



Summer Report

A debate over the future of the Catskills

Clock winds down on drilling decision

As summer begins, thousands of New Yorkers will hike in the Catskills, climbing the Shawangunk Mountains, tubing on the Esopus Creek, or simply getting away from it all.

Yet most visitors will be unaware of the dramatic changes in store for the Catskills if state leaders decide to open the area to dangerous Marcellus Shale gas drilling.

With a set of important decisions due on the issue this summer, Environment New York is helping to stop drilling in the Catskills and anywhere it could threaten our water supplies.

Pipelines, trucks, wastewater

As a New York Times investigative series reported this winter, similar Marcellus Shale drilling operations in Pennsylvania and other states have contaminated water supplies and disrupted the land and communities in ways few could have foreseen.

“Imagine pipelines and 16-wheel trucks slicing through Catskills forests, clearcuts despoiling the mountains and valleys, and toxic wastewater polluting the region’s pristine streams and the drinking water supply for 9 million New York City residents,” warned Environment New York’s Eric Whalen.

A year ago, before he became Gov. Andrew Cuomo’s top environmental official, Joe Martens noted “there could be thousands of new gas wells drilled in the Catskills and the southern tier . . . [and]



▲ Environment New York is working to permanently protect the Catskills from drilling.

the potential for problems multiplies dramatically with each well that is drilled.”

On top of the damage and disruption to the land, drilling would also generate millions of gallons of contaminated wastewater. In Pennsylvania, this wastewater polluted the drinking water supply of 325,000 people in the Pittsburgh area. Recently, Buffalo voted to forbid its treatment plant from accepting drilling wastewater, which can

contain toxic pollutants. Last summer, Environment New York staff and members helped win a temporary moratorium on new drilling. However, that moratorium expires this summer. With a new set of decisions on the horizon, we’re stepping up our efforts to prevent drilling in the Catskills and wherever the environment, including our drinking water supplies, could be threatened.



more online

◀ Take action online to urge our state leaders to permanently protect the Catskills and our drinking water.

www.EnvironmentNewYork.org/action



To our members

What does summer in New York mean to you? Everyone's answer is a bit different, but for a lot of us, getting back to nature in the Catskills is a key summertime ritual.

Given all of the fond memories New Yorkers have of summer days in the Catskills, it's no surprise how shocking many of us find the current push to expand dangerous drilling in the region. While there's a temporary ban on gas drilling, Halliburton and other companies are pushing to start drilling as early as July.

Trust me, these memories are powerful—anyone who has spent time in the Catskills can understand the implications of this dangerous proposal. Please tell your friends and family about this threat to the Catskills. Direct them to our website so they can let Gov. Andrew Cuomo know how they feel about the push to drill there.

Sincerely,

Anna Aurilio
Federal Legislative Director

Recent action

2010 was breakthrough year for solar

In an otherwise lackluster year for the economy, the solar industry shined brighter than ever before in 2010, with a 67 percent increase in the amount of solar energy projects installed across America compared to 2009.

That means millions more homes and businesses powered by pollution-free solar energy, an increase made possible by strong solar policies implemented at the urging of Environment New York. In Buffalo and Brookhaven, new large-scale solar installations are currently under development, and New York is one of the top 10 states for solar job growth nationwide.

To keep the momentum going, Environment New York is working to pass a bill in Albany, the New York Solar Jobs Act, which will increase New York's solar power production a hundredfold by 2025—the equivalent of the power generated by five coal plants—while also creating more than 20,000 jobs.

President pushes for conservation funding

Margie Alt, the director of our national federation, joined President Obama at the White House in February for his announcement that he'd seek the renewal of the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund.

What's the Land and Water Conservation Fund? For the past 45 years the federal government has put a fraction of the revenue from offshore drilling into a trust fund to expand national parks, protect hunting and fishing areas, and aid local conservation and recreation projects like city parks and playing fields.

In 2010, the Land and Water Conservation Fund spent funds on behalf of the Highlands Conservation Act, which protects the area that includes the Ramapo Mountains and the Hudson Highlands. Our staff is currently building support for approval of the conservation funding by Congress.

GREEN CENTURY FUNDS

AN INVESTMENT FOR YOUR FUTURE
TO LEARN ABOUT ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE MUTUAL FUNDS

CALL 800-93-GREEN OR VISIT
WWW.GREENCENTURY.COM

Before investing, carefully consider the Funds' investment objectives, risks, charges and expenses. Contact Green Century for a prospectus that contains this and other information. Please read it carefully before investing. Investments are not FDIC insured, nor are they deposits of or guaranteed by a bank or any other entity, so they may lose value.

Distributed by UMB Distribution Services, LLC 4/10



Tim Meaney Flickr



whitehouse.gov

▲ The Ramapo Mountains would benefit from the renewal of the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Defending 40 years of progress on clean air

Sala Chen, Flickr

There's no doubt that the Clean Air Act, which celebrated its 40th birthday in 2010, has improved the health and well-being of millions of Americans. Its protections are credited with saving the lives of 160,000 Americans in 2010 alone.

Of course, air pollution remains a pressing health threat in this country, a stark reminder of the work still left to do. An estimated 13,200 Americans lost their lives as a result of heart attacks, strokes, asthma attacks and other fatal conditions brought on or exacerbated by air pollution from power plants. It's estimated that one in six women of childbearing age has enough mercury in her bloodstream (a byproduct of coal power production) to put her child at risk should she become pregnant.

Thankfully, the Obama administration has announced it will seek to strengthen and update portions of the Clean Air Act in the coming months.

Clean Air, Healthy Families

With some vocal opponents of the Clean Air Act throwing their weight around in Congress, Environment New York joined our national federation, Environment America, along with the American Lung Association and other public health associations, in building support to make sure the administration's proposals go through.

In January, Environment New York released a hard-hitting examination of one of the most dangerous air pollutants: mercury. According to that report, "Dirty Energy's Assault on our Health," power plants in New York emitted more than 700 pounds of mercury pollution in 2009. Even very small amounts of mercury can have significant impacts, as studies suggest that a gram-sized drop of mercury can contaminate an entire 20-acre lake. More than 50 New York waterways are polluted with mercury pollution, contaminating fish that live in

the waterways and making it dangerous for humans to consume this fish.

Showdown in Congress

The Obama administration's updates to the Clean Air Act face great uncertainty, with polluting industries and their allies in Congress having launched an all-out assault on the Clean Air Act.

In February, the House of Representatives attached a provision to a federal funding bill that would have blocked the EPA from cutting mercury pollution from cement plants, cleaning up soot pollution, and reducing carbon dioxide from coal-fired plants.

Less than a month later, the Senate rejected the House measure, with many senators citing the environmental and public health attacks within the bill as one of the reasons for their opposition.

Yet with some members of Congress still trying to block the EPA from doing its job in protecting our air, Environment New York is continuing to work for clean air and a healthier future.



Staff

Clean Air,
Healthy Families



Join our Clean Air, Healthy Families campaign on Facebook, and tell us why clean air is important to you:
facebook.com/CleanAirHealthyFamilies



dec.ny.gov

How could nuclear ever be worth the risk?

Our hearts go out to the families in Japan that were stricken by a massive natural disaster in March.

After an earthquake and tsunami ravaged Japan, the country remains in the midst of a nuclear crisis. The fallout from this disaster has touched millions of lives in Japan and is being felt worldwide. The health threats are numbing: drinking water samples in Tokyo are contaminated with radioactive iodine at a level dangerous to infants; a dozen agricultural products from the Fukushima region are radioactive at dangerous levels; hundreds of thousands of people have been evacuated from the area around the reactors; and many other effects are just being assessed—including high radiation levels in the nearby ocean waters.

The events in Japan must be a wake-up call for Americans about the dangers of nuclear power. We must ask ourselves: Is it worth the risk? Our current use of nuclear power gambles with our children's health and our environment. In Japan, Mother Nature yet again proved stronger than anything we can design. Could it happen at Indian Point?

We must act now to ensure the relative safety of existing plants, put a moratorium on any new plants, and begin to phase out our use of nuclear power. We can and must move away from energy technologies that put our environment and health at massive risk, and repower our country with clean, renewable energy, like wind and solar power.

▲ Indian Point nuclear plant, along the Hudson River in Buchanan, N.Y.

237 West 37th St., Ste. 203
New York, NY 10018
(646) 473-0905

Environment New York

PRE-SORTED
STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
BROCKTON, MA
PERMIT NO. 430



Summer Report

VOLUME 3 | NO. 3 | 2011

Flickr user dawmzy58

Environment New York

Our mission

We all want clean air, clean water and open spaces. But it takes independent research and tough-minded advocacy to win concrete results for our environment, especially when powerful interests stand in the way of environmental progress.

That's the idea behind Environment New York. We focus exclusively on protecting New York's air, water and open spaces. We speak out and take action at the local, state and national levels to improve the quality of our environment and our lives.

Progress for Long Island Sound in jeopardy

Whether we're fishing off Montauk or swimming at Rye Beach, for many of us summer in New York means a trip to Long Island Sound. But pollution threatens our ability to enjoy this special place.

Sewage pollution leads to beach closings each summer and creates dead zones in the Sound that can grow to be up to seven times the size of Manhattan. To make matters worse, recent Supreme Court decisions called into question whether more than half of New York's streams, including waters that feed the Sound, are still protected by the Clean Water Act.

Last fall, in response to our urging, the Environmental Protection Agency agreed to strengthen protections for Long Island Sound and waters across the country. Unfortunately, Congress is threatening to stop them. Environment New York and our allies are working to build the broad public support the EPA needs to take action for Long Island Sound. So far, these efforts have helped defeat the worst assaults on clean water—but with little doubt that polluters and their allies in Congress will try again, our fight is not yet over.



Read more about the how we are protecting Long Island Sound on our website:

www.EnvironmentNewYork.org/reports