



PRESS RELEASE

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FRIENDS OF THE UPPER DELAWARE RIVER

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Conservation Groups Plan Earth Day Rally For 'Sensible' Delaware River Water Plan

A coalition of conservation groups will hold an Earth Day rally in the Catskills on Friday, April 22, in support of a sensible alternative to the upper Delaware River reservoir water-release plan that has had disastrous environmental consequences.

The Delaware Watershed Conservation Coalition (DWCC) will hold the event at 4 p.m. Friday on the Delaware River at the Bard Parker Road access, south of Hancock, N.Y., just downstream from the confluence of the East and West branches of the river.

"This will be the coalition's first public show of solidarity behind the 'White Paper' alternative to the current flawed flow plan, which is set to expire on June 1," said Dan Plummer, board chairman of the Friends of the Upper Delaware River and a member of the DWCC. "This is a sensible replacement plan, backed by scientific research. We are speaking as one voice to urge government decision-makers to adopt the 'White Paper' plan."

The rapidly growing coalition now includes Trout Unlimited National, NYTU, PATU, NJTU, American Rivers, the Upper Delaware Council, FUDR, and a number of other angling and conservation groups.

The group has cast its support behind the Joint Fishery White Paper as a one-year alternative to the current plan governing water releases from New York City-owned reservoirs. The White Paper was produced last year by the New York Department of Environmental Conservation and Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission. It would replace the flawed plan that now governs water releases, the infamous Flexible Flow Management Program, which is expiring.

The Delaware River Basin Commission and other government entities are considering alternatives before the June 1 expiration date of the current flow plan.

The White Paper proposal is winning plaudits, but its approval as the replacement flow plan is far from assured, Plummer said. "We've watched the mysterious workings of the Delaware River Basin Commission and the New York City Department of Environmental Protection for years, so we

know that nothing is certain when it comes to water issues,” he said. “The Earth Day festivities in Hancock is one of the ways we are working to persuade the decision-makers to do the right thing and support the White Paper. We ask the public to come out and show its support, as well.”

Plummer said the White Paper has become the plan of choice to replace the expiring protocols. Though negotiations are still in progress, there is nothing else currently on the table that well-informed conservation groups are willing to support, he said.

Plummer added the White Paper has particular appeal because it is based on sound science, not on backroom political bullying by New York City, which has hoarded the Catskills reservoir water for decades, to the detriment of river residents, fish and wildlife, and visitors to the financially stressed region.