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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 7, 2014

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EARTH Magazine: Naturally occurring methane found in groundwater in New York

Alexandria, Va. – Since hydraulic fracturing operations began in the Marcellus Shale region, debate has raged over whether drilling operations are causing high levels of methane in drinking-water wells. But few systematic scientific studies have been published to date, so it's unknown if high methane levels are natural or the result of contamination from nearby gas wells. Now, a new study is adding some much-needed baseline data for methane levels in groundwater in New York. The results suggest that at least in some cases methane occurs at naturally high levels in groundwater.

Read more about the findings and what they might mean for oil and gas exploration and production in the Marcellus Shale in the May issue of EARTH Magazine: *http://bit.ly/1gRB0Rl*.

For more stories about the science of our planet, check out EARTH Magazine online or subscribe at *www.earthmagazine.org*. The May issue, now available on the digital newsstand, features stories on scientists shaking and destroying full-scale buildings in earthquake "lab" exercises, the dramatic ground movement that preceded the formation of a massive sinkhole in Louisiana, and tramping around New Zealand, plus much, much more.

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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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