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PA Community Fights Nuke, Development

Point Pleasant, PA – the site of community resistance and approximately 200 arrests last week in opposition to both nuclear power and development. But do not be surprised if you haven't heard about it, because the local media is corporate-owned and practicing its own form of censorship.

Monday the 10th community members noticed that work crews had begun clearing the site for an unwanted pumping station, the first of two which, if completed, will transport water from the Delaware River through two 6-foot pipes over 25 miles, for use in the Limerick Nuke and in development of this rural agricultural area. (One nuke is complete and one is blocked by court action).

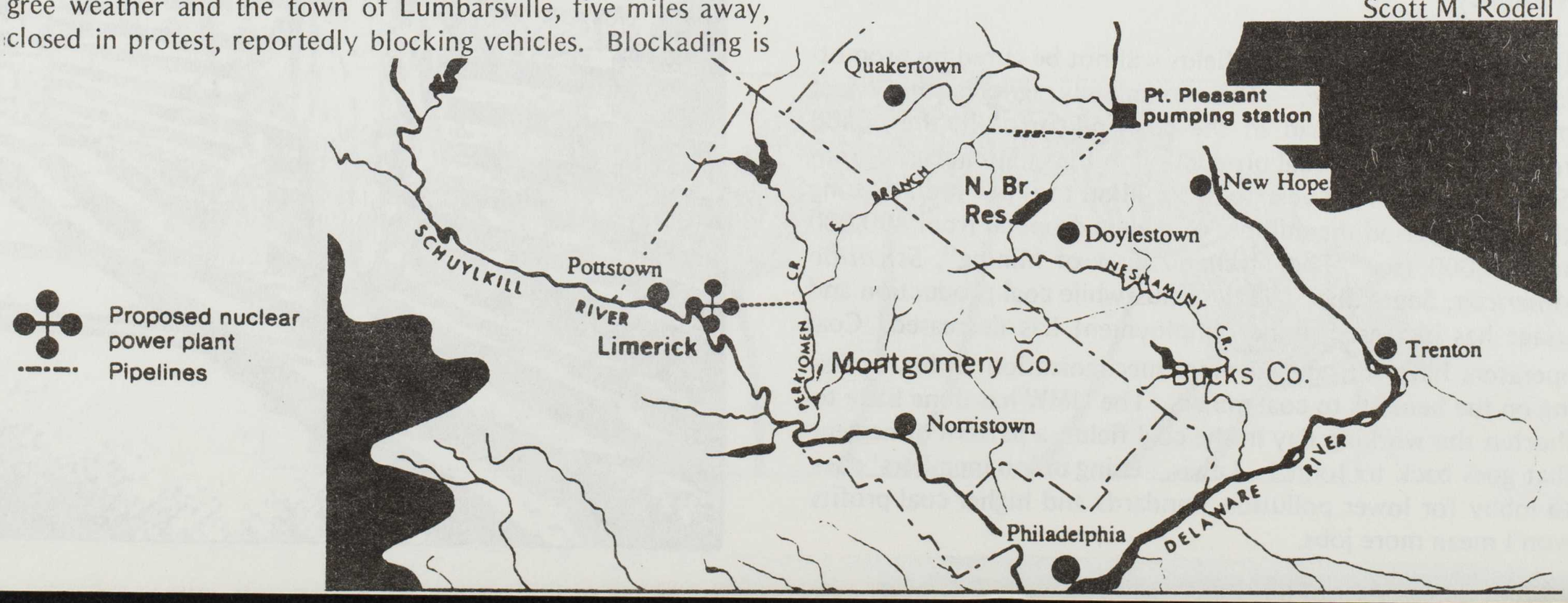
In response to the start of the work, 300 to 400 community members blockaded the site, and a further 1200 to 1500 demonstrated in their support. The construction company went to court and on the next day had a restraining order. Nevertheless, with 70% community support, the blockade was up again, while the township of Plumsteadville filed suit against the water authority, which had no construction permit.

In one hour 60 to 70 blockaders were arrested without violence, and were charged with the civil offense of violating a court order. The presiding judge set a court date and released the arrested on personal recognizance; three-fourths of these returned to the blockade. Meanwhile, the injunction to halt work on the station was postponed for two weeks, this after the suit against the blockade was processed in only one day.

On Wednesday 120 were arrested as construction continued. Bulldozers moved onto the site as crews began fencing it off. On Thursday 200 to 300 picketted the courthouse in 20 degree weather and the town of Lumbarsville, five miles away, closed in protest, reportedly blocking vehicles. Blockading is expected to resume in the future, but for now the townspeople have shifted to community education to break the local news blackout.

Once completed, these pumping stations will cause extensive environmental damage. Last year Philadelphia endured a drought for six months; the pumping stations would draw 95 million gallons a day from the Delaware River which provides Philadelphia with its water supply. This water would be dumped into the East Perkiomin River, flowing downstream to a second pumping station which would remove 45 million gallons a day. This would leave the East Perkiomin with an excess of 50 million gallons of water per day, in an area which already experiences occasional flooding; it would take 18 hours after the Delaware River station was shut off for water to stop flowing into the East Perkiomin. Furthermore, there is not even a present need for the 45 million gallons pumped by the second station, and there are no facilities to process this water. Not least of all, these rivers are used by shad for spawning.

All of this unwanted development continues because the county commissioners push for it. In fact, 12,000 signatures, an enormous number for such a rural area, were collected in order to put the issue to referendum. The commissioners, however, declared the signatures invalid, continuing their practice of ignoring the wishes of the community, acting instead in favor of industry.

One happy note is that due to shad spawning, construction will have to halt by January 31. It is hoped that by then construction can be permanently blocked.

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