



.....keeping watch on the industry

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CATCH THIS VIDEO! IT IS ONE YOU HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR: [HTTPS://YOUTU.BE/k48FVw9J8Lo](https://youtu.be/k48FVw9J8Lo)

A “fly over” of the Chippewa Sands Plant in the Town of Cooks Valley-CHIPPEWA COUNTY, WI



“Ongoing destruction! Drainage from this site is directly to the Trempealeau River. Plastic 24” sheeting seen along mid ground in photo is the active erosion control..... This is a corporate criminal act in progress.” John Rasmussen

Last June, I attended a workshop sponsored by the WTA and the DNR. One piece of information shocked me, and I have subsequently asked for more information so I could report more details out to all of you. When I became involved in the frac sand issues here in Chippewa Falls over 7 years ago, questions were asked about whether silica mining could have the potential effect of causing heavy metals to leach out into water supplies. We were assured that there would be no problems existing with the methods being applied. Last June, I learned that there IS a problem in WI when sulfides from the Tunnel City and other formations combine with water with low pH levels begin the mobilization of heavy metals. The mix causes oxidation when formations are disturbed and when oxygen is introduced which in turn allows heavy minerals in the formation to leach out of the sandstone. Wells around WI are being contaminated with arsenic and other metals as replacement of at least one well has occurred in Turtle Lake due to heavy arsenic, while we were informed that two wells in the bluffs near La Crosse have been replaced at the cost of \$58,000 and \$59,000 respectively. Some counties have more propensity for this problem than others: Barron, Eau Claire, Jackson, Monroe, La Crosse and Pierce have been mentioned.....and there are others not identified, but I would suspect that when tests are being done, few checks are being made for sulfides or low pH levels even though some citizens have orally or in writing have requested that tests be conducted on formations during reclamation hearings held in the counties. I was told by Dave

Johnson, DNR, that the greatest concern he has could occur when the industrial sludge or waste products from the processing plants are carried back to the mines and used for reclamation. Waste at the mine site could cause additional leaching of heavy metals which could contaminate wells and aquifers below. When I asked county officials what protections could be used, I was told that lining the mines with plastic or clay might be a potential solution. (We already know that all lined pits eventually fail.) Can you imagine “lining” the huge mining acreages we now observe on the landscape?

The MEA Petition addresses the issue: (Please see the Petition for A Strategic Analysis of Frac Sand Mining at http://midwestadvocates.org/assets/resources/Frac%20Sand%20Mining/2014-9-12_FINAL_frac_sand_stratgic_analysis_petition_PDF_Color.pdf for the complete analysis and references on the topic.)

“All mineral extraction activities—both metallic and non-metallic mining—may cause acid mine drainage by exposing large surface areas of sulfide rock to air and water.^[1] The Cambrian Jordan and Wonewoc sandstone formations are primary targets for frac sand mining,^[2] and the Tunnel City formation is located between those formations.^[3] The Tunnel City formation contains a significant amount of sulfide mineralization.^[4] Tunnel City sandstone is unsuitable for frac sand use because it is too fine grained and it contains impurities such as feldspar.^[5] However, given its location between the target formations, the Tunnel City formation may be disturbed in mining the Jordan and Wonewoc formations. Further, if frac sand mines have used or plan to use material in the Tunnel City formation for revegetation in the reclamation process, this could raise the potential for acid mine drainage to continue after reclamation. Additionally, certain types of land use following reclamation may increase the risk of continued acid mine drainage, particularly uses such as agriculture that involve applying nutrients to the land. Nutrient application may encourage acid generation by introducing bacteria that can catalyze the oxidation reaction that leads to acid mine drainage.^[6]

Concerns about acid mine drainage from frac sand mines are only further heightened by recent stormwater pond sampling results obtained from the DNR.^[7] Results from the DNR’s stormwater pond sampling at fourteen frac sand facilities in Wisconsin in 2013 indicated high levels of metals at many sites. Aluminum was consistently high, and several ponds had levels of arsenic, copper, lead, and manganese that were higher than Wisconsin or EPA ambient water quality standards. Some had pH below 6.5, which is considered outside of the normal range in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s National Recommended Water Quality Criteria.^[8] Further, Midwest Environmental Advocates’ review of select groundwater sampling results from private wells sampled between 2005 and 2011 indicates that some wells have low pH and a high metals content. The 10 well sampling results that Midwest Environmental Advocates reviewed were located in La Crosse, Pierce and Monroe counties.^[9]”

Interestingly I had a conversation recently with a water specialist during the Fair in Chippewa Falls. I asked if the company was servicing any homeowners who lived close to frac sand mines. He said “YES”! They have had many more customers installing systems than ever before in the 13 counties they service. While they were required earlier to test for bacteria and nitrates, the DNR introduced the ruling that they test also for arsenic. Customers must pay for additional tests. In some cases, frac sand mining companies are picking up the tab in that they know their operations have caused wells to go bad. Evidences of heavy metals are showing up!



Oxidation!

What does this development mean?

The DNR says they are just on the CUSP of finding out more information.

What are the pH levels in water supplies near frac sand mines?

Where are sulfides being found?

How many wells are impacted?

What will be the long term impact upon groundwater and surface water supplies?

Who is responsible for digging new wells? for taking care of existing water supplies?

What will be the long term impact on aquifers and wells?

How will reclamation strategies change?

What rules will apply?

It is important that wells be tested for heavy metals before the sand mining company is up and running! The extension service at UW-SP is doing some outstanding work in this area. Full tests can be done (3 areas) for about \$113. Press county land conservation offices to require testing for sulfides/heavy metals and low pH levels.

Dave Johnson kindly supplied me with additional resources:

Jay Zambito has pointed out the mapping and areas of low pH through the silica sand mine zones. <http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/watershed/Pages/wellwaterviewer.aspx> Please check out your town, county or section.

*****Open and then in upper right change to pH and town or section level data. Some areas in counties do not show much data. That is because it has not been reported to the extension. You will find this resource of great interest.*****

The DNR site has general information on arsenic and other metals release. <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/groundwater/arsenic/>

Some USGS publications that have relevant material.

<http://pubs.usgs.gov/of/2015/1016/>

<http://www.usgs.gov/science/science.php?term=1724>

<http://pubs.er.usgs.gov/publication/ofr81977>

<http://pubs.usgs.gov/pp/0274k/report.pdf>

<http://www.miningfacts.org/Environment/What-is-acid-rock-drainage/>

You can Google "acid rock drainage" or "acid mine drainage" and get additional information.

Fracking jobs encouraged American teens to become high school dropouts

Could it be that this finding applies to areas where frac sand mining also occurs?

http://finance.yahoo.com/news/fracking-jobs-encouraged-american-teens-184126858.html;_ylt=AwrC2Q6wqaVVtXYAfYGZmolQ;_ylu=X3oDMTBybGY3bmpvBGNvbG8DYmYxBHBvcwMyBHZ0aWQDBHNlYwNzcg--

Liz recorded a number of presentations at the frac sand activism conference in Lake City, MN, on May 9, 2015. All of the videos on posted on You Tube. Feel free to share:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-KKtXXaP5jn_45Bm_R3oeA

Ellen Cantaro's latest article is up at Tom Dispatch: "Dirty Energy v Clean Energy: Past Battles Future at Seneca Lake" (A couple of weeks ago, Ellen was in WI. A few of us visited with her and had wonderful exchange!)

<http://www.tomdispatch.com>

PRESS RELEASE! From: Bruce Ferguson <bafbafbafb@gmail.com>

Date: Tue, Jul 7, 2015 at 9:33 AM

Subject: [NYGCG] FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: PROXIMITY OF COMPRESSOR STATION DEVALUES HOMES BY AS MUCH AS 50%

Fremont Center, NY - Homeowners living near the Millennium Pipeline Company's 15,000 horsepower compressor station on Hungry Hill Road in Hancock, New York have seen the value of their homes decline by as much as 50 percent since the industrial facility was constructed in the midst of what used to be a quiet, rural community.

In May 2014 several Hungry Hill residents sought real estate tax relief citing the adverse impact of the compressor station on their property values. The Town of Hancock, denied the tax grievances, but Catskill Citizens for Safe Energy subsequently offered to fund homeowner appeals. On August 25, 2014, small claims hearings were held in the Hancock Town Hall. Two homeowners, a certified Real Estate Appraiser, and a representative of Catskill Citizens testified that the compressor station was responsible for heavy truck traffic, noxious odors, persistent low-level vibrations, and air contamination. The witnesses also asserted that the facility presented a safety threat and recounted how a Millennium employee suddenly knocked on the door of a house late one evening and urged the family to quickly evacuate their home. Finally, it was alleged that blasting during the construction of the compressor station had cracked the foundation of one house, which in turn led to an unsafe spike of radon levels. (Pre and post-construction radon tests conducted by Professional Home Inspection Service of Binghamton, New York showed that radon levels in the home jumped from 3 pCi/L to 6.1 pCi/L, which is above the EPA recommended action guideline of 4.0 pCi/L.)

In light of the evidence proffered, the Town of Hancock tax assessors agreed to decrease the assessed valuation and real estate taxes on two homes by 25 percent. The assessed valuation and taxes on a third home, the one that had been physically damaged, were cut by 50 percent. Hearing Officer John Creech, who presided over the settlement, was familiar with the compressor station and remarked, "I wouldn't want to live next to it." After the tax assessors agreed to the 50 percent tax cut he told the owners, "You have a good lawsuit here." *For further information contact: info@catskillcitizens.org or call (845) 468 7063.*

Need handouts for your fair booths or special summer activities? You may copy the two fact sheets from the Minnesota Department of Health (see below). These should go out to everyone in WI as an educational tool. Sadly enough, county health nurses in WI have not distributed helpful tips for those who live around frac sand mining, processing or trans-loading; neither has the WI Department of Public Health. So, I was able to obtain permission from the MN Department of Health to help us all in distributing much needed information. Distribute the 2 page (each) documents far and wide! They may help in our educational efforts to get out more information about the dangers of respirable crystalline silica dust as well as the impacts that frac sand mining brings to the Wisconsin environment. Please distribute to governmental officials as well as neighbors and friends and others throughout the state!

"SILICA SAND MINING AND HEALTH" FROM MINNESOTA

<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/hazardous/topics/silica/ssmhealth.pdf>

"SILICA SAND MINING & THE ENVIRONMENT" FROM MINNESOTA

<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/hazardous/topics/silica/ssmenviro.pdf>

RESTORATION: ON YOU TUBE HOW CAN WE SUCCESSFULLY LIVE AND WORK WITH NATURE?

Beautiful photography and message!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BdZtuNbD0ok>

Click here for a visual story showing the Construction of a Wind Tower: a step by step lesson!

https://www.youtube.com/embed/84BeVq2Jm88?feature=player_detailpage

Report ties Twin Cities deaths, illnesses to pollution | Minnesota Public Radio News-Wonder if there is the same concern in Wisconsin?

<http://www.mprnews.org/story/2015/07/13/twin-cities-pollution-health>

CONTACT ADDRESSES FOR GOVERNMENT INFORMATION

U.S. GOVERNMENT CONTACT INFORMATION can be obtained through Congressional Switchboard 1-866-327-8670 [this is a toll free number]. You can contact your Congressman and Senator through this number without paying long distance charges.

Email access and addresses

<http://www.house.gov/> for members of the House of Representatives <http://www.senate.gov/>
for members of the U.S. Senate
White House 1-202-456-1111
**FIVE CONSTITUENT CONTACTS WILL CAUSE A LEGISLATOR TO PAY SERIOUS
ATTENTION TO A GIVEN ISSUE.**

SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS FROM THE UK: HEALTH RISKS OF FRACKING

<http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/fracking-poses-significant-risk-to-humans-and-should-be-temporarily-banned-across-eu-says-new-report-10334080.html>

UWEC reports out the crowd sourcing done for Dr. Crispin Pierce's air quality project with students

http://www.uwec.edu/news/stories/public-donations-provide-new-instrumentation-for-air-quality-research_45758j

FOSSIL FUELS: INTERNATIONAL DILEMMA –IN AUSTRALIA

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/ng-interactive/2015/may/15/carbon-bomb-australia-the-new-coal-frontier?CMP=ema-60>

How do you get out of a gas lease? Or for that matter how do get out of a lease for frac sand mining on your property? Remember that the playbook for the landsman is very similar when they offer leases for either gas/oil/or mining use!!!! This video is worth the watch time! The Landowner does seem to have some responsibilities they may not know about!

<http://www.nofrackingway.us/2013/03/19/how-to-get-out-of-a-gas-lease/#comment-85771>

Hope you are enjoying a fantastic summer! If you have something to add, please send it on to me at sunnyday5@charter.net. I may soon be able send out at a faster pace to those of you on my list.

Welcome to the Frac Sand Sentinel, a newsletter highlighting resource links, news media accounts, blog posts, correspondence, observations and opinions gathered regarding local actions on, and impacts of, the developing frac sand mining and processing industries.

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