

Gas Well Study, 2008

*Observations from Visiting Gas Wells Operated by One Company
in Putnam and Kanawha Counties, West Virginia*

Fact Sheet

Between September and the end of December 2008 we examined gas wells in Putnam and Kanawha counties. All but a couple, by chance, were operated by the same company and this Study focuses on what we saw at that company's wells. We're not singling out this company because the problems we saw at their wells we also found at other operators'.

The major reclamation problems we observed had to do with vegetation or lack of it, drainage and sedimentation control, and well access roads.¹ Over four-fifths (84%) of the sites had road issues, most often ruts. We used 2 to 4 inch deep ruts as a sign of needed maintenance, though roads often had other problems.

Maintenance issues we found were the wrong or no API number at sites² (over a third we examined), trash on the site in the form of cast off industrial debris, leaks or spills, and a visible lack of upkeep (most usually unpainted pipework that, while not regulated, can detract from the company's image or indicate substandard performance).

The lack of proper secondary containment structures for tanks was a major problem. Required by state regulations, the dikes have to be a certain size according to tank capacity and include a rainwater drain with valve.³ Over four-fifths (84%) of the sites we examined weren't in compliance. Over two-thirds were without a dike and those sites that did have an adequate dike didn't have a rainwater drain.

The Study examines and illustrates the problems we found and we've created on our website a special section that is devoted, on a well by well basis, to discussing individual site's problems. The URL is:
<http://members.citynet.net/sootypaws/Woods/gaswell/comments/otherwells/index.html>. A link for the Study's download is also found there.

¹ The state in §22-6-6(d) uses the West Virginia Division of Environmental Protection, 1992, *West Virginia Erosion and Sediment Control Field Manual* as minimum standards for roads, drainage and sedimentation control, and vegetation.

² The API number is required by §22-6-6(f) and 35CSR4.5.5.a. We've seen two wells with company tags using the wrong API numbers. Five wells were without numbers.

³ 35CSR1.7 and *West Virginia Erosion and Sediment Control Field Manual*, III.D, Table III-1 and Figure III-5. At least one well was also in violation of federal Spill Prevention, Control and Countermeasure (SPCC) regulations (40CFR112).

Company Wells in Kanawha and Putnam Counties									
API Number	Road Issues	No or Wrong API Number	Vegetation Issues	Drainage and Sedimentation Control	Maintenance Issues	Trash	Leak or Spill	Tank without Dike	SPCC Violation
<i>Long Road Group</i>									
47-079-01288	X		X	X	X		X	X	
47-079-01215 (storage well, no tank)									
47-079-01178	X			X	X		X	X inadequate	
47-079-01299	X		X					X	
47-079-00702	X		X		X	X		X	
No API 1 (probably 47-079-01314)	X	X	X				X	X	
No API 2 (probably 47-079-00706)	X	X			X			no rainwater drain	
No API 3 (probably 47-079-01364)	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	
47-079-01155	X		X		X			no rainwater drain	
No API 4 (probably 47-079-01363)	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	
No API 5 (probably 47-079-01354)	X	X	X					X	
<i>River Road Group</i>									
47-079-00735	X	X	X		X	X		X	possible
47-079-00601	X					X			
47-079-00570					X		X	X	X
<i>King Cemetery Group</i>									
47-079-01200	X				X		X	no rainwater drain	
47-079-00274 (storage well, tank)	X							X	
47-079-00404 (storage well, no tank)	X								
<i>Kanawha County</i>									
47-039-02026	X	X	X	X		X	(X)	(X)	
47-039-05714			X		X			X	
Percentage of Wells Examined	84 %	37 %	58 %	21 %	53 %	32 %	16 %	no dike 68 %	
Notes:									
(X) -- Fixed after complaint									

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