

# Let Them Drink Drill Water

## Why won't the Village of Cayuga Heights take responsibility for the 3 million gallons of industrial waste water they processed into Cayuga Lake?

In making the case for their deer killing program, the trustees of Cayuga Heights state in their Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS): "deer feces are deposited daily in the local watershed and the majority of it is washed into local watercourses and storm sewers, contributing to higher biological oxygen demand in local water systems and increased levels of organic nutrients that come from mammal wastes."

### **Translation: *We need to kill most of the village's deer to prevent water pollution***

Consider the supposed concern over deer feces in the water given what's transpired over the last couple years in the village.

**Cayuga Heights was paid to process 3 million gallons of natural gas drilling wastewater into Cayuga Lake, water that then-Mayor Jim Gilmore admitted contained "hundreds of chemicals." On November 16, 2009, the Cayuga Heights trustees voted to rescind a commitment they had made the previous April to perform a head works analysis on the wastewater they put in the lake, which would determine what had actually passed into the lake after being processed by the plant.**

### **How did we get here?**

**In April, 2009**, articles appear in local newspapers disclosing that the Village of Cayuga Heights has already processed 3 million gallons of natural gas drilling waste water through their sewage treatment plant into Cayuga Lake. Following this, the Cayuga heights trustees temporarily suspend accepting and processing drill water, and **on May 18, 2009**, pass a resolution to authorize a "drill water head works analysis," anticipated to be completed within 180 days. According to the meeting minutes, Cayuga Heights' superintendant of public works "recommends that the Village move forward with this work as it could lead to the option of taking drill water in the future, **but more importantly, it would be documentation of the treatment that was already done.**"

**On August 24, 2009**, at the Cayuga Heights trustees meeting during their privilege of the floor, environmental attorney Helen Slottje comments on just one of the chemicals known to be in the drill water, saying, "I reviewed the correspondence dated Dec. 23rd, 2008, from Chesapeake Energy to Gary Smith, and I learned that the produced well water accepted by the water treatment plant contained 25 mg per liter of Hexavalent Chromium, which is **2,500 times the safe EPA limit for drinking water. Hexavalent Chromium is a known carcinogen, famous for groundwater contamination** in Hinkley, California, and more recently in Midland, Texas, of Erin Brokovich fame. I also learned that each delivery of produced water is approximately 80,000 gallons, and at that rate, each delivery contains 19.65 pounds of Hexavalent Chromium. Hexavalent Chromium is persistent in water as a sediment and has a high potential for accumulation in aquatic life. Cayuga Lake is also a body of concern for the state DEC. As the village board continues to weigh the benefit of payment to accept this water versus the cost of environmental compliance, as noted in your previous minutes, **how will you weigh the cost to the entire community of allowing this poison into our lake?"**

**By October 19, 2009**, the head works analysis was slated to have been nearly completed. However, at the Cayuga Heights trustees meeting, the superintendent of public works reveals that **Mayor Gilmore never signed the paperwork that was necessary to authorize the head works analysis** that was formally committed to in April. This leads to a discussion amongst the trustees about whether or not to perform the head works analysis, with Trustee Robert Andolina saying, "We have to balance whether it's worth \$28,000 to address largely what would appear to me to be a public relations issue at the moment... If we were to defer the decision, when regulations do whatever they're going to do, and we get a better understanding of where the drill water might likely come from, and **what the market for drill water treatment is going to be like**, then we can more intelligently do a head waters study to allow us to address those new regulations and drill water market opportunities."

**On November 16, 2009, the Cayuga Heights Board of Trustees vote UNANIMOUSLY to rescind the head works analysis.** Members of the Board who voted at that time included Kate Supron (now Mayor) Bea Szekely (now Deputy Mayor) and current Trustees Robert Andolina and Diana Riesman.

The EPA's new analysis of hexavalent chromium toxicity, released in draft form in September 2010 (EPA 2010a), cites significant cancer concerns linked to exposure to the contaminant in drinking water. It high-lights health effects including anemia and damage to the gastrointestinal tract, lymph nodes and liver. See this report: [http://static.ewg.org/reports/2010/chrome6/chrome6\\_report\\_2.pdf](http://static.ewg.org/reports/2010/chrome6/chrome6_report_2.pdf)

**Will we ever know what the Cayuga Heights treatment plant released into Cayuga Lake?**

**What is the track record of this group of people in caring for the well being of our community?**

**Should we be worried about deer poop in storm water runoff, or heavy metals like hexavalent chromium in Cayuga Lake, the source of drinking water for Cayuga Heights and many other communities?**

## **What you can do**

Contact the Cayuga Heights mayor and trustees and urge them to complete and publish the head works analysis and take responsibility for the impact their actions have had on the quality of our region's water supply. They can be reached by US mail at the Cayuga Heights Village Hall, 836 Hanshaw Rd., Ithaca, NY 14850, by phone at (607) 257-5536, and by email as follows:

**Mayor Kate Supron:** [mayor@cayuga-heights.ny.us](mailto:mayor@cayuga-heights.ny.us)

**Deputy Mayor Bea Szekely:** [bszekely@cayuga-heights.ny.us](mailto:bszekely@cayuga-heights.ny.us)

**Trustee Robert Andolina:** [randolina@cayuga-heights.ny.us](mailto:randolina@cayuga-heights.ny.us)

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