

Heavy Marcellus Shale Gas Industry Traffic Makes Patchwork Of Route 44

By David Ira Kagan

Driving up Route 44 in Lycoming County from Jersey Shore to Waterville these days presents the sightseer with the stark, shocking reality of what the heavy (both in weight and numbers) Marcellus Shale gas industry truck traffic has done to this Pine Creek Valley road. A message-flashing sign just south of the Venture Inn warns, "Rough Road" and "12 Miles Ahead."

The disaster really begins at the Village of Ramsey. From there on up to Waterville, a distance of only about three miles, Route 44 is now a patchwork quilt of no less than 50 temporary repairs of potholes and crumbled road surface—some 20 to 30 yards long.

It is almost mesmerizing traveling over this three miles of bad road, watching patch after patch after patch come into view, then feeling and hearing them rumble under one's tires. Truly the term Pennsylvania Wilds can now be applied to Route 44 itself.