The Natural Gas Reporting Project

A Project of The Media Consortium

The rush is on to unearth natural gas, which is being portrayed (by President Obama no less) as a “cleaner and cheaper” energy source for the United States. In answer, an initial wave of academic studies and media reports has raised serious questions about this almost completely unregulated industry. These reports have looked at the impact of fracking on groundwater pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, seismic activity and human health.

Left untold, however, is the story of the grassroots movement that has organized to oppose fracking in towns, suburbs, cities, and rural areas across this country. From Occupiers in Kalamazoo to Tea-party groups in Virginia and Ohio, from native Americans in North Dakota to wealthy suburbanites in California, Americans—and their counterparts abroad--are organizing to oppose hydraulic fracturing in their communities.

This activism will be the focus of The Natural Gas Reporting Project . The first-ever multimedia collaboration of its kind, the Natural Gas Reporting Project was founded by Media Consortium members *Earth Island Journal*, *Race, Poverty and the Environment*, National Radio Project, Link TV, Chelsea Green, Specialty Studios and Care2. Utilizing print, digital, radio, film, book and social media, these outlets have agreed to share editorial teams and calendars in order to tell the stories of those impacted directly by fracking for shale gas. By building in a multimedia strategy from the start, we will ensure that our reporting and distribution will inform and engage many different types of audiences, with the aim that they become more involved in the political debates over natural gas extraction.

This project is designed to last 36 months in order to take advantage of natural news cycles. When natural gas hits the news, we will be ready to tell the story with text, audio, and video content, reaching an audience of over 30 million. That ability to surf the wave of the news cycle will increase the impact of the work. Also increasing impact will be our use of the Sparkwise platform for a dedicated Natural Gas Reporting Project website, which will allow us to monitor how our content is used.

For this project, impact is measured by engagement. The project aims to provoke people to take action in their own communities through reporting that informs, that provokes, and that also provides solutions. The goal is not simply to repeat activist polemics against fracking, but to delve deeply into what motivates communities to rise up against fracking; how this activism crosses partisan, economic, ethnic and geographic lines; and what constitutes a solution to fracking in areas that need the jobs and energy fracking might otherwise provide. If we succeed, this project will create transformational change to our energy system.