



## Angling Trust's Position on Hydraulic Fracturing in England & Wales

The emphasis by the government and the oil & gas sector on the potential for hydraulic fracturing (or fracking) to release gas from previously unviabile shales in parts of England & Wales is causing great concern in communities throughout the country, with the angling community being no exception. Most rivers and lakes in England are suffering from low water levels, pollution and habitat damage. There is some work being done by the Environment Agency and the River Trusts to maintain and improve the condition of watercourses, but funding is limited and any additional pressures could negate the good work being done.

The Angling Trust is concerned that if exploratory drilling and further commercial exploitation goes ahead then there are a number of issues that have to be addressed first:

1. **Water Abstraction:** Fracking requires large amounts of water to pump into the ground with a mixture of sand and chemicals in order to frack the rocks to release gas. Estimates from Trout Unlimited in America place this anywhere between 300,000 to 3.6 million gallons per well. Many parts of our country are already severely water stressed, leading to low flows in most rivers and some dry out completely. The Environment Agency estimates that these water shortages will get worse in the near future as a result of increased per capita use, a growing population and climate change. The Angling Trust seeks assurances from government that fracking will not be permitted unless sustainable supplies of water are developed, such as new reservoirs, to avoid taking water from already-depleted rivers and ground waters.
2. **Water Pollution:** Fracking has the potential to pollute both ground and surface waters either by the integrity of the well being breached, inappropriate treatment, disposal of the returning fluid or leaks of the fluid when transported away from site. Such operations should be licensed in accordance with the European Waste Directive and the Environment Agency's permitting process for discharge to ground water. Once ground water is polluted it is nearly impossible to remedy and hard to detect under the current monitoring regime in place. Any pollution of groundwater could lead to further supply shortages and greater pressure for abstraction being placed on rivers. The Angling Trust seeks assurance from government that companies carrying out fracking operations guarantee their ability to finance remediation in the event of any contamination of ground water.

3. **Regulation:** We are concerned that the regulation of the industry will 'slip through the gaps' between regulators due to this being a new industry whose operations are not aligned to present environmental protection legislation. The Environment Agency should now be the lead regulator instead of the Health & Safety Executive as is the case at present. The industry must be made aware that it will have to meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive (which requires that there should be no deterioration of any water bodies) and the Ground Water Directive & Mining Waste Directive. Each site must be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment with the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government amending the Town & Country Planning Act accordingly.
  
4. **Summary:** Fracking may be able to contribute to the UK's energy needs at some point in the future but the Angling Trust, along with other organisations such as RSPB and WWF, contends that until the current environmental regulatory regime is made fit for purpose and that the questions over water supply are resolved then fracking should not be allowed to proceed.
  
5. **Notes:**
  - Trout Unlimited (USA) <http://www.tu.org/conservation/eastern-conservation/marcellus-shale-project>
  - Texas <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2013/aug/11/texas-tragedy-ample-oil-no-water>
  - European Commission study:  
<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/integration/energy/pdf/fracking%20study.pdf>
  - EU Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC
  - Ground Water Directive 2006/118/EC
  - Mining Waste Directive 2006/21/EC