

SANDYSTON TOWNSHIP

R-26-2022

RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF SANDYSTON OPPOSING A PROPOSAL BY THE NEW JERSEY AND PENNSYLVANIA CHAPTERS OF THE SIERRA CLUB TO CHANGE THE DESIGNATION OF THE DELAWARE WATER GAP NATIONAL RECREATION AREA TO THE DELAWARE RIVER NATIONAL PARK AND LENAPE PRESERVE UNTIL A FORMAL PLAN IS PRESENTED FOR PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT

WHEREAS, the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area (DEWA) was established September 1, 1965, one of 10 National Recreation Areas of the National Park Service, currently encompassing nearly 70,000 acres in New Jersey and Pennsylvania and is a protected area in the United States established by an Act of Congress to preserve enhanced recreational opportunities in places with significant natural and scenic resources; and

WHEREAS, the DEWA offers recreational opportunities such as hiking, walking, bicycling, fishing, hunting, swimming, camping, canoeing, boating, cross country skiing, bird watching, horseback riding, sightseeing, and special events; cultural resources, infrastructural facilities, national resources, and rare, threatened and endangered species of plants, fish, mammals, reptiles and amphibians; and

WHEREAS, Sandyston Township is made up of approximately 70% state and federal lands and the residents of Sandyston Township enjoy the recreational opportunities as well as cultural and natural resources of this open space and local businesses benefit from the tourism brought by Stokes State Forest, State of New Jersey, Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Fish & Wildlife and DEWA bring to the Township; and

WHEREAS, in January 13, 2015, Sandyston Township passed ***Resolution R-19-2015*** opposing specific proposals of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area's plan entitled *Vision 2030: A Vision For A Sustainable Future* outlining, among various proposals, their vision to establish a park and preserve; and

WHEREAS, the Township Committee of the Township of Sandyston is aware of a proposal by the New Jersey and Pennsylvania Chapters of the Sierra Club seeking to change the designation of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area to the Delaware River National Park and Lenape Preserve; and

WHEREAS, the proposal by the New Jersey and Pennsylvania Chapters of the Sierra Club offers no insight or plan for the change in designation; namely the environmental, economic and agricultural impact to the DEWA and to the residents and local businesses of Sandyston Township; and

WHEREAS, the proposal by the New Jersey and Pennsylvania Chapters of the Sierra Club offers no information on possible changes to public lands, namely, Stokes State Forest, High Point State Park and State of New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Fish & Wildlife lands as well as acquisition of private property; and

WHEREAS, the proposal by the New Jersey and Pennsylvania Chapters of the Sierra Club offers no information on the plan to facilitate this change; the implementation of fee collection and location of collection stations; and how funding will be provided for this National Park; and

WHEREAS, the proposal by the New Jersey and Pennsylvania Chapters of the Sierra Club offers no explanation on the location, size and parameters of the "Preserve" area, the activities allowed and disallowed; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Township Committee of the Township of Sandyston reaffirms their opposition to any change in designation of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area for reasons set forth and explained in **Resolution R-19-2015** entitled "*Resolution of the Township Committee of the Township of Sandyston Opposing Specific Proposals of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area "Vision 2030"*".

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Township Committee of the Township of Sandyston firmly opposes the proposal of the New Jersey and Pennsylvania Chapters of the Sierra Club, or any other organization, seeking to change the designation of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area to the Delaware River National Park and Lenape Preserve unless and until a formal plan is presented offering information on the environmental, economic and agricultural impact of this proposed change; sources of funding; the fee structure and the plan for the implementation of fees and collection station locations; a map of the area depicting the location of the Lenape Preserve; the plans for any acquisition of additional private or public lands; and the impact this proposal will have on the residents of Sandyston Township and Sussex County.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Township Committee of the Township of Sandyston requests that once said formal plan is presented, the public shall have ample time to review, question and comment on the plan prior to any action taken by the United States Legislature.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Township Committee of the Township of Sandyston requests copies of this resolution be sent to President Joe Biden; Governor Phil Murphy; U.S. Senator Robert Menendez; U.S. Senator Cory Booker; Congressman Josh Gottheimer; Congresswoman Mikie Sherrill; Congressman David Norcross; Congressman Jefferson Van Drew; Congressman Christopher Smith; Congressman Frank Pallone, Jr.; Congressman Tom Malinowski; Congressman Albio Sires; Congressman Bill Pascrell, Jr.; Congressman Donald Payne, Jr.; Congressman Bonnie Watson Coleman; New Jersey Senator Steven V. Oroho; New Jersey Assemblyman F. Parker Space; New Jersey Assemblyman Harold Wirths; NJ Senator Michael Doherty; Assemblyman John DeMaio; Assemblyman Eric Petersen; Congresswoman Susan Wild (PA); Congressman Matt Cartwright (PA); U.S. Senator Patrick Toomey; U.S. Senator Bob Casey; New Jersey Sierra Club, Chapter Chair Rich Isaac; Vice Chair John Kashwick; Pennsylvania Sierra Club; Sussex County Board of County Commissioners; all municipalities of Sussex County; State of New Jersey, Department of Environmental Protection; National Park Service, Charles Sams, Director; National Park Service Northeast Region, Gay Vietzke, Regional Director; Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, Sula Jacobs, Superintendent; Delaware River Basin Commission; Partnership for the Delaware Estuary; National Lands Trust; Warren County Board of County Commissioners; Kittatinny Regional High School Board of Education and Craig Hutcheson, Ph.D., Superintendent; Sandyston-Walpack Consolidated School Board of Education and William Kochis, Ph.D., Superintendent


George B. Harper, Jr., Mayor

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing resolution is a true and certified copy of the resolution adopted by the Sandyston Township Committee at the regularly scheduled meeting held on Tuesday, March 22, 2022, at the Sandyston Township Municipal Building, 133 Route 645, Sandyston, NJ 07826.



Amanda F. Lobban, RMC
Municipal Clerk

SANDYSTON TOWNSHIP

R-19-2015

**RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF SANDYSTON
OPPOSING SPECIFIC PROPOSALS OF THE DELAWARE WATER GAP NATIONAL
RECREATION AREA "VISION 2030"**

WHEREAS, the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area (DEWA) is a nearly 70,000 acre unit of the National Park Service (NPS) located in New Jersey and Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, Sandyston Township is made up of approximately 70% state and federal lands and benefits substantially from the tourism which the recreational activities of the state and federal Parks bring to Sandyston Township; and

WHEREAS, the DEWA is among the top 10 most visited units of the National Park System with an average of approximately 5 million visitors annually; and

WHEREAS, the DEWA currently encompasses 67,210 acres; of this figure 9,151.03 acres are in Warren County and 21,489.78 acres are in Sussex County broken down by the following: 5,467.77 acres in Sandyston Township; 2,454.69 acres in Montague Township; 13,872 acres in Walpack Township; 183.12 acres in Stillwater Township. The remaining 36,569.19 acres exist in Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, the DEWA offers recreational opportunities such as hiking, walking, bicycling, fishing, hunting, swimming, camping, canoeing, boating, cross country skiing, bird watching, horseback riding, sightseeing, and special event; cultural resources, infrastructural facilities, national resources, and rare, threatened and endangered species of plants, fish, mammals, reptiles and amphibians; and

WHEREAS, the DEWA is enjoyed by the residents of Sandyston Township, as well as Sussex County, and the businesses in Sandyston Township benefit from the tourism these recreational activities bring to the area; and

WHEREAS, the DEWA has created a plan entitled *Vision 2030: A Vision For A Sustainable Future* for the vision of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and the Middle Delaware National Scenic and Recreational River; and

WHEREAS, Vision 2030 was prepared by the National Park Superintendent and Staff. Vision 2030 desires to acquire large tracts of land and expand the National Park's jurisdiction of lands outside National Park boundaries and may include, at a minimum, any land that is within a watershed that flows into the Delaware River in the area under National Park Control. Vision 2030 desires to establish the Delaware Valley National Park and Preserve, a proposal which would take the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and the Middle Delaware National Scenic and Recreational River and include them in a larger park and preserve complex. This unit would replace the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area while the Middle Delaware National Scenic and Recreational River would continue under current management which it is believed will eventually limit or prohibit hunting and recreation activities enjoyed by residents and visitors; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Township Committee of the Township of Sandyston hereby opposes the vision of the DEWA taking any additional property outside its current boundaries. Currently, Sandyston Township is comprised of approximately 70% preserved land owned by the State of New Jersey and the National Park Service (United States) which are currently connected and provide a large space for wild life, watershed protection and recreation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Township Committee of the Township of Sandyston opposes the DEWA seeking to control any watershed which flows into the Delaware River. Sandyston Township contains the largest number of Freshwater waterways and these streams are part of the Big and Little Flat Brook systems which are currently designated as Category One waterbodies which have stringent requirements, oversight, management and protection by State of New Jersey Regulations. In November 2011, the Delaware River Basin Conservation Initiative began a collaborative effort between the Nature Conservancy, Partnership for the Delaware Estuary and the Natural Lands Trust which helps to ensure the long-term viability and health of the basin's ecosystem.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Township Committee of the Township of Sandyston hereby opposes the vision of the DEWA to establish the Delaware Valley National Park and Preserve, a proposal which would take the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and the Middle Delaware National Scenic and Recreational River and include them in a larger park and preserve complex. The Township Committee opposes this change as we believe this will negatively affect the residents and tourism of Sandyston Township. Visitors come from all over the East Coast to enjoy the recreational activities offered by the DEWA, including hunting, which provides economic benefits to all of the local businesses in Sandyston Township. By limiting this area and prohibiting or restricting recreational activities, including hunting, Sandyston Township's local businesses will suffer financially because these restrictions will force tourism to other States who offer these activities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be sent to Governor Chris Christie; U.S. Representative Scott Garrett; US, Representative Rodney Frelinghuysen; Robert Menendez, United States Senator; Cory Booker, United States Senator; Senator Steven V. Oroho; Assemblywoman Alison Littell McHose; Assemblyman Parker Space; Sussex County Board of Chosen Freeholders; State of New Jersey, Department of Environmental Protection; National Park Service, Jon Jarvis, Director; National Park Service, Northeast Regional, Mike Caldwell, Regional Director; Delaware River Basin Commission; Partnership for the Delaware Estuary; Natural Lands Trust; Kittatinny Regional High School, Craig Hutcheson, Superintendent; Sandyston-Walpack Consolidated School, M. Glenn Sumpman, Superintendent; and all Sussex County municipalities.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the above resolution was adopted by the Township Committee of the Township of Sandyston at a meeting held on January 13, 2015, at the Sandyston Township Municipal Building, Sandyston, New Jersey 07826.

Amanda F. Lobban, RMC
Municipal Clerk