

2015 Seneca / Clarence Moore Lands Tour

A driving tour of the "before and after" of natural gas drilling in the Loyalsock State Forest.

Please note: These driving tour directions are intended only as a suggested guide, and any driving tour taken using this guide is so done at the risk of the participants. This is an active forest and conditions may change – please use caution.

OBHEY ALL SIGNAGE. DO NOT TRESPASS.

PART ONE: An example of an industrialized forest

Start from Trout Run [Steamtown Restaurant / gas station]

Navigator: Use map 2A* [Seneca well pads] Tract 100 is a 2008 DCNR lease. Winning bid was \$3,200/acre. It pays 16% royalties and \$20 [twenty] dollars per acre/year "rental". Obey all signage; do not trespass.

Go 3.4 miles north on Rt. 14; Turn left on Upper Grays Run Road.

- **Go 0.8 mile**, Turn right on Bodine Mountain Road. At **3.3 miles** note Shriver's Ridge Road on your right; it leads south to Seneca pad "M".
- Continue north on Bodine Mt. Road. Note the wide clearing on your right. A gathering line and water line exist in that ROW. This road is the approximate dividing line between Seneca's lease on your left and to tracts of Anadarko's Clarence Moore tracts on your right.
- Landmark: above-ground pipeline / pig-launcher on your left. **DO NOT TURN LEFT. Keep straight ahead on the small lane.**
- Note the NFG Compressor Station on left. Continue north about **0.9 miles**. **Turn around at the gated reservoir.**
- This is Stop #1, Seneca's 14 million gallon reservoir. It was first filled in July of 2013 for fracking Pad "E". **See map # 2A.**

Tract 551 [another 2008 DCNR lease] is about a mile north of this reservoir. Exxon won the bid for Tract 551 and five other tracts with a low-ball bid of only \$1,151 / acre. Exxon flipped this one to Anadarko. It is possible that Seneca could sell water to Anadarko; otherwise Anadarko must construct their own water system. In any event, this forested lane will become another industrial road with adjacent gas and water pipelines.

- Drive back south and turn right after the compressor station. **Drive through Pad "E" and to the overlook.** **EXIT VEHICLES**

- Walk behind the building to the edge of the plateau. Note the pipeline path; straight down the mountainside. This is normal practice, but in Tiadaghton State Forest the pipelines zig-zag. Aesthetic reasons? Less erosion?

Look west to the ridge on the horizon. To your left is a U-shaped notch in the trees. Below that is a darker shape. This is **Seneca Pad "T"**.

ENTER VEHICLES

- Drive back **200 yards** to Seneca Pad "E". This site was prepared in fall of 2012, spudded in spring of 2013, fracked in summer. Stay in vehicles. Respect private property.

Note that this pad is "wall-to-wall", taking up the entire crest of the ridge. It will remain as a barren industrial zone for our lifetimes. It may never be restored, because bonding is insufficient to fund it. If it ever is plugged and restored, it will probably be on the taxpayers' dime and then take another 50 years before it again looks like the adjacent forest.

Drive **1/4 mile** to the pipeline / pig launcher on your left **EXIT VEHICLES**
From the east side of the fence this is a great view of the Trout Run Compressor station, owned by NFG. About 500 X 500 feet, it runs 24/7. There are four compressor stations like this planned for the CM tracts, one at mile 23.53 of the Old Loggers Path. [Stop # 6 on today's tour.]

Since Anadarko owns the mineral rights to the east, Seneca could only drill westward. Anadarko plans to build their own pad east of Bodine Mt. Road rather than cooperate with Seneca. DCNR has concerns about interference with their timber management.

ENTER VEHICLES

Navigators: Follow our route on map # 2A

Turn right [south] on Bodine Mt. Road. Return to Grays Run Road, turn left.

PART TWO: Rock Run / Clarence Moore Lands

Return to Rt 14, turn left and drive 6.9 miles north to Ralston. Take the first right turn past the Fire House go one short block and turn left, crossing a bridge. **Reset odometers to zero.**

Drive **2.1 miles**. You will see a sign on the right "**2456, 2457**". Parking for five vehicles on your left. **Exit vehicles. Take map "OLP West"**

Walk down the lane to Rock Run behind camp 2456, owned by the Selmans. If they are home, please explain the purpose of your visit and ask permission as a courtesy; this

access is generally used by the public. Please respect the property and privacy of camp owners.

One thousand three hundred and fifty acres along the stream were designated "Rock Run Aesthetic Area" in 2003. The CM lands end here, to be drilled from the plateau to the east. Rock Run is an EV stream. Note the location of Doe Run and Buck Run on the map. We will visit those headwater wetlands next. The CM lands are bisected by another EV stream, Pleasant Stream; 22 tributaries of that stream were recently assessed. This will serve as a baseline for future use.

Return to vehicles.

Continue northeast on Rock Run Road. This becomes Yellow Dog Road after you cross a new bridge at **mile 4.0**. Drive up YDR. At the top of the plateau (**mile 6.4**) is Ellenton Ridge Road. Drive straight into camp # **2672** or park along Ellendale Ridge Road. If parking in the camp, ask permission and explain the purpose of your visit if the owners are present.

Exit vehicles.

This is stop # 4. See map "OLP West"

- Headwater wetlands of Doe Run, Buck Run.
- Audubon IBA [Important Bird Area]
- Planned Anadarko pads R,S,T,U
- Sunoco Pipeline

Anadarko & Southwest own the mineral rights to these 26,000 acres, but according to the 1989 Clarence Moore decision, may have lost access rights to 74% of the land in 1983. The courts will probably have to rule on this.

Walk west [behind the gate] on Ellenton Grade Road. This area is the most ecologically sensitive community identified in the Loyalsock Development Plan, containing an extensive wetlands complex draining both to Rock Run and Pleasant Stream.

"The Yellow-bellied flycatcher, Empidonax flaviventris, a PA Endangered Species, has nested in this wetlands complex. This is only one of two populations in all of PA's State Forests, with only nine populations existing statewide. This is one of the rarest nesting birds in Pennsylvania, and generally nests only in remote high elevation wetlands. As reported by the PA Game Commission, yellow bellied fly catcher can only survive if forested wetlands and conifer stands in extensive upland forests are preserved and sites need protection with generous buffers." ~ Dan Alters

Unconventional gas drilling in the Loyalsock State Forest will cause a devastating decline for several sensitive species. There will be cumulative changes in the hydrology of the area [temperature, volume, erosion & sedimentation] as well as

risks of contaminating these headwater wetlands and affecting both Rock Run and Pleasant Stream. ~ R. Martin

Return to parking area, re-enter vehicles

Drive east on Ellenton Ridge Road. Leave State Forest. This road to Ellenton & Rt. 154 will be the northern access for any gas development on the Clarence Moore Lands.

Turn **sharp right** on Masten Road and drive south, re-entering State Forest land. Note the new Masten Bridge on left. Go 100 yards past the bridge to an OLP campground / picnic area. [Porta-potty here.]

Exit vehicles. LUNCH STOP. Review morning stops; preview afternoon stops. **Re-enter vehicles - zero odometers.**

Drive back to the new Masten bridge, turn right [Pleasant Stream Road]. Go **0.3 miles** and turn sharply right on Hillsgrove Road. Drive up the hill. Landmark: Cascade Road on your right. Go **1.1 miles past** Cascade Road. Here is space to turn around **80 yards past camp 2672**. Turn each car around and park facing west in the grassy area just west of the Old Loggers Path [OLP].

Exit vehicles. [See map "OLP EAST"]

1. Walk through the pines to the edge of the Mill Creek Wetland, the largest in the area. The drainage is to Mill Creek, eastward.

2. Walk back to the OLP, turn left, climb up the bank and go 100 feet. This is the proposed site of compressor station C2. Variances to buffer-zone regulations are frequently granted by DEP. This area is designated as Semi-Primitive. Severing the popular OLP here would require a very extensive relocation. Federal Land & Water Conservation Funding was received by DCNR for land in this area. We do not know if conversion of these lands will affect that funding.

Effects of forest fragmentation on interior species:

"The forest's size, headwater streams, and overall health make it an especially valuable woodland habitat. It provides critical nesting grounds for a number of eastern deciduous-forest species, including: Scarlet Tanager [17% of the global population breeds in PA], Wood Thrush, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Swainson's Thrush and Northern Saw-whet Owl. All of these songbirds migrate to Pennsylvania from the tropics of Central or South America to breed here. Also nesting here is the

Northern Goshawk, a rare raptor of northern Pennsylvania that requires large, quiet, older forests to successfully raise young." ~ Paul Zeph

Forest fragmentation by industrialization changes other aspects of the area. Invasive species and predator species are aided by the conversion of the land. Only generalist species, such as Robins and White-tailed Deer may benefit. To some, the claimed "footprint" of this industrialization may seem unimportant, but the "edge effect" reaches far into the forest. The DCNR owns some "reverse inholdings", where the agency owns the mineral rights within the Clarence Moore Lands. We imagine that Anadarko would want to lease those lands in order to maximize profitability. ~R. Martin

Return to vehicles. Drive west on Hillsgrove Road to Cascade Road. Turn Left. Drive down Cascade Road **0.6 miles** to John Merrill Road on your right.

Brief stop at intersection*. Nine wells, two impoundments and one compressor station are planned for this area. The OLP will be severed and access to Sharp Top Vista may be in jeopardy. Some well pads are within the fenced-in timber management areas. *Decades of careful forest management here could be wiped by industrialization of our State Forests. There have been no adequate studies of the cumulative impacts from our existing leases on 700,000 acres. Drastic decreases in support to DCNR from the Commonwealth's General Fund (from 77% down to 24%) threaten the mission of the agency. We must understand the impacts of industrialization of our forests before allowing gas activities. **If you can't measure it, you can't manage it.** ~ R. Martin*

Continue down Cascade Drive. This will be the southern entrance for gas operations. This road will become a heavy-duty industrial road to accommodate 18-wheelers hauling drilling rigs. The Old Loggers Path will be severed as it crosses **2.3 miles** south of John Merrill Road.

1.0 miles farther down Cascade is a hairpin right turn. **Stop and exit vehicles.**

See map, "OLP East" Note the pipeline from compressor station C2 to pad "J". Rather than fragment the forest, this pipeline should follow Cascade Drive. Not cheap, but ecologically sound. ~R. Martin

END OF TOUR

***Optional side trip John Merrill Road (JMR)**

JMR is flagged with red, white and blue tape. This indicates a major industrial road with parallel water and gas lines.

GPS # 429 @ N41 29.131, W76 49.573 **0.4 miles** from intersection with Cascade Road. Turn right (50-foot uphill). Park in front of gate. To the right of the clearing is a timber management area behind deer enclosure fencing.

"One mission of our Bureau of Forestry is to ensure a continuous supply of forest products. The industry has sales in excess of \$16 billion dollars annually and a total yearly economic impact of \$27 billion dollars, employing more than 100,000 people. The Bureau of Forestry attempts to limit forest conversion because the FSC [Forest Stewardship Council] certification as "sustainable" allows timber to be sold at premium prices. Forest conversion [to other uses] puts that certification in jeopardy."

~ Butch Davey

Two miles farther west on JMR is a gate to the right and Sharp Top Vista to your left. Six well pads and one water impoundment are planned for that area. The gated area is where a long cross-country pipeline is planned [from pad "Q" to pad "G"]. This fragmentation could be completely avoided by utilizing the existing Sunoco pipeline from pad "T" to pad "E"

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More Information:

MARCELLUS 101

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/paforestcoalition/sets/72157646584886103/>

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<http://stateimpact.npr.org/pennsylvania/2013/05/20/lovers-of-pa-s-loyalsock-forest-fight-to-limit-drilling-there/>

*Maps for Participants = **TourMaps #08**

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/paforestcoalition/sets/72157648908927031/>

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