

Gas Mapping Group
11/3/2010 Meeting Notes
Art Pearce

Present: Don Barber, Sue Ritter, Richard Driscoll, Jim Ferraro, Karen Edelstein, Susan Beeners, Larry Cathles, Darby Kiley, Alexis Saba, Zack Patton, Sara Hess, Art Pearce, James Northrup (by phone)

Introduction

Don Barber welcomed the group and explained that the goal was to utilize mapping tools to give public officials materials that could help them make informed decisions about natural gas drilling in Tompkins County. He has asked Art Pearce to coordinate this effort.

Northrup Presentation

James "Chip" Northrup narrated a power point presentation on the special challenges facing New York State with regard to hydrofracking. The state is not prepared to capture the benefits and is not prepared for the environmental impacts. Among other concerns, he discussed the potential for groundwater contamination from frack fluids, flowback, and produced water with the high probability that surface spills could contaminate water wells that are often less than 300 feet deep in this area. He believes that limited seismic data may result in drilling in unsuitable areas. He stated that drilling will not be evenly distributed over the region, but rather will be in clusters surrounding "hot spots".

Gas Mapping

The group discussed the categories of information that would be useful to map, the ways in which the input and output might be structured, and the nature of the audience. The primary audience would be elected officials, but the information can be assembled in such a way that it can be easily reconfigured for a wider audience.

Given that build out will happen over many years, the maps will need to be in a time series, showing, at different points in time, access roads, active drilling sites, producing wells, empoundments, gathering pipelines, compressor stations, and abandoned wells. All of this would be over base maps of the existing roads, rivers, and the built environment. The most likely spacing would seem to be one 5 acre pad with 8 wells per 640 acres. We should use the dSGEIS proposed set-backs and siting restrictions, where they exist.

Zack Patton (Cornell Graduate Student) is prepared to focus on this mapping effort as part of his Cornell coursework. He shared maps prepared by Bradford County, PA of the gas activity in that area. He believes he can produce similar maps of Tompkins County under various gas development assumptions. He agreed to prepare some initial prototype maps for review by the group at its next meeting.

Next Meeting

The group agreed to meet on Wednesday, November 17th, at 3:30 pm (location to be determined).