

DCNR Convenes First Meeting of Natural Gas Advisory Committee

Written by Australian Business

STATE COLLEGE, Pa., Oct. 9, 2013 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources convened the first meeting of the Natural Gas Advisory Committee today in State College to fulfill a recommendation in the Governor's Marcellus Shale Advisory Commission Report.

"The members of the Natural Gas Advisory Committee will provide valuable insight and expertise concerning the complex nature of natural gas management," DCNR's Acting Secretary Ellen Ferretti said. "The committee will work with DCNR to help identify concepts, best practices and principles, and assist in integrating them into the department's natural gas management efforts on DCNR lands."

The primary work of NGAC will focus on state forest lands and the work of the Bureau of Forestry, whose mission is to manage state forest ecosystems to retain their wild character and biological diversity, while providing pure water, opportunities for low density recreation, habitats for forest plants and animals, sustained yields of quality timber and environmentally sound utilization of mineral resources.

Dr. Jim Grace, Penn State University's Goddard Chair in Forestry and Environmental Resources Conservation, will chair the committee. DCNR's Bureau of Forestry will assume the lead responsibility for coordinating and facilitating its work. It's anticipated the committee will meet quarterly.

The NGAC is made up of 21 experts from a variety of backgrounds and organizations, including conservation groups, universities, gas industry, environmental consultants and recreation-related organizations.

Members are:

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- Stephen Barondeau, Anadarko Petroleum Corp.;
- Scott Bearer, The Nature Conservancy;
- Merlin Benner, Wildlife Specialists;
- Dale Bruns, Wilkes University;
- Patrick Drohan, Penn State University;
- Katy Dunlap, Trout Unlimited;
- Kim Kaal, Shell Energy;
- Jeff Larkin, Indiana University of Pennsylvania;
- Dick Lepley, Pa. Off-Highway Vehicle Association;
- Frank Maguire, International Mountain Biking Association;
- Craig Mayer, Pa. General Energy;
- Linda Ordiway, Ruffed Grouse Society;
- Dale Rowekamp, Seneca Resources;
- Richard Stafford, Carnegie Mellon University;
- Susan Stout, Northern Resource Station, U.S. Forest Service;
- Jim Weaver, Tioga County Planning Commission;
- Wayne Wheeler, International Association of Geophysical Gas Contractors;
- Davitt Woodwell, Pa. Environmental Council;
- Tom Yarnick, XTO Energy; and
- Ephraim Zimmerman, Western Pa. Conservancy.

At the organizational meeting today, members received background information and an update on the Bureau of Forestry Monitoring Program related to gas extraction.

The July 2011 Marcellus Shale Commission report recommended that "DCNR should establish a Natural Gas Advisory Committee to enhance communications among stakeholders regarding natural gas development on state forest and park land."

The report also recommends, "DEP and DCNR – along with industry – should continually review and examine the range of best management practices utilized during construction and operation of the well site, and consider incorporating these types of practices into regulatory and operator guidance."

For more information about gas development on state forest lands visit the DCNR website at www.dcnr.state.pa.us and choose "Gas Drilling on State Forests" under "Quick Links."

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