

It's a day of leisure, a shopping mission to scenic Wellsboro which is in the northern tier near the PA Grand Canyon. On the return I want to take the back way down 44 to check up on the condition of the road. It was disintegrating in April, and it is now June.

I have an axe to grind with the frackers. The large issue is pumping radioactive carcinogenic poison fluid into the earth in large quantities which can potentially ruin our water. Lots of problems flow from the large issue. The ancillary issue today is the crumbling road caused by the big tanker trucks hauling our water to the wells and the poison back. In April I was heartsick at what I saw and today I have my camera and I'm ready to advance the story.

We cross from Wellsboro west to Potter County which has signs 'God's Country' and is indeed beautiful enough to be called that. The rugged back country is reminiscent of West Virginia. Soon we get onto 144 and then 44. The mountain laurel is out in great abundance, it lines the road and in some cases blankets the forest. It is an enchanting wonder. The disintegrated road has been repaved, brand new. Nothing to complain about, in fact it is a welcomed surprise.

On Pine Mountain I stop to shoot some mountain laurel and coincidentally stumble across a gas pipeline. My mind makes the leap to hydraulic fracking and the tanker trucks and I have malevolent feeling for the pipeline in pristine nature. As I take pictures of the pipe and its situation among the flowers and trees and trails I am cursing it. But I come to a realization. I use gas. The pipeline is not so bad compared with fracking. It is quietly resting a few feet underground. The enemy is not so much the pipe, it is fracking.

We stop for dinner at Pine Creek Inn, which is under new management and touts great crab cakes. We are welcomed warmly by the lovely hostess. I am holding my camera and as a neighbor's meal is served he raves at the food's appearance and asks me to take a picture. His card tells me he has an oil and gas company. I shoot the food and include him in the shot. The restaurant owner gives me his card and asks for pictures to be sent. It's a friendly place, bon vivant, it's clear they are trying hard. The meal is first rate, delicious generous portions served with a smile.

I ponder events of the day, and the gas boom under way in Pennsylvania. A friend with a home in the middle of gas lands is not concerned about fracking because the fluid is pumped thousands of feet down, and his well is only 30 feet. I shake my head at the risk. Once the water is contaminated, we're done. I'm hoping BP's disaster in the gulf has a cautionary effect here. Many residents are happy for the influx of gas workers to patronize their businesses. I'm happy to see stellar small businesses flourish. But what will become of the hardworking couple's Pine Creek Inn if their water turns, and the pristine Pine Creek valley turns into a killing zone for flora and fauna?

Our most valuable resources are our water, we have the best aquifer anywhere, and the pristine wild beauty of our forests and streams. We need to understand the dangers posed by hydraulic fracking, and insist on protecting our health and environment. The gas boom will be over in ten years. I want Pine Creek to be here in all its glory forever.