

On April 4, 2011 a delegation of Source of Synergy Foundation board members including Emily Squires, Pamela Kraft and Diane Williams as well as SOSF Advisory Board Member Julia Walsh and her colleague Claire Sandberg from Frack Action <http://frackaction.com/> and Water Defense <http://www.waterdefense.org/> along with a number of journalists and concerned citizens on a visit to Dimock, Pennsylvania. It was SOSF's first Journey to bear witness to global challenges. We took this trip to see and understand first-hand the effects of Hydraulic Fracturing or "Fracking" on the lives of citizens of Dimock.



*Diane Williams, Craig Sautner, Pamela Kraft, Emily Squires in Dimock*

Fracking is a process used to extract natural gas from thousands of feet down in the earth using millions of gallons of fresh water, lacing it with hundreds of undisclosed toxic chemicals, and forcing it deep into the earth under extremely high pressure in order to break open shale deposits, and release the natural gas lodged within it. Fracking has been linked to over 1,000 incidents of groundwater contamination across the US. The process is currently unregulated due to numerous exemptions in federal laws, and is a threat to our public health and environment.

The safety record that hydraulic fracturing has amassed to date is deeply disturbing. As use of the technique has spread, it has been followed by devastating health problems and environmental degradation. Thousands of complaints and lawsuits have been lodged with state and federal agencies by people all over the country whose lives and communities have been contaminated by fracking operations.

In Dimock, Pa, alone, where more than 60 gas wells were drilled in a nine-square-mile area and dozens more are scheduled, many noxious and alarming things have transpired. A truck turned over and caused an 800-gallon diesel-fuel spill in April 2009. Up to 8,000 gallons of Halliburton-manufactured fracking fluid, known as a "potential carcinogen" leaked from faulty supply pipes, with some seeping into the groundwater, wetlands and streams, killing fish, in September 2009. Over the past two years, residents' water has been contaminated with such high levels of methane gas that their drinking water can be lit with a match. Metals and other toxic chemicals are making numerous people and their live-stock and pets ill. In addition 'burn-off's from the drilling sites pollute the air with contaminants, and giant diesel trucks required to service each gas well pollute the air with noxious diesel exhaust fumes and destroy local road and bridge infrastructure. There is no doubt that Fracking has ruined the lives of many who trusted when they were told that this process was safe.

Source of Synergy Foundation Board Member Pamela Kraft said *“This issue and other issues like it affect us all and that is what we need to realize. We are all interconnected on this planet and we all, including the animals and plants, need water to sustain us and this process contaminates our water.”*

Our SOSF contingent came to Dimock to bear witness and see first-hand what people whose lives have been destroyed by Fracking are experiencing. We met with Julie and Craig Sautner, whose family has been practically destroyed by contamination of their drinking water, pollution of their air, destruction of their quality of life by huge trucks and drilling rigs constantly trafficking their local roads, and anger from their neighbors who are being given great amounts of money from the oil and gas companies to allow drilling on their land.



Anti-fracking signs dot Julie and Craig’s lawn. A shed houses a huge vat of non-potable water supplied by Cabot Oil for their non-drinking use. Cabot only supplies spring water for drinking. The Sautners showed us water from their well so contaminated with unnamed chemicals that it is unusable; they spoke of incidents such as the one where their daughter took a shower and broke out in hives all over her body; showed us a jerry-built water purification system that the gas company installed in their basement but ultimately did no good; they spoke of huge trucks flying by their house night and day; and how it has become neighbor-against-neighbor in their request for a fresh water pipeline for those in Dimock whose water has been contaminated. They and their

friend, Craig Stevens, another resident of Dimock, took us to several different drilling sites nearby, some so close to houses that many people have gotten sick or have left the area.



Drilling site



Source of Synergy Foundation Board Member Emily Squires said: *My husband and I have a house in Wayne County, the county in Pennsylvania that borders the Delaware River. This is where the largest controversy over Fracking is taking place at the moment, and I have double reason to care about the outcome: Not only would my water, air and quality of life be affected in Pennsylvania, but the drinking water for all of New York City would be affected as well. However, for me, Fracking represents far more than my personal life. It is a clear microcosm of how we are allowing giant Corporations to pollute the earth, water, and air for power and profit, with little concern for the welfare of the local populations or the earth. I feel we must all choose a place and take a stand for ourselves and the Earth, and this is mine.*

At dinner with our Dimock friends, we did our best to come up with ways in which we might help them: A short video <http://www.youtube.com/sourceofsynergy#p/a/u/0/9kSDQ1SG0cg> from our visit; marches, rallies and events taking place in New York City to make people aware of the situation, and so forth. But nothing will bring their fresh water back, or their quality of life. Ultimately, we can only wish them well and take heed from what they are experiencing and work to keep the process Fracking from being carried out any further.

At this very moment, our elected leaders are deciding whether or not to allow fracking along the Delaware River, which supplies much of New York City's drinking water, as well as that of Philadelphia, New Jersey, and Delaware and Maryland as the River pours into the Chesapeake Bay. If the states and federal Army Corps of Engineers under President Obama's direction give the green light to fracking in the Delaware River Basin, the industry plans to drill a massive 50,000 gas wells which could be underway by this summer, and it could be too late to prevent the total degradation of the water supply for 15.6 million people.

The Source of Synergy Foundation is committed to raising awareness about hydraulic fracturing. Source of Synergy Foundation's President Diane Williams said: *When we first heard about this issue, we were very concerned about it because one hears very little about this disturbing method of gas extraction that injects highly-toxic chemicals deep into the earth to fracture shale rock formations. We were even more alarmed to hear that this process is currently unregulated due to a number of exemptions in federal laws. The Source of Synergy Foundation's mandate is to awaken conscious engagement and collective action around global challenges such as fracking which is causing devastating health and environmental problems around the globe. This journey to Dimock allowed us to visit and bear witness to the effects of fracking on a community that has been devastated by it. I know it has inspired all of us that visited Dimock to do something...whether it's informing a friend or colleague, organizing a forum or writing an article about the dangers of fracking. We simply can't ignore what we have witnessed.*