



October 2, 2017 • 7:00-9:00 pm • The Barn at Pendle Hill

## Giving Rights to Nature A Movement Whose Time Has Come *A First Monday Lecture by Chad Nicholson*

The movement to grant legal rights to nature has been a long time coming. From 1972 when the idea was first floated in an article, the theory remained largely dormant until Tamaqua Borough in Schuylkill County, PA -- just an hour north of Pendle Hill -- became the first community on earth to grant legal protections to ecosystems in 2006.

Since then over three dozen communities in nine US states, several nations, and some tribal nations have adopted laws providing legal rights to natural systems. As the movement spreads into the courts and the streets in the US, two Pennsylvania communities are again out front. In Grant Township, Indiana County, and Highland Township, Elk County, the Little Mahoning Watershed and the Crystal Spring Ecosystem, respectively, have filed to intervene in federal court cases seeking to prohibit frack waste dumping in those communities.

With climate change and habitat destruction increasing at terrifying rates, it's imperative that we rethink our relationship to the natural world, including the legal and organizing tools we use to protect all life. Giving nature rights is a movement whose time has come.

**Chad Nicholson** is the statewide Pennsylvania Organizer for the Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund (CELDF). He travels the state working with communities facing a range of industrial threats, e.g., defending two communities in federal court (including Grant Township) facing toxic injection wells; multiple communities pursuing Home Rule campaigns to increase community control over harmful corporate projects; and helping dozens of other communities fighting harms that range from corporate herbicide spraying to factory farms to sewage sludge spreading to fracking to massive energy corridors.

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