

Loyalhanna Watershed Association
Policy Statement on Marcellus Shale Natural Gas Drilling
Adopted: June 21, 2011

Background

A primary mission of the Loyalhanna Watershed Association (LWA) is to protect, restore and improve the quality of the water of the Loyalhanna Creek and its tributaries. Performing this mission, LWA seeks to protect land where development would impact the Loyalhanna Creek and its tributaries. It is the intent of LWA to help educate the public about the importance of water and its use within all watersheds. LWA is not, however, structured to act as a lobbyist within our community or the Commonwealth.

Drilling for natural gas, especially the gas found in the Marcellus Shale formation, has increased dramatically within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the Loyalhanna Creek Watershed, which extends from the Laurel Mountains to the confluence with the Conemaugh River in Saltsburg. Marcellus drilling is expected to continue for the next several decades. During this period, any violations of regulations or best management practices, whether intentional or unintentional, may produce negative and lasting consequences affecting the watershed.

While the rich natural gas resources in the Marcellus Shale have the potential to economically benefit many communities, as well as provide an important source of energy, natural gas drilling is not without its effects on our local environment, communities and residents. Therefore, LWA is intensely interested in how a balance can be achieved between development and preservation of our natural environment and well being; we strive to maintain the latter while recognizing the inevitability of the former.

In view of the above and within the guidelines of LWA's previously issued *Policy Statement on Projects and Issues Impacting Water*, the following Policy Statement on Marcellus Shale Natural Gas Drilling is issued:

1. LWA encourages the strengthening of all protective legislation as well as local zoning initiatives. This protective legislation should strengthen all technical requirements, specifically including those relating to permitting, bonding and penalties for Marcellus Shale drilling activity in the Commonwealth.
2. LWA supports increased transparency and accessibility in the process of permitting and reviewing natural gas drilling in the Marcellus Shale formation. Specifically, for the increased involvement of County Conservation Districts in the permit review and oversight process currently conducted by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.
3. LWA supports the adoption by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania of a fee or tax that should provide adequate funds to the municipalities where drilling is taking place in order to address the increased demands of the municipality's road maintenance, emergency services, etc. that may be affected by the drilling activity. Additionally, a portion of this

revenue should be allocated to the Environmental Stewardship Fund to renew the Growing Greener program administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection for environmental protection and restoration initiatives.

4. LWA supports the development of a comprehensive program to monitor environmental impacts within the Loyalhanna Creek Watershed and Laurel Highlands Region near any proposed or permitted drilling projects. The program will monitor water quality through the use of scientific monitoring equipment. If necessary, negative findings will be brought to the attention of state and local authorities. Likewise, other non-water related impacts (e.g. road damage, land disturbance) will be brought to the attention of appropriate authorities.
5. LWA will engage in cooperative efforts with other concerned organizations to develop a well-informed, committed citizenry; to increase effectiveness and decrease costs related to monitoring, reporting and other actions regarding drilling impacts; and to increase outreach through educational programs, panels, discussion groups, and meetings. LWA will attend hearings, work with state and local governments, and interact in any other appropriate ways to raise awareness regarding possible impacts on surface and subsurface bodies of water within the watershed. As watershed stewards, it is the responsibility of LWA to amplify our citizenry's voice in advocating investment in safer technologies and stronger protection of our environment.
6. LWA recognizes that Marcellus shale development rights on private property reside with the land owners and/or owners of the gas rights for the property. Similarly, development on public land is controlled by State and Local governmental entities. Therefore, LWA advocates that all landowners negotiating lease agreements for drilling on their property utilize a philosophy that ensures the conservation of the land, its vegetation, water resources and fauna will be considered if/when determining to lease, and if/when deciding how the development will proceed. This advocacy will include providing information on best leasing practices to all landowners.

LWA expects to periodically review and amend this statement as Marcellus Shale gas exploration and development procedures evolve across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the Loyalhanna Creek Watershed. This policy will also be reviewed and updated to reflect changes in technology, and laws regarding mineral extraction.