



Public Herald Studios  
presents

# TRIPLE DIVIDE



A DOCUMENTARY FILM BY

**JOSHUA B. PRIBANIC & MELISSA A. TROUTMAN**

For an updated screenings list, please visit: [www.tripledividefilm.org](http://www.tripledividefilm.org)

**Media & Donation Contacts:**

Joshua Pribanic · [joshua@publicherald.org](mailto:joshua@publicherald.org) Phone: 419.202.8503

Melissa Troutman · [melissa@publicherald.org](mailto:melissa@publicherald.org) Phone: 724.388.0464

## Short Synopsis

*Triple Divide* is Public Herald's first investigations into inevitable, negative impacts from shale gas industrial development and how those impacts are handled by the state, specifically the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

Narrated with help from actor and solutions advocate Mark Ruffalo, major findings include stark negligence and endangerment of public and environmental health due to shale gas extraction. Through personal stories, expert interviews, and investigation of state case files, *Triple Divide* tells a cautionary tale about a public agency meant to protect the public and environment that is instead protecting industry.

Though extraction of shale gas will one day end, taking many 'boom and bust' jobs with it, contaminated groundwater aquifers, polluted land, and stories of victimization will remain. Pennsylvanians, fed up with corruption and destruction, won't 'go down' without a fight and are learning how to protect themselves.

## Full Synopsis

*Triple Divide* is the truth behind shale gas extraction in Pennsylvania, part of an ongoing report by investigative news nonprofit, Public Herald.

Narrated with help from actor and solutions advocate Mark Ruffalo, *Triple Divide* reveals how inevitable, negative impacts from shale gas extraction are being handled by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the public agency charged with permitting industrial development in pristine watersheds and peaceful backyards while protecting people and the environment.

Through personal stories, expert interviews, and DEP case files, Public Herald's 18-month investigation discovered recurring impacts: contaminated water, air, and land; intimidation and harassment; loss of property, investments, and standard of living; weak and under enforced state regulations; community disruption; destruction of the public trust; illness; fragmentation of Pennsylvania's last stands of core forest; and lack of protection over basic human rights.

Though shale gas development will one day end, taking jobs with it, contaminated groundwater aquifers, environmental damage, and victim stories will remain. Pennsylvanians living in the shale fields have a new name for the state DEP - Don't

Expect Protection. Indeed, the agency's modus operandi is clearly 'permit first' and 'figure the rest out later.'

The documentary is named after one of only four triple continental divides in North America. Known as the Triple Divide, from it everything is downstream. At this peak in northern Pennsylvania, rain from one storm travels to three separate sides of the continent - the Gulf of St. Lawrence in Canada, the Chesapeake Bay on the eastern seaboard, and the Gulf of Mexico. This vast water basin is drained by three major rivers - the Allegheny, the Genesee, and the Susquehanna.

Triple Divide headwaters don't just feed the largest area of Exceptional Value (specially regulated) water bodies in the state; they also feed part of the state's largest stand of primitive forest - one of the last great wildernesses. These forested waterways rank among the most coveted trout streams in the United States, helping to create a sustainable tourism economy upon which locals have depended for generations.

Forested watersheds also provide 80% of Pennsylvania's drinking water.

Today, these Wilds of Pennsylvania are being divided in many ways by shale gas industrialization, made possible by a new form of an old technology, commonly known as 'fracking.' Despite the powerlessness felt by some living in the shale fields, others see the current devastation as an opportunity to reacquainted residents with what's most important, stand up the world's largest industry, and map a better future for Pennsylvania and everyone downstream.



## Directors' Statements

### ***Joshua B. Pribanic, Co-Director***

I started *Triple Divide* to bridge the information on energy development in Pennsylvania, using water as a central theme and cultural resource for the state. The film and its shape transformed and became more closely connected to a dialogue of trust. Citizens of the Commonwealth had trusted their state agencies to protect them from the harms of industry, but the ever-building momentum and urgency of natural gas development strengthened at the expense of basic human rights.



*Triple Divide* reveals a failure in state regulations and corporate responsibility to our most primeval resource, water. The combination of these things leads to the worst Tragedy of the Commons we've ever faced as a civilization, threatening large-scale contamination of drinking water supplies. So I left my native soils of Ohio in search of the truth, came to Pennsylvania with a camera in hand, and began telling the stories of *Triple Divide*, my first big step as a filmmaker.

Thank you to the courageous people who willingly unsheathed their stories for the world to see. Without them we are blindfolded.

### ***Melissa Troutman, Co-Director***



For me, most of *Triple Divide* wrote itself -- swept me along with it like a river. The story is the same whether you're covering fracking, health care, or modern warfare - profit over people. Money walks.

I'm from Potter County, Pa., home of the triple continental divide. Once I noticed problems with fracking there as a reporter, and realized 100,000+ more wells are slated for the state with no plan, no health or environmental impact surveys - no other story mattered.

Despite it being the biggest threat to the state's long-term sustainability, media across the state either promoted or fell silent (usually when the industry ads started rolling in). So, the industry came after the loudest reporter in the state at the time (2011) - me. Shortly after, I met Joshua Pribanic and we formed Public Herald, dedicated to journalism in the public interest.

*Triple Divide* is our first major investigation. It is my sincere hope that this film will make us all take a hard, honest look at the true, long-term costs of fracking and the desperate need for investigative journalism.

## Film Timeline

*April 2011* - Laurie Barr & Les Wolfe of Save our Streams PA meet with Josh Pribanic to tell the story about what's happening with shale gas development in Potter County. They introduce Josh to local reporter Melissa Troutman, who explains her story and takes Josh to a well pad on Denton Hill. Josh determines to return in a month to film and document the stories of Potter County in a film called God's Country, nickname of Potter County.

*April 19, 2011* - Chesapeake Energy suffers a blowout at the Atgas 2H well in Bradford County. Over 10,000 gallons of toxic waste fluid (flowback) is discharged into a tributary to Towanda Creek. The well takes 6 days to get under control. Troutman and Pribanic take an immediate interest in the case and begins following the story.

*May 22, 2011* - Film production begins at a community event on public lands, a hike to shale gas extraction in the Susquehannock State Forest, then to the first Marcellus well drilled in Triple Divide headwaters, 500 feet from the East Fork Sinnemahoning Creek, a High Quality stream [featured in the film].

*May to July 2011* - Production continues, documenting landowners, businesses, landforms, community members, scientists. Requests for interviews with industry and Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection are repeatedly declined.

*August 2011* - Understanding the role water is playing in the story, Josh and Melissa decide to rename the film, *Triple Divide*.

*August 2011* - Melissa and Josh are falsely detained and harassed by gas company workers hauling water in Tioga State Forest while filming night shots for *Triple Divide*. Public Herald files a report the following morning with the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation & Natural Resources, and asks for documents to be distributed to local drillers explaining the rights of the public in state forests. Soon after, the regional investigator calls to explain how the gas company workers thought Public Herald journalists were "Ecoterrorists." The investigator also stated he told the workers that they had violated our rights and were taking part in an illegal detainment.

*September to October 2011* - Josh and Melissa continue to conduct file reviews at the Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP's) northcentral regional office in Williamsport, Pa., focusing on water contamination and gas migration cases, waste

production reports, inspections, water management plans, and violations. They quickly realize that something needs to be published sooner than later...and in October [Public Herald](#) is born as a non-profit focused on investigative news, education and the arts.

*October to December 2011* - [Public Herald publishes](#) over a dozen investigative pieces regarding shale gas industrialization, arising from the film's research. A series is established on files from the Chesapeake Bradford Blowout case in April, focusing on how DEP handles natural gas pollution.

*November 2011* - Chesapeake Energy agrees to be interviewed about the Bradford County Blowout after Public Herald [publishes its second story](#) on the event. [Public Herald made several attempts to talk with Chesapeake the prior three months.]

*December 19, 2011* - Public Herald publishes about the conflict of interest in the environmental [assessment produced for Chesapeake](#) Energy on the Bradford Blowout, with oversight from DEP, which [discarded a predrill water test](#) and citing the landowner's opinion as "historical evidence." The landowner said he thought his water tasted "salty," which allowed a clean predrill test taken before the blowout to be considered inaccurate and uncharacteristic for his well. The decision to use the landowner's claims as a means to discredit the predrill test calls into question predrill testing data collected across the state, endangering the validity of water tests paid for by homeowners and industry.

*January 2012* - Pribanic & Pribanic files a lawsuit on behalf of Public Herald against Seneca Resources for the false detainment of Melissa and Josh on public state forest land. Public Herald is told by a Sandusky Ohio reporter that Pennsylvania administrative staff dropped the case against Seneca Resources and swept it under the rug.

*February 2012* - The 'Impact Fee' bill, a.k.a Act 13, is signed into Pennsylvania law by Governor Tom Corbett, stripping community control of shale gas development by mandating it be permitted in all zoning districts, including residential areas, in exchange for the fees to repair and mitigate damage and loss.

*March 2012* - State agencies and natural gas companies continue to decline interviews and ignore emails and phone calls.

*April to September 2012* - Filming and post-production continues with updates to investigations and the drilling in Pennsylvania slows down as gas prices on the market decrease. Oil and gas companies turn to the more profitable reserves of 'wet' gas said to

be found mostly in Ohio from Utica Shale.

*July 2012* - The removal of local rights to zone and regulate shale gas extraction and development through Act 13 is struck down by Commonwealth Court as “unconstitutional.” State lawmakers and the oil and gas industry appeal the decision to the state Supreme Court, which later [agreed with the lower court’s ruling](#). Municipalities maintain their control of where fracking happens (but not how) through land use zoning.

*August to November 2012* - Public Herald contributes *Triple Divide* stories and resources and joins the editing team of [Shalefield Stories](#), a grassroots publication of first-hand impacts in the shale fields of Pennsylvania and beyond.

*November* - PA DEP is [accused of misrepresenting drinking water pollution](#) in the state. The ‘stink’ arose from a deposition in which DEP staff indicate that not all water test results are revealed to homeowners during water contamination investigations related to oil and gas operations, or fracking.

*November to December 2012* - Public Herald conducts test-screenings of *Triple Divide* for a broad range of audiences and incorporates feedback into final round of edits.

*March 2013* - *Triple Divide* World Premiere in Coudersport, Pennsylvania, the seat of county government in Potter County, home of the triple continental divide.

*April 2013* - While continuing to coordinate screenings of *Triple Divide*, Public Herald begins its next round of water impact and citizen complaint investigations at the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.

*September 2013* - Public Herald embarks on a national screening tour of *Triple Divide* in communities impacted by or slated for fracking through 2014.

*March 2014* - *Triple Divide* is selected for [Albuquerque Film & Media Experience](#) 2014.

*March 2014* - Public Herald hooks up with producers at The Daily Show and helps create the comedy news [show’s segment on fracking](#) in Pennsylvania.

*April 2014* - Public Herald [wins \\$35K INNovation Fund grant](#) from Investigative News Network and Knight Foundation to conduct it’s national tour.



## Triple Continental Divide



photo: Wikipedia

The Triple Divide in Potter is formed where the Eastern and St. Lawrence Continental Divides intersect. Water flows north along the Genesee River into Lake Ontario, and then on to the Gulf of St. Lawrence, which empties into the Atlantic Ocean in Canada. Water flows east and south along Pine Creek, which feeds the Susquehanna River, which provides 70% of freshwater in the Chesapeake Bay, the U.S's largest estuary at Norfolk, Virginia. And waters that flow west from the Triple Divide form the Allegheny River, which meanders south to Pittsburgh where it becomes the Ohio River, which flows into the Mississippi and down to the Gulf of Mexico.



## Key Subjects

### **Bob Haag, Principal Hydrogeologist/Geologist - Haag Environmental**

Bob Haag received his BS, MS (1972-1979), in Engineering Geology from the University of Michigan. In the 1980's he worked for several of the country's largest hazardous waste remediation firms. Then in 1990 he co-founded HaagEnviro with his wife Ruth, an environmental firm operating out of Sandusky, Ohio. He appears in an interview to explain his theory about the "Pressure Bulb" and it's long-term effects from hydrofracking.

### **Dr. Andrew Kear, Geologist & Political Scientist, Assistant Professor of Political Science & Environmental Science - Bowling Green State University**

The rise of fracking in Colorado also shaped the educational career for Dr. Andrew Kear, who wrote his dissertation on the policy changes surrounding unconventional natural gas development (a.k.a. fracking), and appears throughout the latter half of the film showcasing his research and experience on the subject.

### **Bob Ging, Attorney & Former Regulator for Department of Environmental Resources 1978-1982 (now DEP)**

After helping to amend the Clean Streams Law of Pennsylvania to enforce stricter regulations on waterways of the Commonwealth, Bob took up a private practice in Confluence, Pa., where Public Herald sat down for an interview in 2012. Bob Ging's intimate understanding of DEP and relationship to legal ramifications from oil and gas development is highlighted in *Triple Divide*.

### **Judy Bear, Coudersport Well Drilling (1986-2012)**

Judy Bear owned and operated a water well drilling company in Coudersport, Pa., for 16 years before recently retiring. During her time in business she served as the first female Director of the Pennsylvania Groundwater Association, spent four years on the Natural Gas Task Force, and is a nationally certified water well driller. She appears in an interview about predrill testing history and a witness to Judy E.'s case.

### **Judy E., Affected Neighbor to Leased Landowner**

After 5 long years of living next to a fracked natural gas well, Judy agreed to sit down with Public Herald and share her unique story and experiences with DEP. She appears in her own chapter of *Triple Divide*, "The Judys."

### **David & Raymond Barndt, Affected Surface Owner in Split-Estate**

David and his father Raymond Barndt of Hebron Township, Pa., are showcased in the "Split-Estate" chapter of *Triple Divide* explaining what happened to their property after a phone call from Triana Energy.

**Jim Harkins, Affected Neighbor to Leased Landowner**

Jim Harkins tells the story about how the development of a natural gas well on his neighbor's property, 700ft from his backdoor, affected his health and well-being. His story appears in the "Good Neighbor" chapter of the film.

**Howie Gufstason, Committee Member for 1984 Oil & Gas Act of Pa.**

Howie Gufstason has lived a full life, and worked for a number of different state government branches in regards oil and gas and to the environment. He also sat on the committee from 1978-1983 that established the 1984 Oil & Gas Act of Pennsylvania.

**Laurie Barr (a.k.a. The Matchmaker) & Les Wolfe, [Save Our Streams PA](#)**

While appearing only for special scenes, Laurie Barr & Les Wolfe could be credited as matchmakers for Triple Divide, helping to establish the first contacts and continued information to the Public Herald crew about key aspects of the film. Their work on abandoned wells helped spark and inform a State Impacts series that won the DuPont-Columbia Silver Baton award in 2013.

**Carol French & Carolyn Knapp, Affected Leased Landowners**

Carol French & Carolyn Knapp are farmers in Bradford County, Pa., who teamed up to deal with natural gas development after experiencing drastic changes to their land, air, water and way of life. They appear in the "Pressure Bulb" chapter.

**Pepper Dairy Farm**

An unexplained eruption of pressure occurs in a tributary stream to Towanda Creek on the pepper farm near the Morse well pad in Bradford County Pa. A surface is created in the tributary that's similar to walking on a trampoline, it's documented and presented in the film.

**Victor Pribanic: Attorney**

Victor Pribanic is both a nephew to Joshua and considered a leader in the field of trial attorneys. In Triple Divide he is a key source of information to Public Herald regarding legal rights for homeowners.

**Triple Divide**

Triple Divide is the opening scene of the film and a catalyst for environmental issues. It's a geological phenomenon called a triple continental divide that creates three watersheds, finding their way to three separate sides of the North American Continent.

**Kathryn Klaber: President, Marcellus Shale Coalition**

Kathryn Klaber serves as the Marcellus Shale Coalition's first President. In this role, on behalf of the MSC member companies, she works closely with elected leaders, regulators and the civic community to realize the responsible development of natural gas from the

Marcellus and Utica Shale geological formations and the enhancement of the region's economy that can be realized by this clean-burning American energy source. (*source: <http://marcelluscoalition.org/about/president/>*)

### **Chesapeake Energy**

Chesapeake Energy appears as the main subject of the "Shoveling Water" chapter in *Triple Divide*. After a [blowout at their Atgas well](#) in April 2011, Public Herald completed 3 file reviews to investigate how DEP handled what Chesapeake considered to be a 'worst-case scenario.'

### **Michael Kehs, Vice President of Strategic Affairs (2011) - Chesapeake Energy**

Michael Kehs appears in the "Shoveling Water" chapter for a phone interview with Public Herald about Chesapeake Energy's response to the Atgas blowout of April 2011.

### **Stephanie Timmermeyer, Director of Federal Regulatory Affairs (2011) - Chesapeake Energy**

Stephanie Timmermeyer appears in the "Shoveling Water" chapter for a phone interview with Public Herald about Chesapeake Energy's response to the Atgas blowout of April 2011. Her response is vital to understanding the process of remediation for natural gas pollution.

### **Pennsylvania General Energy**

Pennsylvania General Energy (PGE) is very active in north central Pa. for the exploration of natural gas, especially around Exceptional Value waters. They appear in each case of the "Exceptional Value" chapter.

### **Nancy Schneider, Executive Vice President, Chief Administrative Officer, General Counsel and Corporate Secretary - Penn Virginia Oil & Gas**

Nancy Schneider is phoned for questions by Public Herald regarding predrill testing criteria and storage of flowback water from fracked wells. Her response is necessary to understanding the reporter's experience on shale gas stories across the country. Penn Virginia Oil & Gas also appears in the "Good Neighbor" chapter during the flaring of a marcellus well.

### **Guardian Energy**

Guardian Energy drilled a well 450ft from Judy E. on a neighbor's property, but failed on multiple occasions to alert Judy about DEP violations that could have threatened her drinking water aquifer. Guardian appears only within "The Judys" chapter.

### **Triana Energy**

Triana Energy is responsible for the Split-Estate case on the Barndt family property. Triana would not comment on the case, but their activities are well documented in the film.

**DEP (Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection)**

The filmmakers encountered multiple stories about how state regulators failed to properly handle homeowner complaints causing the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection became to become a central theme to *Triple Divide*, overriding the original focus on water and culture. While DEP refused to be interviewed for the film, much of the information in *Triple Divide* was obtained from file reviews at DEP's office in Williamsport.

**Michael Krancer, DEP Secretary**

Michael Krancer shines as a proponent for natural gas drilling in Pennsylvania and believes state regulations are the best answer for regulating the industry. His appearance before congress in 2011 are juxtaposed in the film to statements and stories from landowners.

**Dr. Stephen Cleghorn, Organic Goat Farmer**

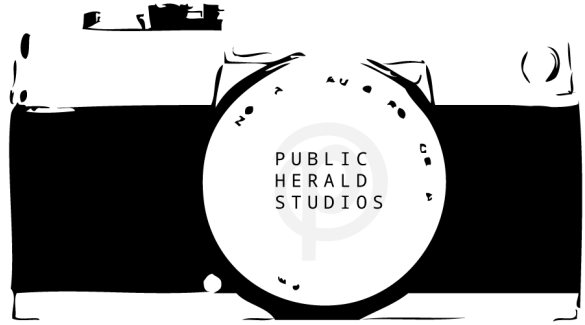
Stephen Cleghorn and this late wife, Dr. Lucinda Hart-González, have a first-in-the-nation Conservation Easement by a private landowner to declare and protect the Rights of Nature, ecosystems and natural communities present on his 50-acre organic farm in the Paradise Community of Henderson Township, Jefferson County, Pennsylvania.



## About The Filmmakers

### Public Herald Studios

PublicHerald.org got its start in late 2011 with a vision to produce investigative news in a multimedia dynamic to an online audience. With the development of *Triple Divide*, Public Herald Studios was born to take an active role in building a focus driven documentary that engages an audience to investigative reporting.



### Joshua B. Pribanic, Filmmaker & Producer at Public Herald Studios, U.S.

Joshua Pribanic is autodidactic and picked up a camera in 2008 to learn photography. *Triple Divide* is Joshua's first documentary feature as a filmmaker.

#### Selected Filmography:

##### Producer & Director:

- Triple Divide, Dir. Joshua Pribanic & Melissa Troutman, 2013
- Triple Divide Intro, Dir. Joshua Pribanic & Melissa Troutman, 2012  
<http://vimeo.com/50229298>
- [Anca Gavris](#), Dir. Joshua Pribanic, 2011
- [Artisans of Lake Erie Series](#), Dir. Joshua Pribanic, 2010-2011
- [short doc] [Lake Erie Algal Blooms & First Energy Fish Kill](#), Dir. Joshua Pribanic, 2009
- [Converging Paths](#), Dir. Joshua Pribanic, 2009

### Melissa A. Troutman, Filmmaker & Producer at Public Herald Studios, U.S.

Melissa Troutman is a writer and educator whose first documentary film is *Triple Divide*. Melissa began investigating shale gas extraction as a newspaper reporter in her hometown of Coudersport, Pennsylvania. Sudden and unexplained termination of her employment afforded her the opportunity to join editor Joshua Pribanic on a research adventure focused on the 'fracking' of the communities and ecosystems of Triple Divide.

#### Selected Filmography:

##### Producer & Director:

- Triple Divide, Dir. Joshua Pribanic & Melissa Troutman, 2013
- Triple Divide Intro, Dir. Joshua Pribanic & Melissa Troutman, 2012  
<http://vimeo.com/50229298>

## Credits

*A Public Herald Studios Production*

*Dedicated to The Carl Stiles Family  
& List of The Harmed*

### Directors

Joshua Pribanic  
Melissa Troutman

### Writers

Melissa Troutman  
Joshua Pribanic

### Producers

Public Herald Studios  
Jamie Pribanic  
Melissa Troutman  
Joshua Pribanic

### Associate Producers

Eric Donavon  
Deborah Pribanic

### DP

Joshua B. Pribanic

### Editors

Joshua Pribanic  
Melissa Troutman

### Narrated by

Melissa Troutman  
Mark Ruffalo



Sound by

Joshua Pribanic  
Melissa Troutman  
Elias Gwinn - Velidoxi

Web & graphic design by

Joshua Pribanic

Graphics assistance by

Dan Mauk  
Will Santino

Illustrations by

Melissa Troutman  
Joshua Pribanic

Music

*Nest*

“The Helwick”  
“Far From Land”  
“The Twelve”  
“Amroth”

*Gustav Holst*

“Saturn, the Bringer of Old Age”  
“Neptune, the Mystic”  
“Venus, the Bringer of Peace”

*Lee Maddeford*

“Tom’s Lullaby”

*Evgeny Grinko*

“Woody Allen”

*Melissa Troutman*

“The Mountain”

Appearances

David & Raymond Barndt, Impacted Landowners  
Laurie Barr, Save Our Streams Pa.  
Judy Bear, Water Well Driller  
Dr. Stephen Cleghorn, Landowner  
Jon Dillon, Pine Creek Outfitters  
Judy Eckert, Impacted Landowner  
Carol French, Impacted Landowner  
Bob Ging, Environmental Attorney  
Howie Gustafson, 1984 Oil & Gas Act Committee  
Bob Haag, Hydrogeologist  
Jim Harkins, Impacted Landowner  
Dr. Andrew Kear, Political & Environmental Science BGSU  
Michael Kehs, Chesapeake Energy  
Kathryn Klaber, Marcellus Shale Coalition  
Carolyn Knapp, Impacted Landowner  
Tim Pepper, Impacted Landowner  
Victor Pribanic, Attorney  
Les Rolfe, Save Our Streams Pa.  
Douglas Shields, Former Pittsburgh City Council President  
Diane Siegmund, Psychologist  
Stephanie Timmermeyer, Chesapeake Energy  
Diane Ward, Landowner

Cast

Benn Troutman, Landman/DEP  
Brett Troutman, Foreman  
Paula Troutman, Landowner  
Laurie Barr, Inspector  
Les Rolfe, Inspector

Special thanks

Walter Baker, Crittenden Hotel  
Pine Creek Outfitters  
Velidoxi  
The Mehl Family  
Kickstarter Backers:  
Reid Joyce, Kevin @ Bayard Studios, Matthew Dillinger

Larry Tasillo, Tom Ryan, Andra Leimanis, Michael Shaw  
Nick Champlin, Angie Francis, Benn Troutman, Dinu Gavris  
James Jones, Bethany Hershey, Erica Brawley  
Brad Masi, Les Rolfe

And all of our Public Herald Members...

In honor and memory of Aldo Leopold & Carl Stiles.

[www.publicherald.org](http://www.publicherald.org)

