiratory distress or death from hydrogen sulfide fumes.

The companies were reluctant to talk. One agreed to meet at its oil field on the reservation but backed out the night before. Others failed to return multiple phone calls. Houston-based Marathon Oil Corporation, which runs three oil fields

on the reservation, agreed to an interview but refused to be recorded.

"As far as I know, there has never been concerns and opposition for the quality of the water that I'm aware about," says Bob Whisonant, Rocky Mountain operations manager for Marathon Oil, which has three oil fields on the reservation.

Whisonant stresses that the water from his oil fields meets EPA's requirements.

"We're really fortunate within Wyoming that the water is extremely fresh, very suitable for livestock and agriculture purposes. That's why we're able to discharge," Whisonant says.

But the EPA's permits, which are reissued every several years, tell a different story. Even the state of Wyoming, which is known to be pro-industry, questioned the fact that the EPA's requirements didn't seem to protect aquatic life. The EPA's response was that the tribes had not adopted their own water quality standards.

The EPA permits acknowledge that oil field water may not meet the agency's own water quality criteria.

The agency requires only minimal water testing at most of the oil fields, and it does not do its own testing to verify the companies' claims; nor does it sample water quality in the streams receiving the wastewater.

In 2007, the EPA required one company to test aquatic animals to see if they'd die in the water flowing from one oil field — it's a standard test of water quality known as whole effluent toxicity. The minnows and bugs in the sample died within an hour. The EPA asked the company to figure out what was killing the animals and propose remedies, but it let the company go on releasing the water for years. Five years later, the company, Marathon, says it is waiting for the EPA to OK a plan to lower high levels of sulfide in the water.

Wes Martel says he's been pushing the EPA to thoroughly study the wastewater and then require the companies to purify it or inject it underground.

He worries about water quality and wildlife — and about food safety, too. Oil field water abounds on the reservation, and the cows that graze there will eventually end up on dinner plates.

"So it really makes you wonder: What impacts is this having on not only aquatic life, but our wildlife?" Martel says.

"You've got to wonder, what types of chemicals are those beef retaining? And when that goes to the slaughterhouse, what's in your steak?"

Ranchers Still Want The Water

But Eastern Shoshone member Darwin Griebel, one of a handful of ranchers whose livestock use the oil field water, pooh -poohs Martel's concerns.

"Animals drink it. People aren't going to drink it. Hell with the quality of the water," says Griebel.

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

Water report badly needed re: gas boom
Pocono Record

11/15/2012

A nationwide study of the impacts natural gas drilling has on the water we drink can't come fast enough.

A U.S. Environmental Protection Agency progress report on the project is due out before the end of this year, with the final report to be issued in 2014. The national study looks at hydraulic fracturing, commonly called "fracking," examining whether it has adverse effects on drinking water.

The fracking process involves injecting large volumes of water laced with sand and hazardous chemicals deep into rock deposits. The procedure breaks the rocks apart to release oil and natural gas, a clean-burning fuel that is considered a vital part of the nation's energy future. The process is under intensive use in Pennsylvania, much of which sits atop the gas-rich Marcellus Shale deposit.

But contaminated wastewater can leak from faulty well casings into groundwater — and underground pollution is not easy to track. Where and how drilling-related wastewater is treated and disposed of is an issue, too. Anti-fracking advocates in northeastern Pennsylvania have stated loud and clear that protecting the clean waters of the Delaware River and its tributaries is just as important as fuel. And right now in the Pittsburgh area, researchers are searching for the source of a salty compound that is persisting in the Allegheny River just downstream of industrial brine treatment plants. The plants treat wastewater from oil and gas drilling as well as from other industrial activities, and other researchers have already documented a significant drop in bromides in the Monongahela River after shale gas drillers stopped taking wastewater.

Here in the Keystone State, the EPA study is looking into water quality and quantity issues in Washington, Bradford and Susquehanna counties.

The drinking water study should serve as a guide to local state and federal governments on how best to manage the pursuit of gas fracking, making sure the practice is conducted as safely as possible. The energy-greedy United States is already seeing lower prices for natural gas thanks to higher production. But plentiful and affordable energy shouldn't come at the expense of clean drinking water.

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

Loophole Lets Toxic Oil Water Flow Over Indian Land
KBIA-FM - Online

11/15/2012

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More than 40 years ago, the EPA banned oil companies from releasing waste water into the environment, but made an exception for the arid West. If livestock and wildlife can use the water, companies can release it. Cows like these grazing near a stream of waste on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming are supposedly the reason the EPA lets oil companies release their waste into the environment.

The EPA requires that the waste water streams show no obvious sheen and no solid deposits. But both were visible near oil fields on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming.

White crystal-like deposits line a streambed where this oil field water is flowing. Researchers for the tribes have also found black oozes, purple growths, dead ducklings and lifeless stretches of streams.

In most oil fields, the water that companies pump up with the oil gets re-injected deep underground. But the federal government allows a dozen oil fields on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming to pump streams of this waste water onto the land.

Rancher Dawin Griebel says his cows need the oil field water, and his business depends on it.

Wes Martel, Vice Chairman for the Eastern Shoshone Business Council, stands near a murky gray stream full of oil field waste water. He's concerned about the effects the waste water has on wildlife, water quality and, since cows drink it, he wonders: "What's in your steak?"

Internal EPA documents released to NPR show some EPA staffers have been trying to figure out what is in the waste water released by oil companies. There are lots of chemicals. Some leave solid residues like these white and gray mounds. Danger signs near this outflow pipe warn that poisonous gas fumes from the water can cause respiratory irritation or suffocation.

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

EPA invites public to submit data on fracking
Wyoming Business Report, The

11/15/2012

November 14, 2012 --
WASHINGTON D.C. — According to a notice posted last week by the Environmental Protection Agency in the Federal Register, the public is invited to submit data and scientific literature to inform the EPA's research on the potential impacts of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water resources.

While fracking has been used by the oil and gas industry for decades, the recent shale gas boom has led to the practice being more wide spread and more controversial. Hard data tracking before and after conditions of water wells, as well as the potential impact of fracking, has been hard to find.

In Pavillion, fracking was blamed by some for the condition of the drinking water. Test results by the EPA and U.S. Geological Service yielded conflicting results, with a resolution still not in sight.

In an effort to expand its informational base, the EPA will accept data and scientific literature until April 30, 2013. Online submissions are preferred: follow the instructions at http://www.regulations.gov, and identify your submission with Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-ORD-2010-0674.

While EPA conducts a thorough literature search, there may be studies or other primary technical sources that are not available through the open literature. EPA would appreciate receiving information from the public to help inform current and future research and ensure a robust record of scientific information. Consistent with our commitment to using the highest quality information, EPA prefers information that has been peer-reviewed. Interested persons may provide scientific analyses, studies and other pertinent scientific information. EPA will consider all submissions but will give preference to peer reviewed data and literature sources.

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

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KUHF-FM - Online

11/15/2012

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Audio for this story from All Things Considered will be available at approx. 7:00 p.m. ET

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Elizabeth Shogren/NPR

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Elizabeth Shogren/NPR

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1 of 8

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Martel is giving me a tour of one of a dozen oil and gas fields on the reservation. These operations have the federal government's permission to dump wastewater on the land – so much that it creates streams that flow into natural creeks and rivers. And this water contains toxic chemicals, including known carcinogens and radioactive material, according to documents obtained by NPR through Freedom of Information Act requests.

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In most of the country, this would be illegal. Most oilfields re-inject wastewater far underground, where it cannot cause harm.

So why is this wastewater being released into a desert wilderness of sage-brush-covered foot hills and sand stone cliffs that blaze with reds and oranges?

The few cows grazing nearby provide a clue.

"You can see the tracks into the water here," says Martel. "This is one of their watering holes."

Inside EPA, Distress Over Dumping Loophole

Without the wastewater, this area would be bone dry most of the year.

In the 1970s, when the Environmental Protection Agency was banning oil companies from dumping their wastewater, ranchers, especially in Wyoming, made a fuss. They argued that their livestock needs water, even dirty water.

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But on the Wind River Reservation, the EPA controls whether companies can release wastewater on a case-by-case basis.

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Another staffer warns that the chemicals in the water could have "irrevocable human health and environmental impacts."

The documents also show recent detective work that some EPA staffers did to try figure out what chemicals companies are putting in the water. Their research reveals that some of the waste streams sometimes include chemicals from hydraulic fracturing, an engineering technique designed to increase the flow of wells. They also include chemicals whose warning labels clearly state "toxic to aquatic organisms," "prevent material from entering sewers or waterways," and warnings about cancer and birth defects at low levels.

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'We Should Know Better By Now'

Experts, including scientists at the U.S. Geological Survey, say it's very rare for oilfield water to be released into drainages or streams because it nearly always contains harmful chemicals.

"It's a very uncommon situation in the United States and, I believe, most of the rest of the world," said John Veil, a retired wastewater expert at Department of Energy's Argonne National Laboratory Energy, who now works as a consultant.

In one analysis that Veil did for Argonne, he found that 98 percent of the water companies pump up with oil is re-injected deep underground. Veil says it's usually far too salty to discharge.

Some scientists were alarmed when they learned about the oilfield wastewater releases, especially given that it is happening on tribal land.

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"I was shocked when I heard this." says Rob Jackson, a Duke University environmental scientist. "I was very surprised this was allowed. It's just something that we should know better by now. We should know that dumping our waste on to the surface of the ground is a bad solution."

Other experts agreed that the chemicals in the water raise concerns. However, some scientists, including staffers from the U.S. Geological Survey, felt uncomfortable commenting for the record without doing their own testing.

Jackson reviewed many of the EPA documents released to NPR, including analyses of the chemicals in the wastewater streams and warning labels for some of the chemical treatments that companies add to the wells.

He stresses that they include hazardous air pollutants such as hydrochloric acid and naphthalene and carcinogens like benzene and ethyl benzene.

"There are many things in this water that you don't want in the environment or in people's drinking water. You don't need to be a genius to know this is a bad idea," Jackson says.

He urges the EPA to consider the consequences of its policy and how it looks.

"Are we doing something on tribal lands we wouldn't allow somewhere else? I think that's something we have to be asking ourselves?"

On The Reservation, Dead Ducklings, Dangerous Fumes

Outside the reservation, Western states decide how oil field waste is handled. And their rules are stricter than the EPA's. For instance, off the reservation, the state of Wyoming requires companies to inject wastewater deep underground and out of harm's way if they've added toxic chemicals to the wells. Other states have set tougher water quality standards that have nearly eliminated these releases.

On the Wind River Reservation, these oil field wastewater streams have flowed for several decades without attracting much interest, even from the tribes, according to Wes Martel and other officials of the two tribes that share the reservation, the Eastern Shoshoni and Northern Arapaho.

"Most of our elders were very trusting, very trusting people. They were glad they had the opportunity to get some revenue. Most of them were just thinking, 'We're being watched over, and things are being taken care of,'" says Martel, 65, who was in tribal government many years ago and was elected two years ago to return to government.

But in 2005, the Wind River Environmental Quality Commission sampled the water downstream of some of the oilfields. Researchers found toxic levels of some chemicals, stretches of streams that were lifeless and stream beds splotched with black ooze, white crystals and purple growths. It recorded water temperatures as high as 125 degrees, and found dead ducklings, according to a draft report prepared by the tribes' environmental department.

During tours of four of the oilfields earlier this fall, I witnessed visible violations of the plain language of the permits that the EPA gave these companies to discharge wastewater. For instance, I saw stream beds covered in white crystals and rock-like formations below outfall pipes. The permits prohibit visible deposits in the receiving waters or shoreline. They also prohibit any visible foam or sheen — I saw both. At the wastewater discharge site at one oil field, company officials warned us to leave after a few minutes because of the danger of respiratory distress or death from hydrogen sulfide fumes.

The companies were reluctant to talk. One agreed to meet at its oilfield on the reservation but backed out the night before. Others failed to return multiple phone calls. Houston-based Marathon Oil Corporation, which runs three oilfields

on the reservation, agreed to an interview but refused to be recorded.

"As far as I know, there has never been concerns and opposition for the quality of the water that I'm aware about," says Bob Whisonant, Rocky Mountain operations manager for Marathon Oil, which has three oilfields on the reservation.

Whisonant stresses that the water from his oilfields meet EPA's requirements.

"We're really fortunate within Wyoming that the water is extremely fresh, very suitable for livestock and agriculture purposes. That's why we're able to discharge," Whisonant says.

But the EPA's permits, which are reissued every several years, tell a different story. Even the state of Wyoming, which is known to be pro-industry, questioned the fact that the EPA's requirements didn't seem to protect aquatic life. The EPA's response was that the tribes had not adopted their own water quality standards.

The EPA permits acknowledge that oilfield water may not meet the agency's own water quality criteria.

The agency requires only minimal water testing at most of the oilfields, and it does not do its own testing to verify the companies' claims; nor does it sample water quality in the streams receiving the wastewater.

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Wes Martel says he's been pushing the EPA to thoroughly study the wastewater and then require the companies to purify it or inject it underground.

He worries about water quality and wildlife – and about food safety, too. Oilfield water abounds on the reservation, and the cows that graze there will eventually end up on dinner plates.

"So it really makes you wonder: What impacts is this having on not only aquatic life, but our wildlife?" Martel says.

"You've got to wonder, what types of chemicals are those beef retaining? And when that goes to the slaughterhouse, what's in your steak?"

Ranchers Still Want The Water

But Eastern Shoshone member Darwin Griebel, one of a handful of ranchers whose livestock use the oilfield water, pooh poohs Martel's concerns.

"Animals drink it. People aren't going to drink it. Hell with the quality of the water," says Griebel.

Griebel has known Martel for nearly 60 years, since they were in elementary school and slept over at each others' houses, but he says they don't agree on this issue.

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What's most concerning to Griebel is that the water has been crucial to his family's business for generations. Without it, he says: "There would be no water for the cows. There would be no water for the deer, the antelope. Nothing. It would put us out of business is what it would do."

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If the oil companies say that re-injecting or cleaning the water would be so expensive that it would no longer be profitable to pump oil, Martel knows what his response will be: "Good riddance."

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Loophole Lets Toxic Oil Water Flow Over Indian Land
WCPN-FM - Online

11/15/2012

Every month, oil and gas operations dump millions of gallons of wastewater on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming. Under a long-standing EPA loophole, it's perfectly legal. Internal agency documents obtained by NPR show the water contains toxic chemicals, including known carcinogens and radioactive materials, that end up in natural rivers.

Dirty water from the oil wells flows through oil-caked pipes into a settling pit where trucks vacuum off the oil. A net covers the pit to keep out birds and other wildlife. Streams of this waste water flow through the reservation and join natural creeks and rivers. Elizabeth Shogren

More than 40 years ago, the EPA banned oil companies from releasing waste water into the environment, but made an exception for the arid West. If livestock and wildlife can use the water, companies can release it. Cows like these grazing near a stream of waste on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming are supposedly the reason the EPA lets oil companies release their waste into the environment. Elizabeth Shogren

The EPA requires that the waste water streams show no obvious sheen and no solid deposits. But both were visible near oil fields on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming. Elizabeth Shogren

White crystal-like deposits line a streambed where this oil field water is flowing. Researchers for the tribes have also found black oozes, purple growths, dead ducklings and lifeless stretches of streams. Elizabeth Shogren

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Rancher Dawin Griebel says his cows need the oil field water, and his business depends on it. Elizabeth Shogren

Wes Martel, Vice Chairman for the Eastern Shoshone Business Council, stands near a murky gray stream full of oil field waste water. He's concerned about the effects the waste water has on wildlife, water quality and, since cows drink it, he wonders: "What's in your steak?" Elizabeth Shogren

Internal EPA documents released to NPR show some EPA staffers have been trying to figure out what is in the waste water released by oil companies. There are lots of chemicals. Some leave solid residues like these white and gray mounds. Danger signs near this outflow pipe warn that poisonous gas fumes from the water can cause respiratory irritation or suffocation. Elizabeth Shogren

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Loophole Lets Toxic Oil Water Flow Over Indian Land
New Hampshire Public Radio - Online

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Originally published on Thu November 15, 2012 3:31 pm

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

"Are we doing something on tribal lands we wouldn't allow somewhere else? I think that's something we have to be asking ourselves?"

On The Reservation, Dead Ducklings, Dangerous Fumes

Outside the reservation, Western states decide how oil field waste is handled. And their rules are stricter than the EPA's. For instance, off the reservation, the state of Wyoming requires companies to inject wastewater deep underground and out of harm's way if they've added toxic chemicals to the wells. Other states have set tougher water quality standards that have nearly eliminated these releases.

On the Wind River Reservation, these oil field wastewater streams have flowed for several decades without attracting much interest, even from the tribes, according to Wes Martel and other officials of the two tribes that share the reservation, the Eastern Shoshoni and Northern Arapaho.

"Most of our elders were very trusting, very trusting people. They were glad they had the opportunity to get some revenue. Most of them were just thinking, 'We're being watched over, and things are being taken care of,'" says Martel, 65, who was in tribal government many years ago and was elected two years ago to return to government.

But in 2005, the Wind River Environmental Quality Commission sampled the water downstream of some of the oil fields. Researchers found toxic levels of some chemicals, stretches of streams that were lifeless, and streambeds splotched with black ooze, white crystals and purple growths. They recorded water temperatures as high as 125 degrees, and found dead ducklings, according to a draft report prepared by the tribes' environmental department.

During tours of four of the oilfields earlier this fall, I witnessed visible violations of the plain language of the permits that the EPA gave these companies to discharge wastewater. For instance, I saw stream beds covered in white crystals and rock-like formations below outfall pipes. The permits prohibit visible deposits in the receiving waters or shoreline. They also prohibit any visible foam or sheen — I saw both. At the wastewater discharge site at one oil field, company officials warned us to leave after a few minutes because of the danger of respiratory distress or death from hydrogen sulfide fumes.

The companies were reluctant to talk. One agreed to meet at its oilfield on the reservation but backed out the night before. Others failed to return multiple phone calls. Houston-based Marathon Oil Corporation, which runs three oilfields on the reservation, agreed to an interview but refused to be recorded.

"As far as I know, there has never been concerns and opposition for the quality of the water that I'm aware about," says Bob Whisonant, Rocky Mountain operations manager for Marathon Oil, which has three oilfields on the reservation.

Whisonant stresses that the water from his oilfields meet EPA's requirements.

"We're really fortunate within Wyoming that the water is extremely fresh, very suitable for livestock and agriculture purposes. That's why we're able to discharge," Whisonant says.

But the EPA's permits, which are reissued every several years, tell a different story. Even the state of Wyoming, which is known to be pro-industry, questioned the fact that the EPA's requirements didn't seem to protect aquatic life. The EPA's response was that the tribes had not adopted their own water quality standards.

The EPA permits acknowledge that oilfield water may not meet the agency's own water quality criteria.

The agency requires only minimal water testing at most of the oilfields, and it does not do its own testing to verify the companies' claims; nor does it sample water quality in the streams receiving the wastewater.

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In 2007, the EPA required one company to test aquatic animals to see if they'd die in the water flowing from one oilfield--it's a standard test of water quality known as whole effluent toxicity. The minnows and bugs in the sample died within an hour. The EPA asked the company to figure out what was killing the animals and propose remedies, but it let the company go on releasing the water for years. Five years later, the company, Marathon, says it is waiting for the EPA to OK a plan to lower high levels of sulfide in the water.

Wes Martel says he's been pushing the EPA to thoroughly study the wastewater and then require the companies to purify it or inject it underground.

He worries about water quality and wildlife – and about food safety, too. Oilfield water abounds on the reservation, and the cows that graze there will eventually end up on dinner plates.

"So it really makes you wonder: What impacts is this having on not only aquatic life, but our wildlife?" Martel says.

"You've got to wonder, what types of chemicals are those beef retaining? And when that goes to the slaughterhouse, what's in your steak?"

Ranchers Still Want The Water

But Eastern Shoshone member Darwin Griebel, one of a handful of ranchers whose livestock use the oilfield water, pooh poohs Martel's concerns.

"Animals drink it. People aren't going to drink it. Hell with the quality of the water," says Griebel.

Griebel has known Martel for nearly 60 years, since they were in elementary school and slept over at each others' houses, but he says they don't agree on this issue.

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If the oil companies say that re-injecting or cleaning the water would be so expensive that it would no longer be profitable to pump oil, Martel knows what his response will be: "Good riddance."

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Loophole Lets Toxic Oil Water Flow Over Indian Land
WGBH News

11/15/2012

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Rancher Darwin Griebel says his cows need the oil field water, and his business depends on it.

Wes Martel, vice chairman for the Eastern Shoshone Business Council, stands near a murky gray stream full of oil field wastewater. He's concerned about the effects the wastewater has on wildlife, water quality and, since cows drink it, he wonders: "What's in your steak?"

Internal EPA documents released to NPR show some EPA staffers have been trying to figure out what is in the wastewater released by oil companies. There are lots of chemicals. Some leave solid residues like these white and gray mounds. Danger signs near this outflow pipe warn that poisonous gas fumes from the water can cause respiratory irritation or suffocation.

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Originally published on Thu November 15, 2012 4:04 pm

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Martel is giving me a tour of one of a dozen oil and gas fields on the reservation. These operations have the federal government's permission to dump wastewater on the land — so much that it creates streams that flow into natural creeks and rivers. And this water contains toxic chemicals, including known carcinogens and radioactive material, according to documents obtained by NPR through Freedom of Information Act requests.

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The fumes hitting Martel's nose are hydrogen sulfide, which can be deadly. So Martel makes sure the wind is at his back before walking over to a pit the size of several tennis courts. Pipes are emptying dirty brown water that came up from oil wells into the pit, which is completely covered in goopy black oil.

The oil is supposed to float to the surface, and then a truck will vacuum it up. Any solid stuff should fall on the bottom of the pit, before the water rushes out and forms a stream. But there are still chemicals in the water — some from the earth, some from the oil, and some the companies add to make the oil flow faster.

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So why is this wastewater being released into a desert wilderness of sagebrush-covered foothills and sandstone cliffs that blaze with reds and oranges?

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Without the wastewater, this area would be bone dry most of the year.

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

Ohio renews issuing permits for injection wells
Independent - Online, The

11/15/2012

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By Julie Carr Smyth

The Associated Press

Posted Nov 13, 2012 @ 04:09 PM

COLUMBUS -

Ohio began issuing its first new permits Tuesday for deep injection of chemically-laced wastewater from oil and gas drilling since a New Year's Eve quake in Youngstown prompted an unofficial statewide moratorium.

Rick Simmers, head of the state's Division of Oil and Gas Resources, said the first four new permits went out Tuesday to sites in Athens, Portage and Washington counties. He said another 28 sites will be permitted in small batches of five or under in coming months.

"We never had an official moratorium on issuing the permits, but we've asked the companies to work cooperatively with us as we upgrade our statutes and rules to make them even more stringent, and the companies have," Simmer said in an interview with The Associated Press.

He said state natural resources officials now believe new regulations include ample safeguards - including the ability to order or conduct seismic testing before, during and after drilling - to protect against future quakes.

Millions of gallons of wastewater from the drilling technique hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, are injected deep into the earth at such wells. The practice has been ridiculed and protested by environmental groups, and defended by well operators as safe and responsible.

Gov. John Kasich imposed a moratorium within a seven-mile radius of a Youngstown deep-injection site after a series of a dozen quakes that included a 4.0 magnitude tremor later linked to activity there. Simmers said Tuesday would mark an end to formal restrictions in the area, but that the offending well and those in the vicinity have no foreseeable plans to operate.

D&L Energy in Youngstown, the well's operator in northeast Ohio, sought state permission in February to re-open the shuttered well to conduct independent research to prove the well didn't cause the quakes. But Simmers said the company hasn't yet presented adequate information needed to be re-opened.

Kasich also issued an executive order this summer giving Simmers authority to order preliminary tests at proposed well sites, to prevent drilling where tests fail, and to restrict injection pressure. The state also can order installation of automatic shut-off valves and monitor for leakage.

Simmers said the EPA turned well oversight over to Ohio years ago because the state's regulations surpass those of the federal government.

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The first round of new wells permitted Tuesday included one in Athens County's Troy Township, one in Portage County's Deerfield Township and two in Washington County's Newport Township. One of the Washington County wells was previously operated as an oil and gas production well.

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WVXU-FM - Online

11/15/2012

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On the Wind River Reservation, these oil field wastewater streams have flowed for several decades without attracting much interest, even from the tribes, according to Wes Martel and other officials of the two tribes that share the reservation, the Eastern Shoshoni and Northern Arapaho.

"Most of our elders were very trusting, very trusting people. They were glad they had the opportunity to get some revenue. Most of them were just thinking, 'We're being watched over, and things are being taken care of,'" says Martel, 65, who was in tribal government many years ago and was elected two years ago to return to government.

But in 2005, the Wind River Environmental Quality Commission sampled the water downstream of some of the oil fields. Researchers found toxic levels of some chemicals, stretches of streams that were lifeless, and streambeds splotched with black ooze, white crystals and purple growths. They recorded water temperatures as high as 125 degrees, and found dead ducklings, according to a draft report prepared by the tribes' environmental department.

During tours of four of the oilfields earlier this fall, I witnessed visible violations of the plain language of the permits that the EPA gave these companies to discharge wastewater. For instance, I saw stream beds covered in white crystals and rock-like formations below outfall pipes. The permits prohibit visible deposits in the receiving waters or shoreline. They also prohibit any visible foam or sheen — I saw both. At the wastewater discharge site at one oil field, company officials warned us to leave after a few minutes because of the danger of respiratory distress or death from hydrogen sulfide fumes.

The companies were reluctant to talk. One agreed to meet at its oilfield on the reservation but backed out the night before. Others failed to return multiple phone calls. Houston-based Marathon Oil Corporation, which runs three oilfields on the reservation, agreed to an interview but refused to be recorded.

"As far as I know, there has never been concerns and opposition for the quality of the water that I'm aware about," says Bob Whisonant, Rocky Mountain operations manager for Marathon Oil, which has three oilfields on the reservation.

Whisonant stresses that the water from his oilfields meet EPA's requirements.

"We're really fortunate within Wyoming that the water is extremely fresh, very suitable for livestock and agriculture purposes. That's why we're able to discharge," Whisonant says.

But the EPA's permits, which are reissued every several years, tell a different story. Even the state of Wyoming, which is known to be pro-industry, questioned the fact that the EPA's requirements didn't seem to protect aquatic life. The EPA's response was that the tribes had not adopted their own water quality standards.

The EPA permits acknowledge that oilfield water may not meet the agency's own water quality criteria.

The agency requires only minimal water testing at most of the oilfields, and it does not do its own testing to verify the companies' claims; nor does it sample water quality in the streams receiving the wastewater.

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it's a standard test of water quality known as whole effluent toxicity. The minnows and bugs in the sample died within an hour. The EPA asked the company to figure out what was killing the animals and propose remedies, but it let the company go on releasing the water for years. Five years later, the company, Marathon, says it is waiting for the EPA to OK a plan to lower high levels of sulfide in the water.

Wes Martel says he's been pushing the EPA to thoroughly study the wastewater and then require the companies to purify it or inject it underground.

He worries about water quality and wildlife – and about food safety, too. Oilfield water abounds on the reservation, and the cows that graze there will eventually end up on dinner plates.

"So it really makes you wonder: What impacts is this having on not only aquatic life, but our wildlife?" Martel says.

"You've got to wonder, what types of chemicals are those beef retaining? And when that goes to the slaughterhouse, what's in your steak?"

Ranchers Still Want The Water

But Eastern Shoshone member Darwin Griebel, one of a handful of ranchers whose livestock use the oilfield water, pooh poohs Martel's concerns.

"Animals drink it. People aren't going to drink it. Hell with the quality of the water," says Griebel.

Griebel has known Martel for nearly 60 years, since they were in elementary school and slept over at each others' houses, but he says they don't agree on this issue.

Griebel says his cows haven't suffered health problems from drinking the water and the impurities clear up after the streams have run for a while. (The tribes' water study backs up that idea: Concentrations of various harmful chemicals tend to decrease the farther you get from the oilfields.)

What's most concerning to Griebel is that the water has been crucial to his family's business for generations. Without it, he says: "There would be no water for the cows. There would be no water for the deer, the antelope. Nothing. It would put us out of business is what it would do."

But Martel says that if the EPA does not put a stop to this, the tribes will step in.

If the oil companies say that re-injecting or cleaning the water would be so expensive that it would no longer be profitable to pump oil, Martel knows what his response will be: "Good riddance."

"We'll take it over ourselves and do it right," he says.

Martel dreams of putting tribal companies in charge of their oilfields. Then the tribes would get all the profits, instead of just the royalties the companies pay them. They'd also be able to protect water quality for future generations.

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Ohio renews issuing permits for injection wells
Times-Reporter - Online, The

11/15/2012

Ohio renews issuing permits for injection wells

By Julie Carr Smyth

The Associated Press

Posted Nov 13, 2012 @ 04:09 PM

COLUMBUS -

Ohio began issuing its first new permits Tuesday for deep injection of chemically-laced wastewater from oil and gas drilling since a New Year's Eve quake in Youngstown prompted an unofficial statewide moratorium.

Rick Simmers, head of the state's Division of Oil and Gas Resources, said the first four new permits went out Tuesday to sites in Athens, Portage and Washington counties. He said another 28 sites will be permitted in small batches of five or under in coming months.

"We never had an official moratorium on issuing the permits, but we've asked the companies to work cooperatively with us as we upgrade our statutes and rules to make them even more stringent, and the companies have," Simmer said in an interview with The Associated Press.

He said state natural resources officials now believe new regulations include ample safeguards - including the ability to order or conduct seismic testing before, during and after drilling - to protect against future quakes.

Millions of gallons of wastewater from the drilling technique hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, are injected deep into the earth at such wells. The practice has been ridiculed and protested by environmental groups, and defended by well operators as safe and responsible.

Gov. John Kasich imposed a moratorium within a seven-mile radius of a Youngstown deep-injection site after a series of a dozen quakes that included a 4.0 magnitude tremor later linked to activity there. Simmers said Tuesday would mark an end to formal restrictions in the area, but that the offending well and those in the vicinity have no foreseeable plans to operate.

D&L Energy in Youngstown, the well's operator in northeast Ohio, sought state permission in February to re-open the shuttered well to conduct independent research to prove the well didn't cause the quakes. But Simmers said the company hasn't yet presented adequate information needed to be re-opened.

Kasich also issued an executive order this summer giving Simmers authority to order preliminary tests at proposed well sites, to prevent drilling where tests fail, and to restrict injection pressure. The state also can order installation of automatic shut-off valves and monitor for leakage.

Simmers said the EPA turned well oversight over to Ohio years ago because the state's regulations surpass those of the federal government.

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The first round of new wells permitted Tuesday included one in Athens County's Troy Township, one in Portage County's Deerfield Township and two in Washington County's Newport Township. One of the Washington County wells was previously operated as an oil and gas production well.

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Loophole Lets Toxic Oil Water Flow Over Indian Land
NPR - Online

11/15/2012

Loophole Lets Toxic Oil Water Flow Over Indian Land

by Elizabeth Shogren

Audio for this story from All Things Considered will be available at approx. 7:00 p.m. ET

November 15, 2012

Transcript

The air reeks so strongly of rotten eggs that tribal leader Wes Martel hesitates to get out of the car at an oilfield on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming. He already has a headache from the fumes he smelled at another oilfield.

Martel is giving me a tour of one of a dozen oil and gas fields on the reservation. These operations have the federal government's permission to dump wastewater on the land â so much that it creates streams that flow into natural creeks and rivers. And this water contains toxic chemicals, including known carcinogens and radioactive material, according to documents obtained by NPR through Freedom of Information Act requests.

The fumes hitting Martel's nose are hydrogen sulfide, which can be deadly. So Martel makes sure the wind is at his back before walking over to a pit the size of several tennis courts. Pipes are emptying dirty brown water that came up from oil wells into the pit, which is completely covered in goopy black oil.

The oil is supposed to float to the surface, and then a truck will vacuum it up. Any solid stuff should fall on the bottom of the pit, before the water rushes out and forms a stream. But there are still chemicals in the waterâ some from the earth, some from the oil and some the companies add to make the oil flow faster.

About a half-mile from the pit, Martel stops the car on a bridge over that stream of murky gray water. A shiny film covers the water in some places.

"I wish a lot of people could see this," says Martell, the vice chairman of the Eastern Shoshone Business Council, the tribal government. "This is something that's going on in the reservation: This don't look too cool."

In most of the country, this would be illegal. Most oilfields re-inject wastewater far underground, where it cannot cause harm.

So why is this wastewater being released into a desert wilderness of sage-brush-covered foot hills and sand stone cliffs that blaze with reds and oranges?

The few cows grazing nearby provide a clue.

"You can see the tracks into the water here," says Martel. "This is one of their watering holes."

Inside EPA, Distress Over Dumping Loophole

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Without the wastewater, this area would be bone dry most of the year.

Credit: Stephanie d'Otreppe/NPR

In the 1970s, when the Environmental Protection Agency was banning oil companies from dumping their wastewater, ranchers, especially in Wyoming, made a fuss. They argued that their livestock needs water, even dirty water.

So the EPA made an exception, a loophole, for the arid West. If oil companies demonstrate that ranchers or wildlife use the water, the companies can release it.

Off the reservation, Western states get to decide what oil companies must do with wastewater; over time, states' rules have become stricter than the EPA's. Some states have all but outlawed dumping.

But on the Wind River Reservation, the EPA controls whether companies can release wastewater on a case-by-case basis.

The EPA refused multiple requests for interviews, but in a statement, the agency said it was evaluating the permits it gives some of the companies to expel this water on the reservation.

"EPA is reviewing new information associated with these permits and intends to meet with the Tribes in upcoming weeks to discuss next steps," the statement reads.

The responses to NPR's two Freedom of Information Act requests include emails between staffers, correspondence with the companies, results of water-quality tests, the permits, and documents justifying each permit. Most of this information had not been public before.

The documents show hints of mutiny inside the EPA. Some EPA staffers clearly are appalled about the wastewater releases.

One wrote in an email to colleagues: "Can we get together and discuss a strategic approach for sending our message of concern? I have attached pictures of this ridiculousness."

Another staffer warns that the chemicals in the water could have "irrevocable human health and environmental impacts."

The documents also show recent detective work that some EPA staffers did to try figure out what chemicals companies are putting in the water. Their research reveals that some of the waste streams sometimes include chemicals from hydraulic fracturing, an engineering technique designed to increase the flow of wells. They also include chemicals whose warning labels clearly state "toxic to aquatic organisms," "prevent material from entering sewers or waterways," and warnings about cancer and birth defects at low levels.

The documents suggest that at least some people inside the EPA are advocating for stricter rules. But much of this debate has been kept secret. The EPA refused to give NPR 757 documents about the loophole, claiming they can be kept secret because they are between the EPA and its attorneys or among EPA staffers.

'We Should Know Better By Now'

Experts, including scientists at the U.S. Geological Survey, say it's very rare for oilfield water to be released into drainages or streams because it nearly always contains harmful chemicals.

"It's a very uncommon situation in the United States and, I believe, most of the rest of the world," said John Veil, a retired

wastewater expert at Department of Energy's Argonne National Laboratory Energy, who now works as a consultant.

In one analysis that Veil did for Argonne, he found that 98 percent of the water companies pump up with oil is re-injected deep underground. Veil says it's usually far too salty to discharge.

Some scientists were alarmed when they learned about the oilfield wastewater releases, especially given that it is happening on tribal land.

"I was shocked when I heard this." says Rob Jackson, a Duke University environmental scientist. "I was very surprised this was allowed. It's just something that we should know better by now. We should know that dumping our waste on to the surface of the ground is a bad solution."

Other experts agreed that the chemicals in the water raise concerns. However, some scientists, including staffers from the U.S. Geological Survey, felt uncomfortable commenting for the record without doing their own testing.

Jackson reviewed many of the EPA documents released to NPR, including analyses of the chemicals in the wastewater streams and warning labels for some of the chemical treatments that companies add to the wells.

He stresses that they include hazardous air pollutants such as hydrochloric acid and naphthalene and carcinogens like benzene and ethyl benzene.

"There are many things in this water that you don't want in the environment or in people's drinking water. You don't need to be a genius to know this is a bad idea," Jackson says.

He urges the EPA to consider the consequences of its policy and how it looks.

"Are we doing something on tribal lands we wouldn't allow somewhere else? I think that's something we have to be asking ourselves?"

On The Reservation, Dead Ducklings, Dangerous Fumes

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More Environment

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

WV organization tracks fracking chemicals
West Virginia Public Broadcasting - Online

11/15/2012

· A West Virginia non profit environmental organization is offering a tool that allows the public to learn more about the chemicals used in natural gas drilling has released its first set of data.

Shepherdstown-based SkyTruth developed software that takes information from 27,000 chemical disclosure reports on a web site called FracFocus.org.

Paul Woods, SkyTruth chief technology officer, said gathering data from the FracFocus site can be cumbersome.

"If you're in academic research and you want to look at the incidence of diesel use in Pennsylvania, you would have to download thousands of individual PDF files and go find all the references of diesel and extract them from the PDFs to build your data base that you're going to work on," Woods said. "That's a substantial barrier to use of this data."

So SkyTruth found a way to present the data in a format that allows the public to easily see what chemicals gas companies are using in the hydraulic fracturing process.

David Manthos, communications director, said the data contains one surprise: that companies are still using diesel fuel despite the fact that it's banned under the Safe Drinking Water Act.

"We looked and found from January 2011 to September 2012 that there were 448 occurrences of what the EPA defined as diesel fuels being used in hydraulic fracturing," Manthos said. "It was mostly kerosene but there were diesel fuel No. 1 and No. 2 and a few other various light hydrocarbon compounds."

Manthos said the problem is not entirely the industry's because the EPA doesn't have a framework to issue a permit but Woods pointed out there's no suggestion from the gas industry for more regulation either.

"The EPA needs to define exactly what constitutes a diesel fuel and they need to create a structure so that industry can request a permit for these fuels to be used," Manthos said.

"However the interesting thing to note here is that rather than industry lobbying the EPA to get off their butts and establish a procedure they just go ahead and use the diesel even though it's not permitted and it's not exempted," Woods said.

Woods points out that SkyTruth's analysis shows continued use of diesel despite what companies claim.

"The industry generally has claimed that they're not doing it any more, they said 'we're phasing it out, we're not going to use it any more,' but there it is right there in the disclosure reports even up to last month," Woods said.

Woods and Manthos said the data will be useful to scientists wanting to study the chemicals used in the fracking process. It can also help property owners interested in monitoring ground water for pollutants.

Latest News :

One of the largest surface coal mine operators in the region has agreed to stop using the controversial method of mountain top removal mining. Patriot Coal, which filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in July, struck a deal in federal court this afternoon with several environmental based groups.

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The House of Delegates health committee has achieved major standing committee status. House Speaker Rick Thompson elevated the committee from minor status today.

WV organization tracks fracking chemicals

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Canvassing of the results of last week's general election began across the state Tuesday, but after the changing of election results in one county over the weekend, one candidate is beginning to question the validity of the race.

It's Homelessness Awareness Week around the state and the country.In recognition, the Kanawha Valley Collective is presenting "One Night Without a Home: An Awareness Sleep Out" at Magic Island in Charleston. The Friday night event gives those in the area a chance to experience the harsh realities those who are homeless face in the winter months.

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Get the facts on fracking
Minot Daily News - Online

11/15/2012

/ Opinions / Editorials /

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Get the facts on fracking

November 14, 2012

Minot Daily News

Americans have been drilling wells for oil and gas for more than a century and a half. Hydraulic fracturing - or fracking - has been in use to augment well production for decades.

Yet it has been only during the past few years that a gusher of propaganda about fracking has surfaced. Incredibly, some public officials, such as those in New York state, have allowed it to dictate policy.

What about the facts on fracking and other oil and gas industry practices? A variety of studies indicate there is little or no danger of groundwater being contaminated by chemicals used in fracking, as the industry points out.

Nevertheless, the Environmental Protection Agency has launched a comprehensive study of fracking. Last week, EPA official George Paulson said a progress report on the study should be released by the end of this year. A final report is due in 2014, he added.

Good. The EPA's progress report should give scientists, the gas and oil industry, and those worried about fracking opportunities to check the agency's methodology. EPA officials, sometimes accused of bowing to the demands of radical environmentalists rather than basing policy on science, should welcome the oversight.

There indeed are some valid concerns about fracking, primarily involving well casings used to keep chemicals out of groundwater. But rejecting the practice altogether, in view of what appears to be an excellent environmental record, makes no sense. The EPA study should provide solid, science-based guidance that will safeguard the environment while allowing Americans to get at the gigantic supplies of natural gas underneath our feet.

Minot Daily News

301 4th St SE , Minot, ND 58703 | 701-857-1900

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Battelle to Assist OEPA, ODNR in Assessment of Wastewater Treatment Technologies pr-usa.net - Online

11/15/2012

Battelle scientists and engineers will work with the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA) and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) to identify wastewater treatment technologies that are suitable for use in Ohio. The technologies will increase water reuse and decrease injection of wastewater into disposal wells associated with shale gas drilling and production activities in the Marcellus and Utica Shale Regions.

"This is another example of creating public-private partnerships and Ohio EPA is pleased to work with ODNR and Battelle to establish a framework for identifying viable technologies for recycling and reusing wastewater generated from oil and gas exploration activities," said Ohio EPA Director Scott Nally. "The process put in place under the contract will enable the agencies to review emerging technologies that can help reduce the volume of fresh water taken from streams and rivers for purposes of hydraulic fracturing, and reduce the reliance on Ohio's underground injection control wells for disposal of fluids."

The ODNR's leadership also sees value in teamwork. "We are fortunate to collaborate with Ohio EPA and Battelle to evaluate alternative new technologies for proper wastewater treatment," said ODNR Director James Zehringer. "Environmental safety is and will remain our top priority, making it imperative to properly regulate wastewater disposal and ensure public health and safety."

The work comes as part of Ohio Senate Bill 315, which Governor John Kasich signed in June. That bill provides critical components to the regulatory framework for horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing operations in the state. The Marcellus and Utica Shale regions stretch across New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, West Virginia, Ohio and portions of Kentucky and Tennessee. These shale gas regions are rich in natural gas. To develop these resources, freshwater is used and may potentially be recycled and reused at additional locations.

"Battelle is committed to helping the state assess technologies so industry can access resources in an economical and environmentally responsible way," said Marty Toomajian, President of Battelle's Energy, Environment and Material Sciences Global Business. "Hydraulic fracturing requires a large volume of water, so new technologies for reuse of the flowback and produced water must be identified, developed and deployed to maintain sustainable operations. Battelle is ideally suited to be doing this type of work."

Battelle will help the state in three ways:

Establish a basis for assessing wastewater treatment technologies, including criteria for water management, appropriate environmental and health protection objectives and technology suitability.

Develop a technology assessment process to evaluate proposed treatment and reuse technologies. The process will allow for assessing both commercially available and emerging technologies using established criteria to evaluate tradeoffs of treatment options.

Demonstrate the assessment process for selected technologies representing solutions for recycling and discharge to state and local government stakeholders, showing the application of the technology assessment process in either scenario. The demonstration will illustrate how to use open literature and information supplied by technology vendors to assess the selected technologies.

About Battelle

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As the world's largest independent research and development organization, Battelle provides innovative solutions to the world's most pressing needs through its four global businesses: Laboratory Management; National Security; Health and Life Sciences; and Energy, Environment and Material Sciences. It advances scientific discovery and application by conducting $6.5 billion in global R&D annually through contract research, laboratory management and technology commercialization. Headquartered in Columbus, Ohio, Battelle oversees 22,000 employees in more than 130 locations worldwide, including eight national laboratories for which Battelle has a significant management role on behalf of the U.S. Department of Energy, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and the United Kingdom.

Battelle also is one of the nation's leading charitable trusts focusing on societal and economic impact and actively supporting and promoting science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education.

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

Obama re-election worries chemical industry
Chemistry World - Online

11/15/2012

The US chemical industry is apprehensive about President Obama?€?s re-election, according to representatives of the industry. In particular, groups such as the Society of Chemical Manufacturers and Affiliates (SOCMA) and the National Association of Chemical Distributors (NACD) are worried that the president?€?s second term will feature more forceful environmental regulation.

Obama will be empowered by not having to seek re-election and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will be ?€? much more confident and aggressive?€? in its approach to new regulations and interpretation of existing law, says SOCMA?€?s vice president for government relations, Bill Allmond. For example, he suggests that the EPA might interpret??more freely its authority under current laws such as the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA).

The American Chemistry Council (ACC), an industry trade association, is also uneasy. ?€?We of course remain concerned about overaggressive and unbalanced regulatory efforts that could stifle US innovation and growth in the chemical sector, whether those be chemical regulations, environmental regulations, such as pending air and ozone rules, or federal regulatory encroachment into hydraulic fracturing practices,?€? says ACC spokesperson Anne Kolton.

In particular, there is a worry that the EPA will try to sidestep a divided Congress by using the White House Office of Management and Budget to require that chemical companies and others provide greater public disclosure.

Allmond warns that this could be dangerous, pointing to one of SOCMA?€?s member companies that produces chemicals used in the US nuclear industry. He says that a company?€?s ability to stay in business is contingent on its ability to use so-called ?€?confidential business information?€? (CBI) protections under TSCA. If that company had to release information about the chemicals underlying its products, its existence would be jeopardised and so would the security of US nuclear technology.

The EPA that never was

Chemical industry groups say that an EPA overseen by Rublican candidate Mitt Romney would have been more judicious and pro-business when it came to regulations affecting the chemical industry. The candidate had vowed to pursue ?€? measured reforms?€? of US environmental laws to ensure that neither were jobs ?€?destroyed?€? nor industries ?€? paralysed?€?.

Obama?€?s victory protects key climate policies from repeal, particularly the regulation of carbon dioxide by the EPA, according to an analysis by HSBC Holdings in London. In a 7 November research report, HSBC analyst Nick Robins suggests that the president might raise revenues from a carbon tax in his second term as part of a wider effort to cut the nation?€?s deficit. Robins cites Congressional Research Service estimates indicating that such a carbon tax could halve the $1.1 trillion (??693 billion) US deficit by 2022.

Differences aside, Allmond for one says Obama?€?s re-election doesn?€?t represent ?€?a total loss?€?. He notes that the president has helped industry by signing three free trade agreements that will reduce millions of dollars in fees for chemical manufacturers who export to Columbia, Panama and South Korea.

Science celebrates

Meanwhile, the American Chemical Society (ACS) is celebrating Obama?€?s reelection. ?€?The president has really

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 15 to 19

been very consistent, even since his original campaign back in 2008, that investment in R&D and STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) education are critical to creating jobs and ensuring America?€?s economic competiveness,?€? according to ACS spokesperson, Glenn Ruskin. ?€?His commitment is still very much evident,?€? he adds, noting that Obama remains committed to keeping the budgets of key physical science agencies on a doubling trajectory.

Sam Rankin, chairman of the Coalition for National Science Funding, agrees that Obama has been steadfast is his support for research and the STEM disciplines. ?€?Obama is a leader in that area,?€? he says. ?€?He will continue to do that, but he?€?ll have to operate within significant budget constraints,?€? Rankin adds.

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EPA?study on fracking should bring guidance
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Americans have been drilling wells for oil and gas for more than a century and a half. Hydraulic fracturing - or fracking - has been in use to augment well production for decades.

Yet it has been only during the past few years that a gusher of propaganda about fracking has surfaced. Incredibly, some public officials, such as those in New York state, have allowed it to dictate policy.

What about the facts on fracking and other oil and gas industry practices? A variety of studies indicate there is little or no danger of groundwater being contaminated by chemicals used in fracking, as the industry points out.

Nevertheless, the Environmental Protection Agency has launched a comprehensive study of fracking. Last week, EPA official George Paulson said a progress report on the study should be released by the end of this year. A final report is due in 2014, he added.

Good. The EPA's progress report should give scientists, the gas and oil industry, and those worried about fracking opportunities to check the agency's methodology. EPA officials, sometimes accused of bowing to the demands of radical environmentalists rather than basing policy on science, should welcome the oversight.

There indeed are some valid concerns about fracking, primarily involving well casings used to keep chemicals out of groundwater. But rejecting the practice altogether, in view of what appears to be an excellent environmental record, makes no sense. The EPA study should provide solid, science-based guidance that will safeguard the environment while allowing Americans to get at the gigantic supplies of natural gas underneath our feet.