

# Earth Day 2012



## Career Profile

**Name:** Susan K. Banks  
**Job Title:** Oil and Gas Inspector  
**Location:** Southwest Regional Office  
**Years with DEP:** 15

### **What kinds of activities do you perform on a daily basis?**

I oversee gas storage fields, ensuring inspections are carried out according to the laws. I am in the process of establishing a protocol for inspecting all gas storage fields so that all operators are aware of requirements under the recently passed laws. I also assist in gas drilling site inspections where needed, primarily in Greene and Washington Counties, where many Marcellus wells are being drilled.

### **What kind of educational background do you have?**

I have a bachelor's degree in geological engineering from South Dakota School of Mines and Technology.

### **What is the most challenging part of your job?**

Keeping up with the constant changes in laws and regulations is a big challenge. In addition, we have to respond in a timely manner to issues that may come out of Harrisburg, to complaints from property owners and submit all our inspections reports. We also have to use our people skills in dealing one on one with individuals and company representatives when issues come up and assist our operators in ensuring they are complying with all regulations and laws while drilling wells.

### **What got you interested in working in an environmental field?**

I have worked in the oil and gas area for over 30 years and when I joined DEP over 15 years ago, it was a natural progression of experience that included working in industry and consulting. I have had the pleasure of working with some of the finest professionals in DEP who also have this diverse experience. The changes over the past few years in regards to oil and gas laws and regulations have been phenomenal. I am glad to be able to work with operators, answering their questions and assisting in any way to ensure the environment is protected.

### **What is the most rewarding part of your job?**

I recently took a lateral move from geologist in permitting to an oil and gas inspector. I love being back out in the field, learning the new compliance laws, and working with the operators. I also am learning new drilling methods as technology has changed quite a bit in a few short years. It is so good to be on a learning curve which helps to keep the mind sharp and helps me to learn yet another aspect of the business. I see firsthand how many operators are going above and beyond protecting the drilling locations, using state of the art equipment and methodology.

**What advice do you have for someone thinking about a career in environmental science?**

Diversify!! Learn more than one skill set and definitely take on new responsibilities in other areas to learn as much as possible and make you a valuable employee in more than one subject.

I serve as an alumni recruiter for my alma mater and I really enjoy meeting students who want to pursue engineering or the sciences. I suggest getting a minor as well as a major and finding good internships or co-op programs that will give you good technical experience.

Learning any new job may involve long hours and time working in the field. Hands-on experience is a must. Don't be afraid to get dirty! Take advantage of any and all opportunities that will enhance your career opportunities.