



Some of the consequences of stray methane leaking from natural gas wells are easier to spot than others. Overflowing water wells and bubbling methane puddles are easy to document. But methane plumes are odorless and invisible, so you need some sophisticated equipment to track it.

Equipment like the “portable laser-based methane measurement system and combustible gas indicator” that Gas Safety, Incorporated’s Bob Ackley used to document methane plumes near Leroy Township, Bradford County, on July 25.

Ackley was in Bradford County to track the methane migration problems StateIm-pact Penn-syl-va-nia has been reporting on for several months. On May 19th, natural gas began seeping out of Chesapeake Energy’s Morse well. The gas has been bubbling into a nearby stream, and onto at least two families’ property, ever since. Click on the articles in the adjoining box for details on how the leak happened, and how it’s affected the people who live nearby.

When Ackley brought his equipment to Leroy Township on July 25, he found two plumes of gas in the air – one stretching more than 10 miles. He also documented pockets of gas under the ground, and documented elevated methane levels in one family’s home.

According to the report – and it’s important to remember this was funded by an environmental group, and not an official state investigation – “the data and observations clearly indicate natural gas has pervaded an extensive sub-surface area and ...surface emissions and ground water methane contamination problems are likely to continue for unforeseeable times.” Read Ackley’s full report at the bottom of this post.

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