



Kent Environmental Council

Winter 2011

Hydraulic Fracking Discussion Topic for KEC Annual Meeting

Kent Environmental Council members, friends and other guests are invited to the organization's annual potluck dinner and business meeting followed by a presentation and panel discussion on hydraulic fracturing and the Marcellus Shale. The speaker is Vanessa Pesec, assistant director of NEOGAP. The panel will consist of local and regional political stakeholders.

The event on Monday, February 21, kicks off at 6 p.m. with a potluck dinner followed by a short business meeting (including a treasurer's report and the election of officers) at 7 p.m. and the guest speaker at 7:15 p.m. in the fellowship hall of the Kent Presbyterian Church, 1456 Summit Street in Kent.

The Marcellus Shale formation lies thousands of feet below the surface and runs from New York westward into Kentucky. It contains large amounts of methane gas, which a number of corporations are actively seeking. The process by which the gas is extracted is called hydraulic fracturing, or fracking. This process involves the vertical injection of a mixture of chemicals under extremely high pressure for 8,000 to 10,000 feet, where it literally fractures the shale formation. Fracking has been likened to exploding an underground bomb. The gas line can then be turned 90 degrees to continue for up to two miles parallel to the surface.

The fracking process is effective but also destructive. The high pressure

injection results in the fracture of other underground structures, and gas is often released into wells and aquifers, thus contaminating drinking water sources. In a number of reported cases, the water coming out of home faucets has actually ignited as a result of methane contamination.

in what now is referred to as "the Halliburton loophole." As a result, state governments were given complete control of the drilling process. States have little money available for regulation or monitoring and, as a result, the well-drilling process remains virtually unregulated in most states.

Some states, such as New York, have declared a moratorium on drilling pending further research, and some cities, such as Pittsburgh, have banned gas drilling. Ohio law places all jurisdiction for drilling in the hands of the state, thus outlawing any local control of the process.

For the business meeting, the KEC Nominating Committee will be presenting the following individuals as candidates for office: Lisa Regula

Meyer, vice chairperson; and David Ewbank, secretary. Ewbank has been serving as secretary since 2009. Meyer

See DINNER, p. 4.

Kent Environmental Council Annual Meeting and Potluck Dinner

Monday, February 21, 2011

Presbyterian Church Fellowship Hall
1456 E. Summit Street, Kent

6 p.m. - Potluck Dinner

7 p.m. - Business Meeting and Election of Officers

7:15 p.m. - Program

Speaker:

Vanessa Pesec - Assistant Director, NEOGAP

Panel:

Local and Regional Political Stakeholders

Topic:

Regulating Gas Drilling: Fracturing Democracy?

The brine of injection fluid also contains numerous chemicals, some of which are known carcinogens. The fluid sometimes leaks from the drill casing to contaminate ground water, but a more frequent and serious problem results when the brine is returned to the surface and collected in large storage vats that leak into ponds and streams. A number of cases have been reported in which cattle have died from drinking pond water that contains runoff from the collecting vats. Numerous lawsuits are pending for losses incurred as the result of the fracking process.

Gas drilling was removed from the Clean Drinking Water Act in 2005

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The Humanization of Environmental Education for the 21st Century

Environmental education has evolved over the past five decades from its early predecessors in nature study, outdoor education and conservation education to the present where educators currently are struggling to define its place in the green and sustainability movements. The concern is that environmental education has been noticeably absent. One issue in the development of a niche or its identification in the movements has been disagreement about curricular content. Given that the environment is all-encompassing, including aspects that are political, economic, social, aesthetic, ethical, technological and ecological, some have advocated that environmental education be considered an approach to education that incorporates environmental aspects in all curricular areas. Others contend that environmental education should be considered a separate curricular domain as in the typical manner in which it is taught as a topic or course in the science curriculum (e.g., environmental science).

While debates abound regarding curricular content, it generally has been accepted that three core elements, or threads, have contributed to present beliefs and practices in environmental education. These core elements are characterized as education in, about and for the environment. Education in the environment uses the natural world as a teaching tool or resource in two ways: as a medium for learning and discovery and as a source of material for hands-on activities in areas such as language, mathematics and science. Education about the environment focuses on investigation, discovery and knowledge of a particular area or place (e.g., learning about the flora and fauna of a bog). Education for the environment emphasizes the development of a genuine concern for the environment. It goes beyond the development of knowledge and skills to involvement and clarification of values that affect behavior. The goal is acquisition of attitudes and understanding that lead to a personal environmental ethic. These elements and goals, the latter

formulated at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Conference in Tbilisi, Georgia, in 1977, have provided direction for environmental educators. The goals are to do the following:

- Foster clear awareness of and concern about economic, social, political and ecological interdependence in urban and rural areas
- Provide every person with opportunities to acquire knowledge, values, attitudes, commitment and skills needed to protect and improve the environment
- Create new patterns of behavior of individuals, groups and society as a whole toward the environment

A more significant issue hindering environmental education's acceptance as a major player in the green and sustainability movements has been the manner in which information about the environment has been communicated. Some critics have suggested that environmental education is out of balance or that it is stuck in an outdated "doomsday" paradigm and needs to be transformed through the adoption of a human-benefits approach similar to the sustainability movement's focus on personal empowerment. These critics argue that a paradigm shift focusing on the humanization of environmental education and highlighting the benefits to humans and the social aspects of environmental problems is needed rather than promotion of "ecophobia" and the resultant dissociation of persons from nature. This approach is congruent with advances in psychological research demonstrating that positive informational or instructional strategies are far more effective in promoting behavior change than negative communication techniques that focus on fear, guilt or shame.

Examples of human benefits research on programs that incorporated the environment as an integrating context yielded the following positive developmental outcomes in children

See *EDUCATION*, p. 3.

CLUCKent Set to Present Proposal to Kent City Council on March 2

CLUCKent, a local grass-roots organization formed last year, is planning a presentation in early March to the Kent City Council about the group's proposal to permit pet hen flocks within the city and on plots of less than two acres of land. No roosters would be allowed under the CLUCKent proposal. City code, however, classifies hens as farm animals that require at least two acres of land. The Kent Health Department gave its stamp of approval to the plan last year. CLUCKent representatives will speak on behalf of the organization's proposal on March 2 at 7 p.m.

CLUCKent developed its proposal after researching other communities with similar demographics as Kent. Property owners who want to raise chickens would be required to pay a licensing fee to cover the cost of health inspections.

Most surrounding communities, and even large cities across the country, are permitting small flocks as a way of promoting self-sufficiency in food production and potentially reducing the need for large factory egg production, where laying hens are kept in inhumane conditions and the potential for widespread bacterial contamination is quite high unless large volumes of antibiotics are used. Some readers may recall the recent Salmonella outbreak at factory egg farms in Iowa last year. The CLUCKent proposal would not permit commercial operations; rather, the objective is to allow for egg production for an individual or family.

CLUCKent has met with some resistance from people who believe that even small flocks are inappropriate in a city setting. CLUCKent's presentation to city council is an attempt to counter this criticism. City council is divided on the matter of whether to allow or prohibit these small flocks of chickens.

CLUCKent maintains that well-regulated and maintained flocks will

See *CHICKENS*, p. 3.

EDUCATION

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and youth: higher academic achievement, higher standardized test scores, increases in cognitive skills and motor coordination, increases in concentration of those with attention deficit disorder with hyperactivity, reduction in levels of stress, and improved social skills through enhanced language and communication abilities. Many successful programs have incorporated or adapted the informal pedagogical methods from the "children and nature movement," an outgrowth of the work of Richard Louv (2005). The focus of this approach is getting children to spend more unstructured time in nature. These programmatic applications also have demonstrated cognitive, emotional, physical and social benefits.

In addition to the human developmental benefits of early childhood experiences in nature, it was found that such experiences have positive long-term environment-related outcomes. For example, in a study done by Palmer (1999) in the United Kingdom to determine the significant life experiences that influenced adults to become "active and informed citizens who know about and care for the environment," it was found that the most significant category response overall was experiences "outdoors"—more specifically, "experiences outdoors in early childhood-experiences in the world of nature." This was followed by a distant second category labeled "education courses" and then in descending order, "parents/close-relatives," "organizations," "television/media," "friends/other individ-

uals," "travel abroad," "disasters/negative issues," and "books."

In conclusion, environmental education has made great strides over the course of its evolution and significant contributions to environmental causes through the transmission of knowledge, attitudes, values and skills to an international constituency. In order to make a salient niche in the popular green and sustainability movements, a paradigm shift—one focusing on humanization or the benefits to humans and social aspects of environmental problems—is needed. This does not necessarily mean a humans-first approach; it means instead an assessment and communication of benefits to humans gained through positive environmental experiences and actions.

Selected References

- Louv, R. (2005). *Last child in the woods: Saving our children from nature-deficit disorder*. Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books.
- Marcinkowski, T.J. (2010). Contemporary challenges and opportunities in environmental education: Where are we headed and what deserves our attention?. *The Journal of Environmental Education*, 41(1), 34-54.
- Palmer, J.A. (1999). *Environmental education in the 21st century: Theory, practice, progress and promise*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Strife, S. (2010). Reflecting on environmental education: Where is our place in the green movement?. *The Journal of Environmental Education*, 41(3), 179-191.

This article was written by Wayne W. Munson, professor emeritus at Kent State University.

CHICKENS

Continued from p. 2

be an asset to the community, promote family self-sufficiency, and teach children about the responsibility of contributing to a family's well-being and about the source of their food.

For more information about the group's proposal and their research into other communities that permit this activity, go to <http://cluckentoh.webs.com>.

Even if you do not intend to raise chickens at your home, please consider letting your councilperson know whether you find the practice no more objectionable than the raising of other neighboring pets, such as dogs and cats.

Upcoming Environmental Events

March 12, 8 p.m. - "Go With the Flow." Watershed Awareness and Homebrew Tasting Fund-Raiser for "Who's Your Mama?" Film Fest in April.; \$20 suggested donation. For details, go to www.whosyourmama.org.

April 9, 6 p.m. - Portage County Environmental Awards Dinner; for more information, call the Portage Park District at 330-297-7728.

April 17, 2 p.m.-5 p.m. - Vegan Iron Chef contest; KSU Student Center second floor dining area; FREE! Competition of local restaurants and culinary programs; samples available.

April 22, 5 p.m.-11 p.m. - "Who's Your Mama?" Environmental Film Festival; Kent Stage; for more information, go to www.whosyourmama.org.

April 23, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. - Main Street Block Party to celebrate Earth Day with vendors, sustainable energy displays and children's parade; sponsored by Standing Rock Cultural Arts; for more information, go to www.whosyourmama.org.

Kent's Lucky Penny Creamery Hosting Winter Farmers Market

For those of you who are longing for a farmers market this winter but don't want to drive to Akron or Cleveland, Kent's Lucky Penny Creamery, on Temple Avenue, south off of Lake Street, is hosting an indoor winter farmers market in the creamery in partnership with Salt of the Earth Farm on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to noon.

You will find cheese, grass-fed beef, farm eggs, winter veggies, hot beverages, and live music. Also available is a food/garden book swap. For detailed directions to the creamery, go to www.luckypennyfarm.com.



— REMINDER —
**YOUR KEC ANNUAL DUES
ARE NOW DUE!**

You can pay at the February 21 Annual Meeting or mail your check to KEC, P.O. Box 395, Kent, OH 44240. (See back page for limited-time free offer!)

DINNER

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would be completing the term of Craig Lucas, who resigned to pursue his artistic career in Germany. For KEC members who do not already know them, Ewbank is retired from the faculty in the English department at Kent State University; Meyer is pursuing her doctorate in biology at Kent State. Members of the Nominating Committee were Gene Weninger, Lynn Gregor and Ann Ward.



It's time to think ahead for the 2011 tax year. Get a head start with a tax-deductible donation to the Portage Foundation with *KEC Legacy of Learning Fund* on the memo line. Your financial contribution helps KEC fund local environmental education programs.



Live Green . . .
Recycle!



KEC Membership Reminder . . .

Please take the time and energy to check your mailing label for the current status of your KEC membership.

You can indicate your support of KEC at the following membership levels:

**Sustaining, \$45; Family, \$35; Individual, \$25;
Golden Buckeye, \$15; Student, \$10**

SPECIAL PREMIUM!

For a **sustaining membership** at \$45, you will receive a **FREE KEC 40th Anniversary cap** (adjustable to fit) made from recycled plastic bottles in dark green. This is a **limited time offer**. Caps will be available at the February 21 KEC Annual Meeting. You also may order one by mail when you send in your dues payment. Or you can call Edith Chase at 330-673-1193.

If you see OK on your label, you are a **member in good standing**. Thank you for your trust and support!

The letters **CC** mean that KEC has sent you a **complimentary copy** this month. Please consider joining KEC at any membership level you find appropriate. Make your check payable to Kent Environmental Council, and mail it to: Kent Environmental Council, P.O. Box 395, Kent, OH 44240.

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