

Fracking - Suicide Capitalism Poisons The Earth's Fresh Water Supplies.

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Theme: [Environment](#), [Oil and Energy](#)

Lena Headley lives in Fayette County, Pennsylvania. She and her husband bought a small farm for their semi-retirement with the mineral rights but not the oil and gas rights. Over the last seven years 5 gas wells and a transmission pipeline have been put on their land. The effect has been devastating: Pollution of land and air together with destruction of fruit trees and the burning of 10 acres of ground by the gas drillers. Gas wells leak and a spring 200 feet from her house is so rich with gas it can be set on fire.

Visits to the family doctor have become common. Her 5 year old son Adam suffers from crippling stomach pains. Lena has said that she wants her story to act as warning to ordinary people about the dangers of fracking.

In an interview in 2012 [she said](#)," And why? All because of an uncaring, dirty industry, driven by greed, selling their souls, leaving our health, environment, and rights behind as waste. When will this nightmare end ???".

Governments across the world are triumphantly declaring that gas fracking is the solution to our rapacious energy needs. Yet as each month goes by new studies emerge in the United States of how this industry is poisoning water supplies and posing a grave threat to public health.

In December, a team of scientists from the University of Missouri [published a study](#) in the Journal of Endocrinology that revealed that over 700 different chemicals are used by the fracking industry. Their study focused upon a dozen fracking chemicals which had contaminated water supplies in Colorado which is home to over 10,000 fracking gas wells. They took samples of contaminated river water from areas close to fracking sites and found that these chemicals disrupt the normal functioning of the endocrine system and can lead to cancer, infertility and birth defects.

Yet government politicians, who are spokespeople for the suicide capitalists who own the big energy companies, insist that fracking is safe. Take US Interior Secretary [Sally Jewell's comment](#) in November that,""I think that there's a lot of misinformation about fracking," Jewell said, adding: "I think that it's part of the industry's job to make sure that the public understands what it is, how it's done, and why it's safe."

How can drinking poisoned water be safe? Numerous scientific studies have concluded that fracking poisons the local water supply by adding carcinogens and radioactive materials. According to Dr.Sandra Stenigraber, Distinguished Scholar in Residence at Ithaca College and Science Advisor to Breast Cancer Action, there have been over [1,000 different cases of water contamination](#) near fracking sites.

In many areas across America fracking has led to high levels of arsenic and other toxic heavy metals in ground water near drilling sites. Researchers from University of Texas last year found levels of arsenic [18 times higher](#) than in areas without fracking. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has found elevated levels of arsenic in [Wyoming](#) and Pennsylvania. Meanwhile, scientists at Duke University have found [high levels of methane](#), propane and ethane in ground water samples near fracking sites in northern Pennsylvania.

As if that wasn't bad enough in some areas fracking waste water is highly radioactive. A U.S. Geological Survey report found waste water from gas wells in Pennsylvania and New York state to be [3,609 times more radioactive](#) than the federal limit for drinking water.

Meanwhile, Scientists at Duke University have found levels of [radium 200 times](#) above normal or background levels in the Pennsylvania creek that flows into the Allegheny River . In [New York](#) state scientists from the Department of Environmental Conservation analysed 13 samples of waste water and found, " levels of radium-226, a derivative of uranium, as high as 267 times the limit safe for discharge into the environment and thousands of times the limit safe for people to drink."

EPA scientists are worried about the threat to public health from the huge amounts of fracking waste water. Sewage treatment plants are incapable of removing radioactive materials from waste water which is then discharged into rivers from which drinking water is taken.

On average only 30-50% of the fracking fluid is recovered the rest is left in the ground. In some areas waste water is left in open air pits to evaporate into the atmosphere. Harmful volatile organic compounds are released into the air creating acid rain and ground level ozone.

[Numerous studies](#) have shown how fracking chemicals can contaminate water supplies. There have been transport spills before and after gas drilling, the fracturing process itself, disposal of waste water and failure of gas well casings and seepage from abandoned gas wells. Chemicals fluids from gas fracking can migrate underground to contaminate water tables.

To compound this environmental pollution there is the problem of water shortages caused by fracking. Each fracking well uses huge amounts of water requiring 2 to 4 million gallons of water. The EPA has estimated that the 35,000 fracking wells in America consume between 70 and 140 billion gallons of water each year.

A recent study by [Ceres](#) reveals that 47% of all oil and gas wells in the US are in regions with high or extremely high water stress. More than 55% of all US wells are in areas experiencing drought. Thirty six per cent of all wells are in regions experiencing ground water depletion.

The fracking industry's reliance on huge amounts of water is placing unsustainable demands on many regions which are expected to experience 20 per cent or higher growth in population. To compound matters there has been a systematic [over-exploitation of 40 major US aquifers](#). Major fracking activity and depleted aquifers overlap in many regions.

In many water stressed areas such as Texas it is creating major problems for ordinary

people. There is [water rationing](#) for 15 million people and 30 small towns are threatened with running out of water completely because of the insatiable demands of the fracking industry.

Besides this, the water demands of the fracking industry create yet another problem for local communities: [wear and tear](#) on roads and the air pollution caused by hundreds of trucks bringing water to the site and then taking waste water away. The average fracking well requires [over 400 trucks](#) to deliver water and take away waste water.

On top of this, is the associated rise in deaths and injuries caused by road accidents from the huge increase in traffic on roads. For example, in [Pennsylvania heavy truck crashes](#) have increased by an average 9% a year. Some of these crashes have spilled fracking waste water into surface water.

There is of course an economic burden for local areas associated with this increase in truck crashes. In Pennsylvania a typical truck crash has an estimated economic cost of \$216, 229 relating to deaths, injuries and property damage. This has added an estimated \$28 million burden on to the overstretched budgets of heavily fracked counties.

The fracking industry in America resembles one vast ponzi scheme that is as reckless as it is criminal. Let's take the example of Wyoming which has thousands of fracking wells. It has recently come to light how companies that once operated fracking wells have disappeared and have abandoned the wells they made huge profits from. Apparently, over [1,200 fracking wells have been abandoned](#) in Wyoming with state officials saying there may be thousands more to come.

Many of the companies that once operated these fracking wells are seeking bankruptcy and unable to pay the cost of cleaning up the land they leased. Many farmers are complaining to state officials that their land has been left in a toxic state. Take for example the case of [State senator John J.Hines](#) who is seeking public money to clean up the 40 fracking wells abandoned on his land by Patriot Resource Company. It appears that Wyoming state will have to pay for the clean up costs for the 1,200 abandoned wells with potentially thousands more to come.

Max Keiser, a financial commentator, has called fracking [suicide economics](#). As he points out, many fracking companies sign contracts with farmers to lease their land knowing full well that they won't be spending any money to clean up the toxic mess they will have created.

Keiser calls fracking a "12 to 36 month scam" by energy companies out to make a 5% return on their investment. Companies borrow money at zero per cent to pay for fracking rigs, make huge profits during the life of the fracking well then once its exhausted declare bankruptcy to avoid any clean up costs. Leaving tax payers on the hook for millions. I wonder where we've seen that kind of scam before?

Not surprisingly, there is a growing movement of ordinary people against this form of suicide capitalism. Over [400 counties](#) in America have passed resolutions banning fracking operations from land in their areas. In Pennsylvania local people have delivered a [100,000 strong petition](#) to Governor Corbett calling for a halt to fracking operations in that state. Last year [650,000 people](#) sent messages to the Obama administration calling for a ban on fracking on public lands.

As the fracking industry spreads its destructive tentacles across the globe ordinary people must fight back against the big oil and gas companies that would poison millions of people and destroy local environments. All in the pursuit of a quick buck.

I'll leave the last word to [Sandra Steingraber](#), "At what point does preliminary evidence of harm become definitive evidence of harm? When someone says, "We were not aware of the dangers of these chemicals back then," whom do they mean by we? ."

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