



Immediate Release

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Tennessee Gas Pipeline Drains Wetlands With Emerging Amphibians – Regulators Sit By/Support

Pike County, PA – On Friday, the Delaware Riverkeeper Network visited wetlands on DCNR lands to videotape juvenile amphibians to document for the public and the PA Department of Environmental Protection the diverse and healthy juvenile and adult frog, toad and newt populations threatened by Tennessee Gas Pipeline's (Tennessee Gas) delayed restoration work on its 300 Pipeline Project (view video here: <http://youtu.be/boTlfxMaFSs>). One day after documenting the abundant life, Tennessee Gas quickly drained down the wetlands, apparently with the knowledge of state and local agencies; the result was to wipe out some of the emerging life within.

“We notified the State and County agencies on Monday the 7th of the situation, urged them to order Tennessee Gas to hold off on their invasive wetlands work to allow the aquatic life to achieve maturity and move on. After all, the wetlands work was largely to ensure the critical habitat necessary for these sensitive species; it makes no sense to undertake the project at a time it will wipe out the very life it is intended to support. Rather than order the delay, it seems that state and local officials either acquiesced or perhaps even supported the devastating actions taken by Tennessee Gas over the weekend to drain the wetlands and kill the life that was struggling to grow there,” said **Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper**.

The Delaware Riverkeeper Network had written multiple agencies and Tennessee Gas last Monday to urge that the amphibians be protected during the company's delayed restoration actions (letter available here: <http://www.delawariverkeeper.org/resources/PressReleases/DRNamphibs%20TGP%20300%205%208%2012%20Letter.pdf>). According to the letter by DRN, despite requests from regulatory agencies to Tennessee Gas to

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conduct final grading, stabilization, and seeding over the mild winter months when less biological activity was present in the already disturbed wetlands in the pipeline corridor, Tennessee Gas disregarded its restoration obligations for many months. The Tennessee Gas 300 line has been in operation since November 2011. As a result amphibians that avoided the Tennessee Gas 300 line impacts to these wetlands last year during construction, migrated back to the impacted wetlands that were not yet fully restored by Tennessee Gas in the early spring, mated and subsequently thousands of juveniles and adults resided in these wetlands.

Delaware Riverkeeper Network staff witnessed bulldozers and were trailed by Tennessee Gas employees when they went to site on Friday, May 11, to seek video-documentation for the agencies as to the situation. Tennessee Gas work crews on site told the Delaware Riverkeeper, van Rossum that one of the most thriving wetlands present would not be drained or impacted over the weekend, they confirmed that work was scheduled for the following week and may be delayed further by rain.

“As a result we believed we would have more time to influence the PADEP to delay the wetlands work or as a last resort, that we would have time to mobilize a corps of volunteers and concerned citizens to help relocate some of the amphibians to nearby wetlands out of the pipeline corridor,” **said van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper.**

Delaware Riverkeeper Network staff re-visited the pipeline corridor Saturday morning only to see the large wetland highlighted in the video already been pumped down and impacted, leaving a muddy mess behind. “The pumping, dewatering, and sediment pollution certainly killed many amphibians that were documented to live in this wetland. As of Sunday, the wetland still remained cloudy and choked with suspended solids,” said **Faith Zerbe, Monitoring Director for Delaware Riverkeeper Network.**

To view DRN’s video of the TGP actions on Friday in the wetlands, see <http://youtu.be/boTlfxMaFSs>.

According to **van Rossum**, “this is sadly more of the same from Tennessee Gas Pipeline.” According to a letter sent by the Delaware Riverkeeper Network to regulatory agencies earlier this year: During the Tennessee Gas 300 Line Project, in 28 out of 38 “Environmental Compliance Monitoring Program Weekly Summary Report[s]” that were provided on FERC’s website, at least one recorded incident was reported where an activity did not come into “compliance with Project specifications, mitigation measures, and applicable FERC-approved Project plans.” Out of 16 inspections conducted by the Wayne County Conservation District during the 300 Line Extension Project, violations were found in no less than 15 of the inspections. The Pike County Conservation District cited numerous violations during the 300 Line Extension Project including, but not limited to: 17 instances of dirt and sediment being discharged into water bodies, 7 violations for worksite conditions, and 21 instances of failure to properly institute Best Management Practices for erosion and sediment control.

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