



For Immediate Release:
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Contact: Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper, 215-369-1188 x102

Delaware Riverkeeper Network Fights to Protect Streams and Rivers from Inappropriate Expansion

Huguenot, NY – The Delaware Riverkeeper Network is working with concerned residents and local organizations to address a threat to headwater streams and pristine rivers, and is urging the Town of Deerpark Planning Board to deny expansions requested by Dragon Springs Buddhist, Inc.

Dragon Springs is proposing to further overdevelop sensitive headwater wetland and trout streams in the Basher Kill and Neversink River watersheds. The current proposed expansion includes a dam, several massive buildings, and a wastewater treatment facility. These projects will permanently destroy over five acres of forested headwater wetland, create large volumes of stormwater runoff, and create new discharges that will impact the downstream Basher Kill and Neversink River, in addition to the local trout streams they will pollute.

According to the Delaware Riverkeeper Network, the proposed expansion will adversely affect the Basher Kill and Neversink River watersheds, including impacting threatened and endangered species. “The magnitude of the impacts from this proposed development is incredible, it will destroy wetlands, fill in trout streams, and pollute rivers where endangered species are trying to survive. The applicant has a long history of flouting the rules and regulations, particularly with stormwater and sediment. Everyone should be concerned about the long-term damage this will cause to the health and clean water of the region,” said **Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper and leader of the Delaware Riverkeeper Network.**

A number of state and federally listed Threatened and Endangered species are located on-site or in areas affected by on-site activities. Among the biggest impacts, which the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the proposal has largely ignored, are the water quality impacts to two mussels, the federally endangered Dwarf Wedgemussel and the state threatened Brook Floater. Existing on-site practices have already led to serious violations of turbidity standards, affecting these sensitive freshwater mussel species in downstream receiving waters.

DELAWARE RIVERKEEPER NETWORK
925 Canal Street, Suite 3701
Bristol, PA 19007
Office: (215) 369-1188
fax: (215) 369-1181
dm@delawareriverkeeper.org
www.delawareriverkeeper.org

The proposal also includes vast areas of new impervious surfaces in a mountainous setting, including a parking garage, new buildings, covered roadways, and an expanded road network. This will create large volumes of stormwater runoff in this high topographic relief area. The added volumes of stormwater runoff will exacerbate existing stormwater impacts from the current development footprint. Numerous stormwater violations have been documented and have already caused water quality impacts and impairments.

Additionally, the proposed dam and developments would obliterate forested wetlands that are critical to maintain trout spawning in this headwater stream. Given the size and permanence of the structures and the development (including the continuous flow of antiquated wastewater treatment effluent), reversing the loss of trout and trout spawning in the impacted trout-designated unnamed tributary will be incredibly difficult, if not impossible. A permanent removal of both Designated Uses and Existing Uses is a violation of state and federal law.

“This proposed expansion is fraught with problems at every level,” **said van Rossum**. “The proposal would damage or destroy critical environmental resources that enrich our lives and make this area so special.”

On Wednesday, April 10 at 7 p.m. there will be a hearing at the Port Jervis high school to discuss the proposed Dragon Springs development, dam and wastewater proposal. The Delaware Riverkeeper Network recently submitted comment on the draft Environmental Impact Statement. See the full comment here:

<http://www.delawariverkeeper.org/sites/default/files/DRN%20Letter%20on%20DEIS%20to%20Deer%20Park%20Planning%20Board%20re%20Dragon%20Springs%20%282019-04-04%29.pdf>

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Delaware Riverkeeper Network (DRN) is a nonprofit membership organization working throughout the four states of the Delaware River Watershed including Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware and New York. DRN provides effective environmental advocacy, volunteer monitoring programs, stream restoration projects, public education, and legal enforcement of environmental protection laws.