



## **News for Immediate Release**

**July 30, 2014**

### **DCNR Will Seek Public Comment on Draft Development Agreement for Gas Extraction in Loyalsock State Forest, Lycoming County**

**State College** –Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Secretary Ellen Ferretti today announced that the department will seek public comment once a draft Surface Development Management Agreement has been negotiated to protect the natural and recreational resources of a 25,000-acre tract known as the Clarence Moore lands in the Loyalsock State Forest, Lycoming County.

The state does not own the subsurface rights to this land. Anadarko and Southwest Energy Company each own or lease 50 percent of the subsurface rights and have requested access to extract natural gas.

At present there is no known date for the comment period as all parties are still in discussions and no development plan has been submitted for department review.

“For about a year now, DCNR has been meeting with a small group of stakeholders to inform them of the progress of talks between Anadarko and Southwestern Energy Company,” Ferretti said today at a meeting of the department’s Natural Gas Advisory Committee in State College. “From previous public input we understand that there is a unique interest in this particular tract of land and that we needed a much broader way to communicate with the public.”

“To that end, although we have not reached an agreement, the department is committing to a process that will involve sharing the final draft agreement with the public for comment, once that draft is in place,” Ferretti said.

Ferretti noted that DCNR will allow 15 days for public comment on the document, which will then be reviewed and considered before an agreement would be finalized. A timeframe has not been determined for completion of the final draft.

DCNR will publish notice of the comment period in the Pennsylvania Bulletin and issue a news release at that time to make sure all interested parties are informed. A copy of the agreement and development plan will be posted on the DCNR website for review.

DCNR uses agreements to manage oil and gas activity on state forest lands where it does not own the subsurface rights.

The Surface Development Management Agreement will protect commonwealth assets on the surface while outlining reasonable infrastructure development to extract natural gas. It will include a development plan for the entire 25,000 acres.

Unlike a permit decision, there is no law or regulation that outlines or requires any process or timeframe for talks or agreements where the subsurface rights are held privately.

DCNR's priorities in protecting the natural resources and recreational opportunities on the Clarence Moore lands include:

- Minimizing surface disturbance to the greatest extent possible;
- Limiting impacts on trail users on the 27-mile Old Logger's Path trail that circles the lands or relocate trail if necessary;
- Reducing fragmentation from pipelines, right-of-ways and roads;
- Avoiding or minimizing activity in wetland areas and important habitat for threatened or endangered species;
- Avoiding or minimizing development in the headwaters of the Rock Run waterway; and
- Mitigating noise impacts from compressor stations.

"Our main interest is protecting this resource. That is our mission. It's our job to balance the protection of habitat and recreational resources such as the Old Logger's Path with the various uses of the state forest, including gas extraction. Our multi-disciplined team of professionals is working diligently to that end," Ferretti said.

Any development by the subsurface owners would also be subject to the required environmental reviews and permitting process with the Department of Environmental Protection.

Members of the public currently can submit written comments on this issue to DCNR by email to [loyalsock@pa.gov](mailto:loyalsock@pa.gov)

For more information about possible gas development on the Loyalsock State Forest, visit the DCNR website, choose "Forestry" under "Quick Links," and scroll down to the "Loyalsock State Forest and the Clarence Moore Lands."

**Media Contact:** Christina Novak, DCNR, 717-772-9104

###