

Shale Gas: Twelve Pathways to Dialogue

As part of RFF's project, [Managing the Risks of Shale Gas: Identifying a Pathway](#) toward Responsible Development, scholars in RFF's Center for Energy Economics and Policy conducted the first survey-based, statistical analysis of experts from government agencies, industry, academia, and nongovernmental organizations to identify the priority environmental risks related to shale gas development. The survey defined "priority risks" as those for which the experts believe government regulation and/or voluntary industry practices are currently inadequate to protect the public or the environment.

Survey respondents were asked to choose from 264 possible "risk pathways" that link routine shale gas development activities—from site development to well abandonment—to the environmental burdens (such

as stormwater flows) that have impacts on the environment and local communities in various ways (such as lowering surface water quality or disrupting habitat).

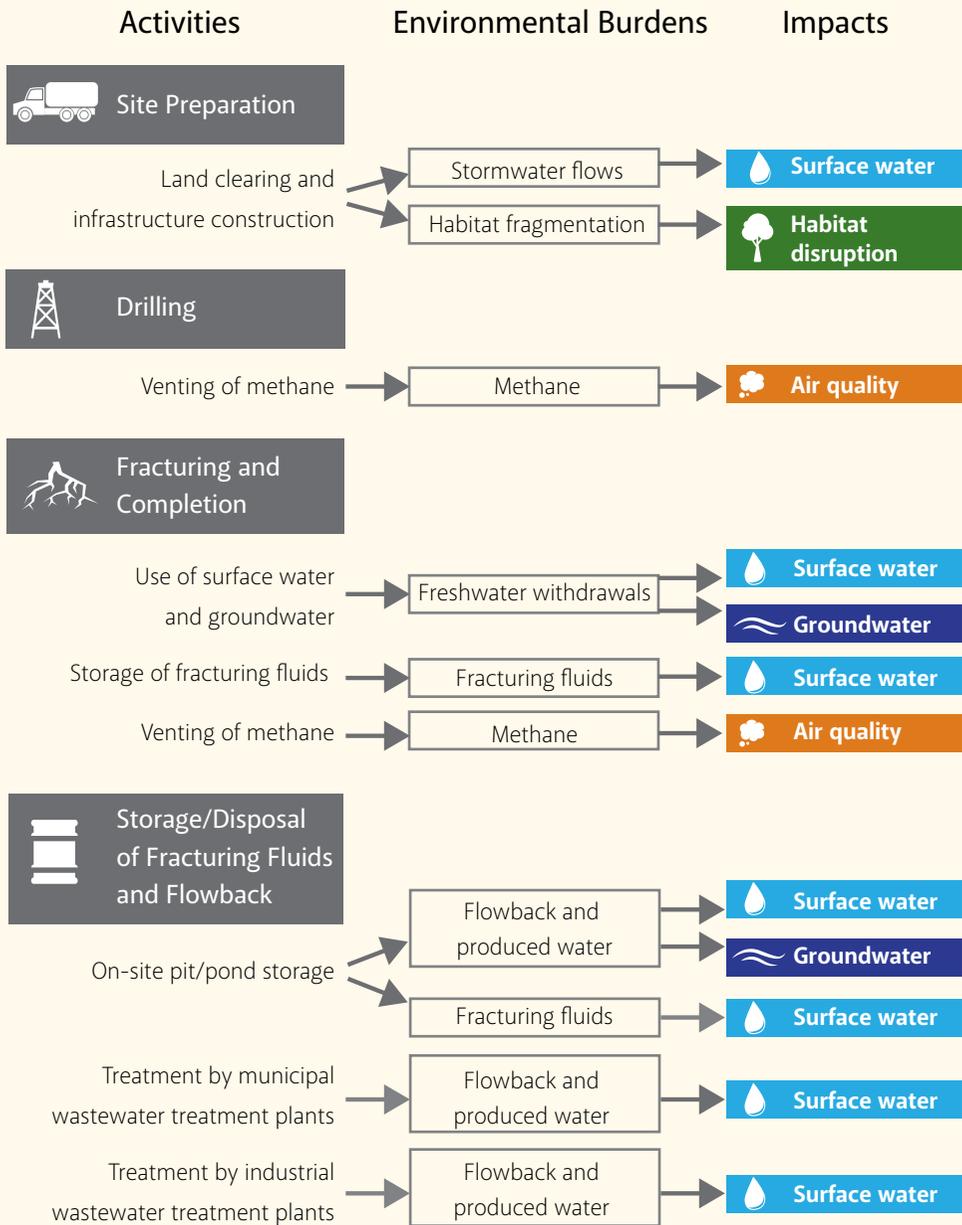
A key finding from this analysis is the high degree of consensus among experts about the specific risks to mitigate. These 12 "consensus risks" (on the next page) are those that survey respondents from all four expert groups most frequently identified as priorities for further regulatory or voluntary action.

Of the 12 consensus risk pathways:

- » 7 involve potential risks to surface water quality,
- » 2 involve potential risks to air quality,
- » 2 involve potential risks to groundwater quality, and
- » 1 is related to habitat disruption.



12 CONSENSUS RISK PATHWAYS



FURTHER READING

Krupnick, Alan, Hal Gordon, and Sheila Olmstead. 2013. *Pathways to Dialogue: What the Experts Say about the Environmental Risks of Shale Gas Development*. RFF Report and Overview of Key Findings. Washington, DC: Resources for the Future.

www.rff.org/shaleexpertsurvey.

RFF Center for Energy Economics and Policy. 2012. Risk Matrix for Shale Gas Development. www.rff.org/shaleriskmatrix.