

# **MANAGING MARCELLUS**

## Deliberative Theater Epilogue

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## **DELIBERATIVE THEATER ON MANAGING MARCELLUS SHALE**

On July 27, 2011, WQED TV, Pittsburgh hosted an evening of deliberative theater in their Oakland studios. Deliberative integrates dramatic and visual arts with public policy debate in order to engage many different kinds of people in important decisions affecting the quality of life in their communities. Publicized widely on TV, internet, social media and word of mouth, *Managing Marcellus* gathered 120 diverse residents of the Pittsburgh region to participate. One third of participants lived near, or had friends and family who lived near, shale gas drilling activity.

There are four steps of Deliberative Theater:

- Receiving information about the discussion topic from two sources. The first is the *Managing Marcellus* “Playbill,” which lists various concerns raised by people who live near drilling activity and outlines different ways local communities have responded. The second is a panel of experts on local responses to Marcellus Shale drilling in western Pennsylvania. Panelists serve as a learning resource by answering questions written by participants.
- Viewing a 25-minute performance dramatizing causes and consequences of the breakdown in communication between landowners, the drilling industry, elected officials, and environmentalists.
- Deliberating in structured, moderated small-group conversations about the costs and benefits of drilling and what role local communities should play to ensure citizens concerns are addressed.
- Sharing opinions before and after the deliberative theater through pre- and post-event surveys.

## **FOCUS ON LEARNING**

The purpose of Deliberative Theater on Marcellus Shale was to promote public dialogue and learning about the industrial development of Marcellus Shale. As a form of deliberative democracy, deliberative theater strives to enable learning from multiple, often competing, points of view. Whereas other forms of policy discussion are advocacy-oriented and focused on a single point of view, deliberative theater is learning-oriented and inclusive of many points of view. It is not a policy-making forum but rather a place for citizens to become informed about policy choices facing their communities.

## **PARTNERS**

*Managing Marcellus* was created through a partnership between the Program for Deliberative Democracy, the Un-Seam’d Shakespeare Company, Pop City Media, WQED Pittsburgh, and the Coro Center for Civic Leadership. Resource panelists were Bracken Burns, Washington County Commissioner; Jan Jarrett, Citizens for Pennsylvania’s Future; and Angela Zimmerlink, Fayette County Commissioner,

**PROXIMITY OF PARTICIPANTS TO SHALE-GAS DRILLING**

Live near a well or processing facility	18% (15)
Do not live near a well or processing facility but have friends or family who do.	30% (25)
Do not live near a well or processing facility or family lives near a well or processing facility	62% (42)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100% (82)</b>

**CONCERNS PARTICIPANTS HAD ABOUT SHALE DRILLING**

Participants used exist surveys to express their concerns about Marcellus Shale drilling. Concerns fit into the following four categories, in order of frequency:

- Environmental and public health problems such as emissions from increased traffic, ground and surface water pollution from hydraulic fracturing, and increased demand on resources by industry.
- Limited capacity of local infrastructure to adequately handle heavy use trucks, demands for housing, utilities and school enrollment.
- Local economic instability related to the short-term nature of drilling activity.
- Additional demands on police, fire and other public services.

## HOW PARTICIPANTS LEARNED ABOUT MANAGING MARCELLUS SHALE DRILLING

Participants rated how helpful they found the various resources used for learning in *Managing Marcellus*.

### How helpful did you find the small-group conversations?

Very helpful	60% (42)
Somewhat helpful	29% (20)
A little helpful	12% (8)
Not at all helpful	(0)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%(70)</b>

### How helpful did you find the theatrical performance?

Very helpful	50% (36)
Somewhat helpful	25% (18)
A little helpful	18% (13)
Not at all helpful	6% (4)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%(71)</b>

### How helpful did you find the resource-panel conversation?

Very helpful	36% (25)
Somewhat helpful	41% (28)
A little helpful	9% (6)
Not at all helpful	14%(10)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%(69)</b>

### How helpful did you find the Managing Marcellus Playbill?

Very helpful	30% (21)
Somewhat helpful	42% (30)
A little helpful	17% (12)
Not at all helpful	10% (7)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%(70)</b>

## WHAT AND HOW MUCH PARTICIPANTS LEARNED

**How much did this day of conversation give you a better understanding of important concerns of people who live in communities where Marcellus Shale is being drilled and/or processed?**

A great deal	46% (31)
Somewhat	24% (16)
A little	21% (14)
Not at all	10% (7)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100% (68)</b>

**How much did this day of conversation cause you to consider points of view that you had not considered previously?**

A great deal	24% (16)
Somewhat	34% (23)
A little	29% (20)
Not at all	13% (9)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100% (68)</b>

**How much did this day of conversation help you think about how your community can better manage Marcellus Shale as a resource**

A great deal	17% (11)
Somewhat	13% (9)
A little	50% (34)
Not at all	21% (14)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100% (68)</b>

Additionally, after the event we asked participants what they believe would be the most effective way to voice a concern about shale-gas drilling near where they live. Four key themes emerged in the responses.

- First, if you want to voice concerns it is best should join or organize a group of people who have similar concerns and want to do something about it.
- Second, the group should contact local elected officials as well as state lawmakers and make your views heard collectively.
- Third, you should learn as much as you can about drilling, by reading, attending forums and listening to other similarly affected people.
- Finally, you should use the newspaper editorial and other media outlets to let others know of your concerns.

## THE VALUE OF DELIBERATIVE THEATER ON MARCELLUS SHALE

Participants gave feedback on their experience of the *Managing Marcellus* as a whole. Overall, three quarters said they would probably or definitely be more engaged in their community as a result of participating in *Managing Marcellus*. And 92 percent said that, given what they know now, they would still have participated in *Managing Marcellus*.

### Given what you know now would you still have participated in *Managing Marcellus*?

Definitely yes	64% (44)
Probably yes	28% (19)
Probably not	3% (2)
Definitely not	6% (4)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100% (69)</b>

The post survey also contained open-ended questions to identify how people benefited from participating in the deliberative theater process on Marcellus shale.

52 percent said they benefitted most by interacting with other people who hold different information and perspectives on the issue of shale gas drilling.

25 percent said they benefited most by becoming more aware of and knowledgeable about critical policy issues related to Marcellus Shale.

13 percent said they benefited most by gaining a deeper understanding of how corporations shape public policy and by recognizing the limits of citizen dialogue to address concerns about shale gas drilling.

The remaining 10 percent said they benefited most by learning more the various ways in which local communities are responding to shale gas drilling.