

Lynnette Saunders

As you know, the Delaware River is the longest free-flowing river east of the Mississippi. Within the Delaware watershed millions of people depend on the river for drinking water while millions more use the river and watershed for recreation. Of course, wildlife, from fish to birds and mammals depend on the river and its watershed for survival. All of these uses depend on ample amounts of clean water which would no longer be available if fracking water withdrawal or its waste water dumping are allowed within the Delaware River watershed. The length and depth of fracking wells has dramatically increased over the last few years which means that the amount of water required to frack a well and the amount of toxic waste water produced has gone up dramatically

As a trained freshwater ecologist I know that neither surface water nor groundwater, along with any pollutants it is carrying, stays put. Any fracking waste spilled in surface water or injected underground will move the pollutants down slope, contaminating more and more areas.

It is impossible to frack safely, without significant environmental impact. Both Maryland and New York states have been wise enough to realize this and have therefore banned fracking throughout their entire states. Hopefully the DRBC will be wise and completely ban fracking and all of its related activities from the Delaware watershed. There should be no variances or exceptions of any kind. Once surface water or groundwater is polluted it is very difficult to impossible to clean it up. Many fracking chemicals biomagnify through the food chain and so would do their damage at all trophic levels.

My family and I have enjoyed many aspects of the Delaware River and its watershed, from canoeing to hiking and picnicking and bird watching. We would find it very sad, short-sighted and unwise if the Delaware Watershed were sacrificed to any aspects of fracking. We implore you to protect this special watershed.

Lynnette Saunders, Ph.D.