

From: owner-pabiodiv@webmail.upb.pitt.edu On Behalf Of Jim Kleissler
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To: pabiodiv@webmail.upb.pitt.edu
Subject: PABIODIV: ANF asks oil company to interrupt operations

The Allegheny Defense Project is looking for volunteers who can contribute to our efforts to document and report oil & gas related damage within the Allegheny National Forest. Contact Jim Kleissler at 412-559-1364 or jkleissler@alleghenydefense.org if you can help.

The Bradford Era http://www.bradfordera.com/site/news.asp?brd=52&nav_sec=76491
ANF asks oil company to interrupt operations
By MERRILL GONZALEZ, Era Reporter

Bradford Ranger District officials said Friday that they have asked a local oil company to interrupt their operations because of potential resource impact problems. John Schultz, Bradford District Manager, said ranger district officials discovered a potential problem during the week of June 19 with a site in the reaches of the Pigeon Run area, where crews for Minard Run Oil Co. were working. "We asked them to interrupt operations while we work with them to relocate possible roads and well sites," said Schultz. "We have been working with the company since (discovery) and have not yet resolved the issue, but hope to have it resolved by the end of next week." Chairman of the Board of Minard Run Oil Co. Fred Fesenmyer said they are working with the representatives of the Allegheny National Forest to resolve the issue. "The company has been informed. We are taking all of this under consideration with the idea in mind of cooperation with the forest in anyway we fashionably can," he said. "We are considering other avenues and it will take time. We will be meeting with them." The Bradford Era was informed of the problem through a press release by the Allegheny Defense Project, who said, "oil and gas development had been suspended due to a host of water-shed problems." Schultz said that the whole operation is not suspended for the company, but of about 30 wells, three are impacted by the delay. The press release also said that after a tour of the Pigeon Run area through the ADP, the "violations" were reported. Schultz said that a member of the ADP did contact them about the issue, but he said the ANF already knew there was a problem and had been working with the company to find solutions so that they could continue with their work. ADP officials said in the release they are happy to see ANF officials taking action in the situation, but add they believe that more could be done to protect the environment from potential hazards. "We are pleased the Forest Service took the appropriate steps and suspended oil drilling operations in order to address the watershed concerns at Pigeon Run," said Megan Rulli, Outreach Coordinator for the Allegheny Defense Project. "The Forest Service needs to take a more proactive role, however, by addressing these issues before drilling ever occurs including exercising their right under state and federal law to limit the scope oil drilling in the Allegheny National Forest." Officials say that 93 percent of the subsurface is owned by private parties, and it has been reported that there are more than 8,000 wells in production at this time on the ANF. Along with those wells, there are about 1,200 miles of oil and gas roads that take up from 50,000 to 60,000 acres of forest. In the press release, the ADP adds, under the Pennsylvania Oil and Gas Act, surface owners have the authority to file objections and appeals to the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) regarding the location of oil and gas wells on their property. This objection carries additional weight if the land in question is public forest land or habitat for threatened and endangered species. To date, the Forest Service has not exercised its authority to file objections to the location of wells in the ANF, but instead allows oil companies broad access to the Allegheny National Forest.

James Kleissler, Forest Watch Director
Allegheny Defense Project
311 Pitt Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15221
412-559-1364
jim@alleghenydefense.org, <http://www.alleghenydefense.org>
The Hellbender Chronicles - <http://www.alleghenydefense.org/chronicles/>
Defending the Allegheny National Forest