

Drinking Water Testing Forum Set For Next Thursday

This column is presented weekly by the Public Education sub-committee of the Clinton County Natural Gas Task Force in an effort to provide accurate, up-to-date information on activities surrounding the Marcellus Shale formation and the natural gas exploration industry. For more information on Task Force activities, visit the Task Force page on the Clinton County government website at www.clintoncountypa.com.

The Clinton County Natural Gas Task Force will host two important public presentations, the first of which will be held Thursday, May 19. Titled “Private Drinking Water Testing: What do I need to Know About Natural Gas?”, the initial forum will be held at the Chapman Township Fire Hall in North Bend, beginning at 6:00 p.m.

The purpose of next Thursday’s forum, the first of two such meetings, is to give area residents and camp owners the opportunity to learn and ask questions about water testing of private drinking water wells and springs and the regulations designed to protect ground water. A second forum is scheduled for Thursday, June 9, in Lock Haven.

“The forums are a chance to learn about the importance of home water testing, particularly as it relates to the developing natural gas industry,” says Jim Ladlee, director of Penn State’s Cooperative Extension office in Clinton County. Ladlee will serve as moderator for the forums. “Presenters will discuss why home testing is important, the types of tests available, how to interpret a water test report, and current state regulations regarding natural gas development and private water supplies. There will also be a chance for people to visit and talk with representatives from water testing labs from around central Pennsylvania.”

Featured guest speakers for the forums will be Bryan Swistock, a water resources expert with the Penn State Extension Office, and Dan Vilello with the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Northcentral region office. In addition, water testing labs will have informational material and will be able to talk one-on-one with people before and after the presentations.

“If people have concerns about their water and they want to have it tested, we encourage them to attend one of these presentations,” says Ladlee. “This will be a great opportunity to ask questions and get good, practical information.”

The forums are free, and Ladlee says the intent is to give people time, beginning at 6:00 p.m., to talk with representatives from water testing companies, after which, there will be informational presentations from Swistock and Vilello. Swistock and Vilello will then take questions from the audience.

To sub-committees of the Clinton County Natural Gas Task Force – the environmental committee and the public education committee – have organized the forums, along with Penn State’s Clinton County Cooperative Extension office. The forums are in response to questions and concerns which have been raised in the community regarding peoples’ private drinking water supplies and natural gas well drilling.

The second forum will be held Thursday, June 9, beginning at 6:00p.m., at the Lock Haven Emergency Medical Services building on Liberty Street (across from St. Agnes Catholic Church) in Lock Haven. People with questions about the upcoming forums can contact Jim Ladlee at 570-726-0022, extension 126.



An example of the water testing process.



From left, Bryan Swistock, a water resources expert with the Penn State Extension, and Dan Vilello with the PA Department of Environmental Protection will be the two key presenters Thursday, May 19th at a private drinking water testing forum. Jim Ladlee with the Penn State Extension, Clinton County office will serve as moderator for the program.