



# IROQUOIS MESSENGER

Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

## WHAT'S A DGEIS?

It means draft Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement. As the NYS DEC public hearings on the dSGEIS regarding high-volume hydraulic fracturing and horizontal drilling procedures (to drill for natural gas in the Marcellus and Utica black shales) run their course, there is lots of talk using this term. The processes are being reviewed for their suitability for use in an area that stretches from Pennsylvania to the Tug Hill Plateau and from the Catskills through the Finger Lakes. In other words, there would be drilling in most of New York and underneath a lot of fresh water. The dSGEIS is a way to assess the impacts and propose regulation of the drilling.

This process is new both in the amount of water it takes to "frac" a well and in the chemicals that are added to the drilling water to make it effective in the shale. Issues of chemical identification, truck traffic to transport water and supplies, creation of pipelines, and disposal of wastes are causing all citizens of New York to take notice. The pro-drilling movement cites energy independence, tax revenue, economic development, and proclaims the process as being safe. The "ban the drilling people" are concerned with unknown consequences in a less than ten-year old process, water and soil pollution, destruction of rural roads and environment, and disposal of highly toxic wastewater. Wherever these processes have been deployed (CO, WY, TX, LA, WV, PA), there have been issues with quality of life and water. The dSGEIS is an attempt to deal preemptively with these issues.

Does it go far enough? Is it time to start drilling so we can start raking in that money? Do we need more study or stipulations on drillers? What will New York look like if we allow these procedures to go forward? What details are missing in the dSGEIS that you would like to see the DEC consider more thoroughly? What questions do you have?

The comment period ends on December 31, 2009. Every Sierra Club member should take it upon themselves to get informed, consider the ramifications, and let your elected officials, especially Governor Paterson, and the DEC know where you stand.

(Note: The dSGEIS can be found on line at <<http://www.dec.ny.gov/energy/58440.pdf>>[www.dec.ny.gov/energy/58440.pdf](http://www.dec.ny.gov/energy/58440.pdf) or highlights are available at <<http://www.dec.ny.gov/press/58472.html>>[www.dec.ny.gov/press/58472.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/press/58472.html) .)

*JACK RAMSDEN*

## GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE GETS JUDICIAL APPROVAL

Months ago County Executive, Joanie Mahoney, accepted the recommendation by the DEC and Atlantic States Legal Foundation, and proposed scraping three planned sewage plants in favor of Green Infrastructure. Her move required judicial approval. This month a judge signed a new consent order with the County DEC and ASLF. Sewage overflows from storm water will be reduced by storage, trees, rain gardens, green roofs, permeable pavement and rain barrels.

These solutions are less expensive, less intrusive and certainly more attractive. The number of rain gardens created, trees planted and sales of rain barrels are indications that this program is really catching rain.

To learn more and do your part, contact Amy Samuels at Cornell Cooperative Extension: [ams71@cornell.edu](mailto:ams71@cornell.edu)

## HYDROFRACKING MEETINGS IN DECEMBER

Once again Iroquois Group will partner with Onondaga Nation, Neighbors of the Onondaga Nation, and Citizens Campaign for the Environment to explain the hydrofracking process and the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. This information together with details of how to comment to DEC before December 30, the end of the comment period, will help us get our input on record for consideration.

The meetings are in two different locations and times to make it easy for everyone to attend.

- Monday December 7, from 7 to 9PM at Artrage Gallery Syracuse, 505 Hawley Ave. Park at 408 and 414 Lodi.
- Tuesday December 8, from 4 to 6PM at the Liverpool Library, 310 Tulip St.

Speakers include Joe Heath, Jack Ramsden, and a message from Assemblywoman, Joan Christensen. There will be question and answer period and handouts that tell you how to contact the governor and your legislators with your concerns about hydrofracking.

This could be the largest state wide environmental issue we have faced since the building of the Erie Canal. Remember it is not just the Southern Tier, there are thousands of leases here in Onondaga County.

Try to attend at least one session, as the comment period ends December 30.

## IROQUOIS GROUP CONTACT INFO

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SUBMIT ARTICLES BY THE 15<sup>TH</sup> OF THE  
PRECEDING MONTH:  
DEBBYS@VERIZON.NET  
**SUBJECT LINE MUST BEGIN WITH IM**

# HAZARDS OF GAS DRILLING

Drilling companies are exempt from most environmental regulations, and clean up costs are shifted to local municipalities, resulting in billions of dollars of subsidized profit for industry and a toxic legacy for New York State! The hydraulic fracturing process uses over 275 chemicals. New York's most precious resources — water, land and air — will be contaminated. Drilling could begin as early as next April.

There are hazards to public health and safety, to local economies and to farmers. Examples:

1. Hydraulic fracturing has already contaminated water supplies in many states, including Wyoming, New Mexico – and Pennsylvania.
2. Hydraulic fracturing threatens water, land and air contamination through the use, transport and storage of toxic chemicals.
3. Hydraulic fracturing results in millions of gallons of radioactive wastewater.
4. There is no safeguard against accidental chemical spills into reservoirs and farmland or underground migration to aquifers, rivers and streams.
5. Chemical fluids used in hydraulic fracturing have been associated with neurological damage and cancers.
6. Heavy-duty use of diesel trucks and compressors increase noise and traffic, as well as ground ozone and other pollutants.
7. Gas drilling clears land, uses heavy diesel fuel and leaks toxic gases.
8. Natural gas is not green – it contributes to greenhouse gas emissions.

Learn more at: <http://un-naturalgas.org>, <http://www.newyorkwater.org>, <http://waterunderattack.com>, <http://chenangogreens.org>, <http://damascuscitizens.org>, <http://delaware-riverkeeper.org/>

## TRANSITION FUELS?

Natural gas, nuclear power, biomass, ethanol, and others have been promoted as transition fuels or technologies. A transition is something that gets us from A to C by going through B. When economic resources are invested in infrastructure for fuels, this doesn't bring us closer to the goal of meeting our energy needs with conservation, efficiency, wind, solar and ocean power. It actually makes it harder because:

1. **The economic resources can be better spent by investing directly in conservation, efficiency, wind and solar.** Ocean power and some special wind and solar applications aren't ready to be commercialized on a mass scale yet, but they're close and deserve investment dollars to bring them to market as soon as possible.
2. **They are an investment dead-end.** Building capital-intensive false solutions does not help get us to our goal. No project owner is going to run such a plant for 5-10 years, tear it down, and then build a concentrated solar power facility in its place.
3. **They create a new constituency of investors opposed to the move to clean energy.** Those who invest in "transition" projects will have an economic incentive to keep their plants running for decades, seeking their own subsidies and generally preventing the transition from "B to C."

A good example of a genuine transition strategy is the transition from internal combustion engine vehicles to hybrid cars to plug-in hybrids to full electric vehicles. We can go directly to full electric vehicles where possible, but hybrid technology has helped make the transition to more efficient vehicles.

It's better to continue using the existing dirty infrastructure to build the new clean one, than to try building *new* temporary, expensive infrastructure, which will have economic imperatives to keep operating as long as possible, making it even harder to shift to the clean technologies we're aiming for.

*MIKE EWALL, ENERGY JUSTICE NETWORK*

## FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Tree Huggers,

I must give you an update on my summer “tenants.” My conclusion that they were mice does not seem to be accurate. Most likely they were chipmunks. As I watch them outside under the bird feeders filling their cheeks and running off to stash the winter supply, I am sure they were my tenants. I have found hands-full of safflower seeds behind books, on shelves, in laundry bags, in shoes. It’s like an Easter-egg hunt. The latest find is when I went to get a hat to take a walk in the rain. The hat was on a high shelf in a closet and on its way to my head, out fell a large supply of safflower seeds. Seems too bad all that work has been wasted but then winter has held off this year and the troops are filling appropriate outdoor spots (mostly under my deck), so all should be well.

While we are in my back yard, another fun thing to watch is the chickadees emptying all the wren-sticks from the bird boxes — I can only guess to make more room for winter hangouts. Anyone have a better idea?

I hope many of you will attend the meetings on Hydrofracking for gas drilling. It is not just about the Southern Tier: there are thousands of leases here in Onondaga county and we need to be informed and outspoken. The comment period on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement from DEC ends on December 30. Don’t miss the opportunity to be heard.

Remember to get out and enjoy what we work to protect.

For the Earth and all its Critters.

Martha loew



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

## 2010 Sierra Club Calendars

**Mail Order** — Make checks payable to Sierra Club

Calendars c/o Bernie Marcus  
4373 Palmer Road, Manlius, NY 13104  
bmarcus@twcny.rr.com

**Discount Prices! No Tax! \$3 shipping on any quantity!**

| Item                | Price | Quantity | Total |
|---------------------|-------|----------|-------|
| Engagement Calendar | \$12  | _____    | _____ |
| Wall Calendar       | \$12  | _____    | _____ |
| <b>TOTAL</b>        |       |          | _____ |

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone (    ) \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_

**\$ave!! Buy calendars at any indoor or outdoor event for only \$10 each.**

## ENVIRONMENTAL ALERTS

Join the environmental alert list of Iroquois group to receive information on:

- state and local bills that affect the environment;
- meetings and hearings of environmental concern;
- health and environmental benefits of a plant-based diet, including recipes.

Contact Linda:LDESTEFANO3@twcny.rr.com.

Put “environmental alerts” in the subject line and YES in the body.

## MEETUP.COM

For event updates and information, be sure to use the Meetup.com site and the Syracuse Sierra Club Meetup for calendars of both our Indoor and Outdoor Events. They are updated regularly. It is not a social networking space, but a calendar of events for groups. Join our group to receive reminders, or just refer to the calendars for updates.

## HYDROFRACKING AND DRINKING WATER INFORMATION

- <http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/Fracking>
- [http://www.hetf.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=57:hydrofracking-bradford-pa&catid=42:environmental-issues](http://www.hetf.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=57:hydrofracking-bradford-pa&catid=42:environmental-issues)
- <http://www.shaleshock.org/info/hydrofracking/>
- <http://www.propublica.org/series/buried-secrets-gas-drillings-environmental-threat>



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## SEASONAL EVENTS

Sierra Club Indoor and Outdoor events encourage us to **Explore, Enjoy and Protect the Planet.** They are free and open to everybody. Parks may charge entry fees.

**ExCom business and strategy meetings, Sierra Iroquois members only.** December 9, January 13, February 10, March 10 at 7:15 PM at 128 Buffington Rd., Syracuse.

## INDOOR EVENTS

Indoor programs are held the *fourth* Wednesday of the month (except Dec 2) at 7:30 PM, at University United Methodist Church (UUMC), 1085 E. Genesee St. Park and enter on University Ave.

*Updates, cancellations and information at [newyork.sierraclub.org/iroquois](http://newyork.sierraclub.org/iroquois) or 492-4745.*

### WHITHER I-81? — DEC 2

Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council members James D'Agostino and Meghan Vitale will brief us on *I-81: Up, Down, Under or Around?* We'll learn why Interstate 81 doesn't meet current safety standards and why it can't stay the way it is. There will be reports on the progress of this important change. The speakers want to hear comments and concerns from the community.

### HYDROFRACKING — DECEMBER 7-8

See page 1

### SYRACUSE FIRST — JANUARY 27

"Think local, buy local, be local" is a presentation by Chris Fowler, on the many advantages, both monetarily and environmentally, of supporting local businesses.

"Local business" means it is *based here* and is not a local store of a large chain. Learn why independent businesses retain \$73 in the local economy for every \$100 spent, while chains retain only \$43.

### MOUNTAINTOP REMOVAL — FEB 24

Dave Cooper, Sierra Club Group Chair from Lexington KY, will show a new film *The Great New Mountaintop Removal Road Show* to further our understanding of this issue. The film is 35 minute long with plenty of time for questions. Find more information at: [Ilovesmountains.org](http://Ilovesmountains.org). Remember there is no such thing as Clean Coal.

### NICOTINE BEES — MARCH 24

This is a new film on the plight of the bees and why they are disappearing. **Janet Allen** of Habitat Gardening will introduce the issue and moderate a question and answer period after the film. Without pollinators our food supply is in danger. This is an opportunity to learn what must be done and why.

### THE ENERGY HIGHWAY — APRIL 16

The 6th Annual Symposium on Energy in the 21st Century will focus on issues associated with the planning, construction, operation, and regulation of the nation's high voltage interstate electric transmission network. Rhea Jezer: [rjezer@twcny.rr.com](mailto:rjezer@twcny.rr.com)

## OUTDOOR EVENTS

**Outdoor programs** are usually on **Sundays at 2 PM** at various interesting locations. Field guides for birds, plants and trees will be available. **No RSVP unless specifically requested. Info: Jenna 315-299-7175.**

### IMPROMPTU — DEC AND JAN

Because of unpredictable weather, our January and February outings will be impromptu. If you want us to notify you, write to Tasha Cooper and ask to be put on the Iroquois News list. Or go to [Meetup.com](http://Meetup.com) and type Syracuse Sierra Club in the search box to see our newest listings.

### CHILI FEST — FEBRUARY 7

We meet at Rhea and Danny Jezer's home at 7426 Song Lake Road on Sunday at 1PM. Everybody brings a vegetarian chili or other dish, so there are always object lessons on earth-friendly nutrition. Hike, snowshoe or ski around the lake, and come inside about 2.

The Chili Fest has become an Iroquois Group retreat where veteran members talk about environmental issues, and newcomers have a chance to learn where their interests mesh with the activities of the group.

Directions: Preble exit off Route I-81 South. Right on 281. Take the first right (hairpin turn) onto Song Lake Road. After the Song Lake sign, count 8 garages on the right to #7426. Park on the road. RSVP not required, but helps us plan. 727-0123.

Open to all, bring a friend.

### URBAN LANDSCAPE — MARCH 14

Meet at Manley Fieldhouse at 12:45PM to take the 1:02PM Connective Corridor bus (543) downtown.

Rediscover the urban landscape of Syracuse. Instead of heading for the hills this spring, let's check out what downtown has to offer. Exact route and tour guide(s) to be announced. This will be a great opportunity to talk as we walk about some of the environmental issues facing Syracuse: I-81, urban decay, redevelopment and deconstruction...