

Speaker to Address How Drilling in Marcellus Shale Could Impact Water Quality

What is required to treat adequately and dispose safely of the millions of gallons of water that will be used in drilling the Marcellus Shale is the subject of the Monday, Feb. 23 EarthTalks, "Water Quality Impacts from Natural Gas Drilling."

"Drilling for natural gas can produce large quantities of both naturally occurring and man-made waste fluids, and much of these fluids result from the use of millions of gallons of water during the hydrofracturing process," says Bryan Swistock, Penn State Water Resources Extension Associate.

The wastes typically contain high concentrations of salts, metals and organic materials which if not treated properly can contaminate water supplies, he added.

Swistock will discuss not only the contaminants which can occur in drilling waste fluids but also the current state regulations that protect water resources from contamination by drilling wastes.

"Pennsylvania's water and wastewater regulations related to gas drilling are 25 years old, so revisions have been needed to address the Marcellus Shale drilling activity," Swistock said.

Open to the public, the talk is set for 4 p.m. in 112 Walker Building. Kelsey's presentation also will be available online at http://www.eesi.psu.edu/news_events/EarthtalksSpring09.shtml.

This is the fourth in the 2009 EarthTalks Spring Colloquium Series on "The Marcellus Shale Play: Boon or Burden?" that is sponsored by the Penn State Earth and Environmental Systems Institute (EESI), the College of Earth and Mineral Sciences (EMS), the College of Agricultural Sciences, the Environment and Natural Resources Institute, the Penn State Institutes of Energy and the Environment (PSIEE) and the EMS Energy Institute. All talks are archived and can be viewed at http://www.eesi.psu.edu/news_events/EarthtalksSpring09.shtml.