

Subsidence Damage Continues

Those of you who live in the current permit area are keenly aware of the longwall mining activity as subsidence damage becomes more evident and the water in wells and springs disappear and foundations crack. How easy it is to remember the words of Bill Plassio, District Mining Manager, DEP Office, California, PA, as he assured us that the spring water would not be lost. Residents asked why there was such a concern about stream-bed preservation when the feeder springs were going to be lost. Mr. Plassio's repeated reply was that the springs would not be lost. It makes you wonder whether the mining operation or the environment is being protected in Amwell and North and West Bethlehem Townships. Striking an economic balance should have no place in the vocabulary of the DEP. The "E" in DEP is for the environment, not for the economics of longwall mining. The DEP's role should be to protect the environment, not interpret the rules in an effort to justify a method of reimbursement for damage.

Historically, government agencies seem to always lock the barn door after the horse has been stolen. Greater safety measures are put in place after there are accidents and loss of life. Perhaps the long-term environmental damage and the permanent loss of domestic and agricultural water supplies will be recognized only after the mine owners have stripped us of an irreplaceable natural resource. The long-term natural flow and supply of water are being sacrificed for the sake of huge corporate profits. If we had adequate protection, reimbursement would not be an issue. It's time to talk to your elected lawmakers in Harrisburg. Don't buy the corporate argument that environmentalists are putting miners out of work. It's the longwall method that has put miners out of work. Also, carefully examine the employment shell game when the mine operators talk about jobs. Mostly, it's just a shift in the current workforce.

October 25 Meeting – Mark Your Calendars

A community meeting is being planned for Wednesday Oct. 25 at Lone Pine VFD Social Hall at 7:00 pm. Residents are concerned about some of the choices that they must make regarding repair and restoration of their homes and properties. A major concern is whether property owners should accept the mine operators' proposal of up-front money and their estimated payment to repair damage caused by mine subsidence or to rely on the rules and regulations within Act 54. Remember, a mining agreement may negate protection of Act 54. The decision is not always as simple as it appears and legal advice from a competent lawyer may be helpful, but it could be expensive.

There are questions about how to deal with active and inactive gas and oil wells plus a number of questions related to water replacement and damage to property. The plan is to have a panel discussion of attorneys to address these and other questions. We are sure you will have questions.

Financial Support Is Important

Any organization needs funding to accomplish its goals and TMPN is no different. We have been busy looking for funds and have explored several resources. We have and continue to request funds from large corporations and foundations interested in improving communities. We have applied for "Operational Support Funding" from the Tri-State Citizens Network, as well as a grant for the revision and reformatting of the VHS film "Subsided Ground...Fallen Futures" from a Foundation. The funding requests are still in progress and we hope that they will all be granted. Even if they are, it will cover only part of an aggressive agenda and a fall/winter grass roots fund-raiser will be needed along with the membership fees. We will need your ideas and help for the fundraiser.

Volunteers Are Needed

TMPN is always looking for volunteers. Volunteers are needed for short-term activities such as helping with the upcoming community meeting, fundraising, serving as a road contact and calling a few people to let them know about events and activities. If you would like to help with a specific activity, please let us know. Please call Aimee Erickson at (724) 222-5602.

TMPN Website Back On Line (www.TMPN.org)

After a long hiatus, the website will soon return with information and updates on coal related issues. We apologize for the long delay. We hope you'll become a regular user of the website. It will be informative, up-to-date and best of all, it is an efficient way to share news and information. Let us know if you would like to help with the website.

Morris Township Residents Organize

Faced with CONSOL's 500 million dollar mine expansion and construction program, residents of Morris Township have organized for the purpose of keeping themselves informed about their rights and the obligations of the mine operators. Meetings have been held and given the high level of concern, there will be additional meetings and organizational activities. Interested residents should contact Scott Finch at (724) 225-1976. Remember, organized groups are more effective than individual effort.

The Duke Lake Controversy (Facts and Rumors)

When there is talk about the draining of Duke Lake and the loss of that key part of Ryerson State Park, the conversation always drifts to the question of why was it necessary to drain the lake so quickly. One take on the story is that Duke Lake had been seeping for years and the breastwork was weak and in disrepair. If that were true, why was there such a rush to deal with a chronic condition that was causing no immediate problem?

There is another take on the story as told by some of the people who were involved with the activity. That story is that, underground only a few hundred yards away, miners suddenly found themselves ankle-deep in water and something had to be done quickly.

The question is, "What is the true story?" Endless investigations will not answer the question unless there is a way to get to the truth about the matter.

Mine operators are quick to say that mining activities were too far away to be the cause of the problem. We are being asked to believe that mine subsidence damage was not a factor.

Much is at stake when it comes to determining the real cause of an acute problem that could be addressed only by the immediate draining of Duke Lake. Where the truth lies in this mystery is something that may come out in the months to come as investigators try to sort out the details.

Let's hope that there is testimony, under oath, from CONSOL management, the miners and the members of the construction crew who physically dealt with the problem. The public deserves a timely and truthful answer to all of the questions that are being asked.

Subpoenas and testimony under oath would certainly be helpful in finding out what happened.

Please join the activities of the Ten Mile Protection Network (TMPN) as a dues paying member. There is much to do and you can be part of a dedicated group of people who care about protecting our properties and preserving the natural flow of spring and well water. Help in the effort to promote responsible mining practices that **do not** cause long-term, permanent damage for the sake of a short-sighted energy policy and obscene short-term corporate profits.

Membership Form -We want you to join.
(Membership dues are voluntary – please enclose whatever amount you can)

Name _____ We need your help - meeting preparation, fundraising, publicity,
Address _____ research, media relations, computer skills,
Phone _____ road contact (calling a few people about events) or
Email _____ other talents that you have. Call Aimee (724) 222- 5602

Return to: TMPN, 546 Lone Pine Road, Washington, PA 15301
There will be a free loaf of homemade bread with each membership at the meeting on October 25th.

T M P N . O R G
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