

Tioga Peace and Justice, a citizen-based non-partisan volunteer group, requests your responses to the following questionnaire. We plan to share the questions and your responses with voters in Tioga County and the regional press so as to increase the ability of Tioga County residents to make an informed selection in the voting booth. At the Tioga County Citizens' Forum scheduled for Tuesday, October 21, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. in the Hubbard Auditorium in the Tioga County building, to which you are invited, a moderator will be seeking your spoken responses to some of these questions, as well as inviting questions for you from the audience.

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### Questionnaire for Candidates for Tioga County Legislature and Executive positions

Please return this questionnaire with your responses entered below each question to [comments@tiogapeaceandjustice.org](mailto:comments@tiogapeaceandjustice.org) by Friday October 17, 2008.

1. How do you plan to make Tioga County more self-sufficient, integrating human needs and environmental concerns as common goals?
2. What steps would you take to promote energy conservation and the presence in Tioga County of clean safe renewable sources of energy?
3. What are your plans for improving Tioga County's transportation infrastructure and decreasing its reliance on fossil fuel?
4. What will you do to support the creation of a Citizens Committee to prepare regulations to protect the water, air, land, and residents of Tioga County that has as its goal the protection of the rural quality of the county?
5. What will you do to support the creation of a Tioga County Water Quality Management Agency, as provided for in NYS County Law, Article 5, Sec. 14A, Paragraph 220-a.
6. What evidence can you provide us that Tioga County, especially its public safety services agencies, is sufficiently prepared to handle all potential environmental challenges, especially the release of hazardous materials, including those related to the drilling into the Marcellus Shale by any means, that ensures full protection to the health and well-being of all life in Tioga County, including its residents, water, land, and air?
7. What is your opinion of the fact that the Tioga County 2010 Strategic Plan specifically identifies tourism as a basic activity that generates new funds in view of the potential major increase in gas drilling activity in the county?
8. What would you do to reduce the generation of waste, garbage and trash, items that end up in a landfill, in Tioga County? What do you know about the status of the Barton Transfer Station in terms of its ability to handle waste matter from the increase in drilling activities in Tioga County?
9. What will you do to require sufficient monetary bonding to recoup potential damage to the land, air, water and health and wellbeing of all life in Tioga County resulting from the drilling of the Marcellus Shale?
10. What will you do to actively lobby New York State legislators to update State oil and gas regulations and to increase resources to the State Department of Environmental Conservation so as to enable that agency to properly monitor and enforce regulatory safeguards to protect the water, soil, air and quality of life for the residents of Tioga County?

11. What is your opinion of the Tioga County Soil and Water Conservation District and the role of its Board of Directors? What arguments can you present for or against converting that entity into an Environmental Management Council so as to include the protection of the air and against excessive noise? What will you do to increase funding for such an entity?

12. What will you do to increase the emphasis of REAP on sustainability and self-sufficiency in Tioga County?

13. What is your knowledge of the function of the Tioga County Planning Board and whether changes should be made to its mission and composition in view of the challenges currently facing the environment and quality of life in Tioga County?

Thank you very much for taking the time to consider and respond to these questions. We do appreciate your concern for the residents of and the quality of life in Tioga County.

Answers from Donald J. Burns:

1. The county is exploring the potential for purchasing wind power generated electricity. We can purchase this power now but it is purchased at a premium and is more expensive at this point than conventionally generated power. We have asked for a follow up report in six months.

We are also a charter member of MEGA, a power purchasing consortium of municipalities that purchase power at reduced rates.

There have also been exploratory investigations by power companies to consider wind generation in the county with an accompanying presentation on their findings. Unfortunately I was attending the gas industry presentation which was on the same date at the same time.

2. Tioga County was one of the first in the state to promote recycling and has done so for years. We recycle county waste to the extent possible.

The Barton transfer station can handle traditional waste that might be generated by normal business operation such as paper, metal ect. However, I suspect your question refers to waste water from fracking of gas well, sludge and waste from drilling operations. These materials would not likely be handled at the station or by the county. DEC is presently investigating all of these issues in preparation for drawing up rules/legislation and their regulations will govern those operations. In the meantime a moratorium on future drilling is in place pending the DEC's decisions.

As a member of the Tioga Landowners group we are strongly investigating the benefits both in terms of the environment and cost effectiveness of "closed loop drilling" where specialized equipment at the drilling site separates and filters waste on site and stores it in containers with the goal of recycling the water component for re-use at additional drill sites.

3. The county does have a Disaster Preparedness Plan and a highly trained and equipped Hazmat team to handle most emergency situations. Until specific guidelines from DEC are vetted and in place we are in an exploratory mode regarding these issues.

4. New York has a strong tradition of local control of local issues. Local often means town government rather than county. Issues like road permits, bonding for damages to public properties, ect. are usually going to be town issues. Those issues relating to air & water are typically DEC (state) issues and are under study. Our Public Health Department is part of our co-ordinated Disaster Preparedness Plan which is reviewed and updated annually.

Individual issues often fall under individual property rights and are generally governed by the lease arrangements that have been negotiated by the landowner with the gas company.

5. We are reviewing our transportation vendors schedule and delivery of services. This is the year that the contract is to be rebid and at this point there is only one bidder. we are exploring rebid options.

As to alternative energy options, all of our investment in buses has been with gasoline powered vehicles. In view of the size of our fleet (small) and the high startup cost of alternative fuel vehicles the resources are probably not available to do this at this time. Water is very high. As an independent agency that works in conjunction with the county I have found them to be competent and of assistance to the county and our residents. Many of their programs involving streams and land management are critical to flood control and agricultural issues in the county. They are a proactive agency with specific goals and assignments.

Their role is different from the Environmental Management Council which was a creation of the legislature to advise, investigate and educate on issues that either the legislature wants investigated or the council chooses to bring forward for public education.

Soil & Water is part of the normal yearly budgetary process. The EMC is voluntary in nature and other than a small funding to support necessary functions no increases beyond routine budget concerns are anticipated at this time.

7. Self sufficiency is always a good thing and I would argue that we already have quite a bit of that. What we may need more of is interactivity between municipalities and counties to increase cost effectiveness and reduce redundancy.

8. They are presently investigating use of power lines as an Internet transportation medium to rural areas of the county. I support it.

9. My understanding of the Northern Tioga Neighbors Network is that it is attempting to duplicate the Nichols Health Care network and a similar network that exists in the Spencer area. One of the concerns we hear from these agencies is the need for county financial support. The county has resisted funding these agencies to date because of the regional nature of these organizations. If they were interconnected and across the county they would have a stronger argument for county wide financial support.

10. REAP has been instrumental in the development of Ransom Park in Tioga Center. It has been instrumental in coalescing that community with a number of festivals and events as well as for use by the public at large for family type functions. It has become a focal point for the community. As far as support for REAP, I was a member of their BOD for a number of years and helped develop the matching county financial support program that tied county aid to the financial level that was received by REAP from towns and villages which helped to assure their ongoing existence.

11. While on the surface it may seem like a good idea there are a number of potential problems to consider. First is the issue of jurisdiction and powers. Who prevails. County or DEC. Would it also try to enforce DEC regs and would the DEC allow this. Also to be considered is the towns position. they may have jurisdiction that the county doesn't have. Do we wish to try and supercede this.

Secondly, since most of these issues are presently under review by DEC and the rest under the supervision of the Upper Susquehanna Water District it may be premature. There is also the question of liability if we try to enforce something that conflicts with the state. I believe there is a lot to study before we intervene

12. I do not have a problem with this pending public hearings on similar issues by the DEC. The bigger question is one of authority and/or jurisdiction on these matters and the potential for liability.

13. I am not aware of any requests from the Planning Department to increase their authority or range of operations as a result of drilling issues facing the county. If they are considering additional authority they are free to approach the county with new requests.

14. Like most Strategic Plans they have to in place in order to make the county eligible for grants and additional tubing streams. They also give you a snapshot in time of the county status and a boilerplate for where we think we might like to go. As time goes on they may or may not be accurate as situations do change.

15. I do not see a conflict. To imply that one new industry negates the positives of another or that we cannot do one without sacrificing the other would need some strong additional evidence to support it.

To all County Legislative incumbents and candidates:

Tioga Peace and Justice, a citizen-based non-partisan volunteer group, requests your responses to the following questionnaire. We plan to share the questions and your responses with voters in Tioga County and the regional press so as to increase the ability of Tioga County residents to make an informed selection in the voting booth. At the Tioga County Citizens' Forum scheduled for Tuesday, October 21, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. in the Hubbard Auditorium in the Tioga County building, to which you are invited, a moderator will be seeking your spoken responses to some of these questions, as well as inviting questions for you from the audience.

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Questionnaire for Tioga County Legislative incumbents and candidates

Please return this questionnaire with your responses entered below each question to [comments@tiogapeaceandjustice.org](mailto:comments@tiogapeaceandjustice.org) by Friday October 17, 2008.

Answers from Daniel Sniezek:

1. How do you plan to make Tioga County more self-sufficient, integrating human needs and environmental concerns as common goals?

These are the key issues as I see it:

***Promote better jobs through improved quality of life.***  
***Encourage economic growth through better planning.***  
***Aim for zero tax increase through continuous process improvement.***

2. What steps would you take to promote energy conservation and the presence in Tioga County of clean safe renewable sources of energy?

As I said I will:

***Promote better jobs through improved quality of life.***

The quality of life in Tioga County is key to keeping people here and wanting to come and live here. We have a great place to live and work. We must encourage improvement of our environment to keep the great quality of life we have here.

I know there are renewable sources of energy such as biking to work. Why not encourage this by having bike racks on our busses? We need to do more around the county to encourage use of mass transit and biking.

A simple example of that is to have the bus that picks up students travelling to BCC start earlier. Classes begin at 8:00 AM, so the bus should pick up students and teachers in Tioga County in time to attend the classes. This would help all those attending BCC save money and help with energy.

Better yet, let's encourage BCC and TC3 to have more classes in Tioga. I know we are doing this and it is great.

3. What are your plans for improving Tioga County's transportation infrastructure and decreasing its reliance on fossil fuel?

I think I answered that. More can be done but we must start small and move on.

4. What will you do to support the creation of a Citizens Committee to prepare regulations to protect the water, air, land, and residents of Tioga County that has as its goal the protection of the rural quality of the county?

I have not considered this. It really depends on the regulations.

In general I don't like to restrict people's freedom. However, when one's freedom interferes with another's, then regulations or laws are needed.

5. What will you do to support the creation of a Tioga County Water Quality Management Agency, as provided for in NYS County Law, Article 5, Sec. 14A, Paragraph 220-a.

With the gas drilling in the area I do have a concern about water quality. I do, however, feel that this is a technical problem that can be solved.

As for the specific law, I have no comment.

6. What evidence can you provide us that Tioga County, especially its public safety services agencies, is sufficiently prepared to handle all potential environmental challenges, especially the release of hazardous materials, including those related to the drilling into the Marcellus Shale by any means, that ensures full protection to the health and well-being of all life in Tioga County, including its residents, water, land, and air?

I answered this one.

7. What is your opinion of the fact that the Tioga County 2010 Strategic Plan specifically identifies tourism as a basic activity that generates new funds in view of the potential major increase in gas drilling activity in the county?

I don't see why we cannot do both.

I am a key organizer of Bike Tioga that encourages tourism in our county. We hold a bike ride that brings hundreds into our county to enjoy what we have here. We have a great and beautiful county.

I was one of the first ones to oppose the gas drilling in our state forests. I was active in stopping the drilling at Oakley Corners. The key reasons I opposed the drilling of Oakley Corners was that the technology is available to drill horizontally. Doing so would not use up our precious land in our forest and the county would get taxes if drilled from adjoining land.

8. What would you do to reduce the generation of waste, garbage and trash, items that end up in a landfill, in Tioga County? What do you know about the status of the Barton Transfer Station in terms of its ability to handle waste matter from the increase in drilling activities in Tioga County?

As I said before contamination of ground water from drilling does concern me. I do feel that the technology is there to prevent this. I am a simple engineer, so I am not an expert in the field of drilling. I would have to study the information.

9. What will you do to require sufficient monetary bonding to recoup potential damage to the land, air, water and health and wellbeing of all life in Tioga County resulting from the drilling of the Marcellus Shale?

I understand that bonding maybe needed but I think prevention is the key. Let us make sure we don't contaminate the water.

My concern about bonding is that if indeed the water is contaminated, even a Billion dollar bond will not help. For what is the cost of clean glass of water in a dry desert or the cost of clean air under the ocean? This is unknown and unknowable.

10. What will you do to actively lobby New York State legislators to update State oil and gas regulations and to increase resources to the State Department of Environmental Conservation so as to enable that agency to properly monitor and enforce regulatory safeguards to protect the water, soil, air and quality of life for the residents of Tioga County?

I will do my best to maintain and improve the quality of life in Tioga County.

11. What is your opinion of the Tioga County Soil and Water Conservation District and the role of its Board of Directors? What arguments can you present for or against converting that entity into an Environmental Management Council so as to include the protection of the air and against excessive noise? What will you do to increase funding for such an entity?

I will support them whenever I can.

12. What will you do to increase the emphasis of REAP on sustainability and self-sufficiency in Tioga County?

I think REAP is doing a great job, especially in the education of small businesses and increasing the skills and knowledge of people.

I am a member of SCORE which does similar work.

13. What is your knowledge of the function of the Tioga County Planning Board and whether changes should be made to its mission and composition in view of the challenges currently facing the environment and quality of life in Tioga County?

The Tioga County Planning Board is key to the success of Tioga County.

This is my second point:

***Encourage economic growth through better planning.***

If we are to expect economic growth in the county we must do better planning. I know of businesses that have left the county simply due to lack of planning.

We must plan for better roads that encourage alternate transportation needs. We must plan for places to meet in green areas. We must be ready when a business wants to move in that our infrastructure is ready to handle them. A community is not simply a parking lot.

Thank you very much for taking the time to consider and respond to these questions. We do appreciate your concern for the residents of and the quality of life in Tioga County.

Barbara Heywood 565-3651

Ann Ellis 625-5920