A Note from Alison
Alison L. Steele, Executive Director

2020 was certainly a year for the books, but it will always have a special place in my heart as my first year with this amazing organization. EHP not only survived but thrived during the challenges of the year. Our team of experts furthered our mission of defending public health in the face of oil and gas development, focusing on new medical knowledge about the connection between pollution and COVID-19. Most notable was our mention in June’s Grand Jury report, lauding EHP’s work to quickly gather information and generate recommendations to protect Pennsylvanians in the early days of the shale boom. It was an incredible reminder of the lives we have touched over the last nine years.

Several new faces joined our virtual office, including a Deputy Director who is streamlining our internal processes, an Environmental Data Scientist who is creating more interactive tools for residents, and a Social Media & Marketing Coordinator who is using new techniques to help us reach a wider audience. We are also refining our organizational structure in order to better serve the needs of residents across the regions where we do our work.

We successfully rolled out a pilot program in which our team members train community advocacy groups on how to use monitors to collect long-term air quality data. EHP still performs data analysis and generates recommendations, but we are seeing greater enthusiasm and involvement from residents as they feel more ownership in the process. This new model, already in place in several New York State communities, will be rolling out in Pennsylvania later this spring.

Understanding that change needs to happen from the top down, as well as the bottom up, our policy team has released the first in a series of position statements, increased outreach to state agencies and elected officials, and hosted the first two in a series of policy symposia that aim to educate legislators on the most recent information about health impacts related to the oil and gas industry.

The EHP team is looking ahead to a bright and promising 2021, and we hope you will join us!

UPCOMING EVENT!
EHP will host a virtual Expert Panel in February 2021 addressing how pollution may impact the severity of respiratory infections. Stay tuned for more details!

2020 Highlight: Grand Jury Report
In June 2020, Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro released “Report 1 of the Forty-Third Statewide Investigating Grand Jury.” In the report, EHP was celebrated for our quick data collection and education of the public in our initiative to protect public health against oil and gas development.

2020 Highlight: Webinars
In 2020, we hosted a three-part webinar series, “Shale Gas Development and Cancer: Conversations with the Experts.” Presenters included Dr. Marsha Haley,
2020 Highlight: Work in the Field

Our team conducted pollution dispersion modeling around the Beaver Shell Cracker Plant to better understand locations with heightened exposure risk and inform air pollution monitor placement. We also completed deployment plans for a baseline monitoring program in the Ligonier Valley.

2020 Highlight: Speaker Series

EHP's Medical Advisor, Dr. Ned Ketyer, presented "From Well Pad to Ethane Cracker: How Fracking for Plastics Harms Our Health" at Bradford Woods Conservancy's 2020 speaker series.

The recording is available here.

2020 Highlight: PSR Colorado

EHP Toxicologist David Brown, Consultant Ned Ketyer, and Regional Manager (Appalachia) Jessa Chabert presented on the health effects of oil and gas development at the 2nd Annual Medical Symposium hosted by Physicians for Social Responsibility (Colorado) in December.

The "Shale Gas Development and Cancer" fact sheet is available here.
2021: Continuing Our Mission

We have begun a new air pollution monitoring project around the Augustine Well Pad near Cecil Township in Washington County, PA.

Additionally, as part of our Environmental Health Surveillance Model, we have developed a Community Training Manual that we are using – along with virtual educational sessions – to train community members to monitor their air quality and examine the results, as well as to better gauge health risks associated with shale gas development.

2021: Sharing Our Work

You’ll be seeing more of us in 2021. Through social media, email, virtual events, and more, we’ll be keeping you up to date on our ongoing projects and all the latest studies on the health impacts of shale gas development. Like, follow, and subscribe!

Spotlight: Nathan Deron

EHP Environmental Data Scientist

“A native of Lancaster, PA, I have lived, worked, and studied in Pittsburgh since 2014. My work seeks to provide evidence-based insights that can inform policy to protect our communities, our health, and our democratic society. I currently work as an environmental data scientist for EHP.

While studying at the University of Pittsburgh, I worked with the ACLU of PA to advance the civil liberties of those incarcerated in the Commonwealth. From there I served as an editorial intern at SampsoniaWay.org, City of Asylum’s online magazine, helping give voice to writers around the world who fight against censorship and oppression.

I spent three years working at City of Asylum, where I oversaw the production of over 200 readings, concerts, film screenings, and community events that sought to elevate lesser-heard voices and promote cross-cultural exchange.

In 2020, I completed my master’s degree in public policy and management at the Heinz College at
Carnegie Mellon University with a focus on data analytics. Additionally, I worked with 412 Food Rescue to adapt their model of food waste recovery to rural communities.

It is a pleasure to work with EHP to bring the tools of data science to communities in need, I hope to help affect real change in the lives and health of my neighbors.”

Since Issue 6 of our semi-annual newsletter, EHP has welcomed Keeley Teslik as our Social Media and Marketing Coordinator.

Keeley earned her BA in English from Duquesne University, where she was the recipient of the Carol Creative Writing Scholarship, O’Donnell Award for Excellence in fiction writing, and a featured author in the university’s Coffee House Reading Series. Keeley previously led multiple successful social media and email marketing campaigns with the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy (PPC) during PPC’s referendum campaign, which secured public support of an additional $10 million in annual park funding.

Get to know our full team here, and by following us on social media.

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Your support defends public health.

By giving a gift today, you can put valuable information in the hands of real people, allowing them to learn how to reduce their exposure to harmful pollution and improve their quality of life.

Yes, I want to defend public health!

EHP's donation page is hosted by the Community Foundation for the Alleghenies.

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EHP defends public health in the face of oil and gas development.
We provide frontline communities with timely monitoring, interpretation, and guidance.
We engage diverse stakeholders: health professionals, researchers, community organizers, public servants, and others.
Because knowledge protects health.

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