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EARTH Magazine: New Tracers Can Identify Fracking Fluids

Alexandria, Va. — Hydraulic fracturing, the natural gas extraction method known popularly as fracking, has been controversial in large part to the concern about groundwater contamination by the fluids used in the process, especially the so-called flowback fluids that re-emerge at the surface from fracking wells and are usually disposed of by waste water fluid injection into other formations. Now, researchers have developed a geochemical method of identifying fracking fluids in the environment. The tool could be used to identify hazardous spills in the future and may even lead to better use and disposal of fracking wastewater.

Read more about how scientists came up with the new tracers and what they might mean for wastewater disposal in the February issue of EARTH magazine: <http://www.earthmagazine.org/article/new-tracers-can-identify-fracking-fluids>.

For more stories about the science of our planet, check out EARTH magazine online or subscribe at www.earthmagazine.org. The February issue, now available on the digital newsstand, features stories on how secondary aerosols are affecting Chinese air, how a submarine landslide may have exacerbated the March 2011 Tohoku tsunami, and what a new geochemical map of U.S. soils shows about the country's soil mineralogy, plus much, much more. And don't miss our commentary on the long history of celebrating more than just groundhogs on February 2!

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Keep up to date with the latest happenings in Earth, energy and environment news with EARTH Magazine online at: <http://www.earthmagazine.org>. Published by the American Geosciences Institute, EARTH is your source for the science behind the headlines.

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