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# THE BUFFALO NEWS



*An aerial view of Zoar Valley. (News file photo)*

## Another Voice: Northern Access Pipeline would scar Zoar Valley

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By **Another Voice** (<https://buffalonews.com/author/another-voice/>) | Published April 17, 2019

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**By Larry Beahan**

In 1946, when I was 15, my dad dropped me and a friend off in Zoar Valley (he called it “Sore Belly”) for a week of camping.

We packed in with a WWII surplus pup-tent, some bacon, bread and canned beans. That was four sun-filled days to swim in Cattaraugus Creek, climb its gravelly banks and cook over a wood fire.

Last month I went to a meeting of folks who don’t want National Fuel’s Northern Access Pipeline built through their Zoar Valley property. A gray-haired gentleman in a plaid shirt said, “If they build this explosive, methane-gas line, it will go through our church camp. It could, legally, pass within 25 feet of the cabin my granddaughter sleeps in. It will cross two of our fishing streams, close to where they join the Cattaraugus.”

A woman in barn boots and dungarees responded, “Our place is right across the creek from you, just west of Yorkshire Corners. I manage a 180-acre farm there for our family. We been there for five generations. The house and barn are on the National Historic Registry so National Fuel can’t touch them. We harvest

oak, cherry and maple out of our hardwood forest every 15 years. Neighbors rent acreage from us to raise corn and alfalfa.

“We rent to fishermen, too. The Cattaraugus is famous for steelhead trout. National Fuel wants to make a 600-foot-long, 50-foot-wide cut for that pipeline, they say 100-foot-wide during construction.”

The lady told of her friend, Joe, a master forester who won't be able to harvest his Allegany County timber once the pipeline goes through and of her not-so-well-off neighbor who did everything he could to keep National Fuel off his property but caved-in when the agents raised the offer from \$2,000 to \$35,000.

The Northern Access Pipeline will carry methane from 1,000 newly fracked-gas wells in McKean County, Pa., across 97 pastoral miles of New York State to Elma in Erie County. It will connect with lines that export 70 percent of that gas to Canada. Hundreds of families along this route have pipeline stories like the ones above, yet they will have no access to any of this gas.

The lady in boots said, “Many of the families who object to their land being taken are Trump voters. Yet they believe it is morally wrong to burden our children with the storms and fires brought on us by fossil-fuel induced

global warming. ... And I personally believe we should leave the gas in the ground for use by hundreds of generations to come.”

It hurts to imagine National Fuel’s bulldozers, empowered by eminent domain, wreaking destruction across this beloved valley.

*Larry Beahan is secretary of the Adirondack Mountain Club, Niagara Frontier Chapter.*

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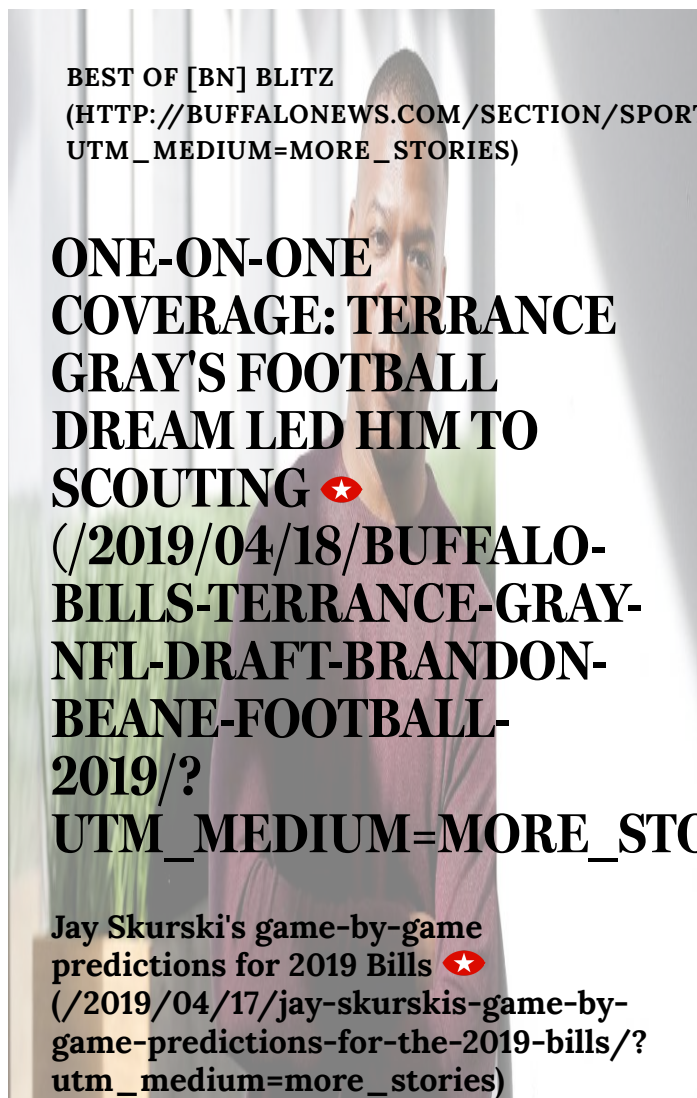
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