INTRO TO FRAC-SAND MINING

HYDRAULIC FRACTURING (aka hydraulic fracturing, hydrofracking, fracking or frac'ing) is a well-stimulation technique in which underground rock layers are fractured (broken) by highly pressurized liquid made of water, sand, and chemicals in order to extract oil or gas. An initial part of the full cycle of basin level mining, frac sand is the proppant that holds the induced fractures open for the gas or oil to flow when the pressure is released. According to research from The FracTracker Alliance, the average horizontal shale gas well is currently using 5,100 to 5,300 tons with demand increasing by 364 tps per year as the wells are drilled longer.

WHY WORRY...

The essential frac sand is obtained by strip mining, which leaves behind a range of devastation from lone landscapes similar to mountain range removal in the case of surface operations, to destruction of vital aquifers in the case of subsurface mines, and water contamination (ex. Rockwood Quarry, Newport, ME). As is evident in the experience of Wisconsin and other states in which frac sand mining has already progressed, the list of health, safety, economic, and environmental problems caused is devastating.

To start mining operations before essential controls could be put in place for this entirely new industry, mining companies have financed propaganda campaigns that have overwhelmed townships and county officials lacking the knowledge of the industry required to make foresightful decisions on their behalf. As the frac sand mining industry proceeds without stringent regulations or oversight, the degradation it is causing could well exceed all other damages since white settlement, and the social fabric, tax burden, quality of life, and health in rural communities is being negatively impacted, perhaps for decades, if not forever.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

The industry now wishes to move quickly, through a rapidly expanding network of towns and counties in the U.S. Midwest — the breadbasket of the world. Fortunately, informed and highly motivated citizens can prevent such landscape-eroding activities. LAND-USE / ZONING ORDINANCES at the municipal or county level and state laws banning their power have been used successfully in many states to block sand mining and fracking-related activity.

Join local and regional groups, write letters to local media, educate your neighbors, voice your opposition to industrial frac sand mining can awaken and inspire elected officials at all levels, and convince them to use the legal tools at hand to block or restrict frac sand mining and other sand facilities.
Health & Safety

CANCER. Many Clinic doctors who have studied the impact of mining, fracking, and shipping silica sand by rail or barge warn of its correlation with lung cancer. They have said, “It’s a silica sand dust that’s created an environmental and health crisis for those living near it.” Under any circumstances other than sand mining and related activities, silica dust is very highly regulated.

No frac sand mine in heavily mined Wisconsin has ever been reclaimed or restored with natural or native vegetation.

Environmental Impacts

Diminishing Groundwater. Mining and processing silica sand takes enormous quantities of surface and groundwater, lowering water tables and reducing or eliminating the availability of water that is critical for scores of other purposes. In a period of drought across most of the U.S., this is an unacceptable use of precious water.

Wildlife Habitat. Mining eliminates entire landscapes that are the natural habitats of important populations of birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians and other members of the food web on land and fish and other aquatic species. Silica sand mining sells the ecological integrity of surface water and its species are of high conservation concern.

Outdoor Recreation. Frac sand mining eliminates or severely degrades all forms of nature-centered recreation. This includes hiking, biking, canoeing, camping, and wildlife photography opportunities for those who live near sand mining districts. Tourism is a big industry, but not near sand facilities.

Heritage. Native American burial sites, village sites, and numerous other valuable artifacts from the first residents and later immigrant residents will be destroyed if frac sand mining is allowed to take place wherever the mining corporations wish.

Climate Change. Frac sand is an essential part of natural gas and oil production, a major contributor to global warming via the potent greenhouse gas methane. A combination of leaks and intentional venting by oil/gas production facilities adds emissions equivalent to 35 million additional automobiles each year.

Economic Impacts

Jobs. While the industry has promised jobs, very few local residents have actually been hired. One local job site has been notorious for recruiting mostly seasonal labor from outside Wisconsin.

Highway Damages. Semi-trucks hauling dense sand can damage or crush highways and cause severe problems to nearby properties. This has been a huge problem for Wisconsin, where the highways were not designed for the kind of traffic the frac sand mines are producing.

Home Values. Home values are depressed in areas near the mines. Many homes are located on rural roads, which are not designed for the kind of traffic the mines are creating.

Truck Traffic. Because of the size of the trucks and the volume of traffic, many rural roads are not designed for the kind of traffic the mines are creating.

Loss of Tourism. Areas near frac sand mines have lost tourism dollars. The mining operations are so large that they are no longer considered tourist attractions.

Restrictions on Frac Sand Mining and Facilities

There are a number of municipal and county land-use ordinances controlling frac sand mining facilities. These ordinances establish clear setbacks on land where frac sand mining is allowed to take place. They also include restrictions on the type of mining facilities that can be built and the amount of land that can be mined.

The Radical Approach

To allow outside corporations to sink themselves in the expense of local residents and leave behind nothing but a devastated landscape and devastating economic, local, environmental, health, and quality-of-life problems.

The Conservative Approach

To preserve human and natural resources and enjoy the status quo and the quality of life it provides.
DCS
DAMASCUS CITIZENS
FOR SUSTAINABILITY
In February of 2008, alarmed by the lease gazonation industry’s local encroachment of the
Upper Delaware River Valley formed the Damascus Citizens for Sustainability (DCS). Throughout a
powerful organizing education and mobilization, DCS has sought to protect the river from
fracking, an irresponsible source of drinking water for over 175 million people. As the
industry has expanded this powerful 300-member movement extended its efforts across the states of
New York and Pennsylvania. To the entire Marcellus Region and beyond.
For DCS, the lease gazonation is another effort to keep our
natural abodes, and battle a predatory approach to
the Commons.
St. Anneke Dreier and Chief Science Officer
DamascusCitizens.org

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CONTACT YOUR LOCAL GROUP, or form one!

“Frac sand
mine proposals
COME AT
local communities
like a
RUNAWAY
BULLDOZER
going
100 mph”

-RIC ZARWELL
ALLAMAPA COUNTY,
PA

For more information and documentation on these fracking
sites, visit DamascusCitizens.org/Frac-sand
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