

# Deerpark Rural Alliance (DRA) Update

*Grace Woodard*

While DRA awaits the Supplemental EIS from Dragon Springs, we have conducted outreach to Friends of the Shawangunks, Yankee Lake Preservation Association and appeared before the BKAA Annual Meeting at the super Phillipsport Center. Sharing what's been accomplished, what is looming, approaches to problem solving, and the big picture of maintaining our rural identity, while remaining environmentally educated and prepared for action, helps everyone.

As a watchdog, DRA monitors the DS' tributary that regularly contains plumes—dark, light and sometimes bubbly—pouring into the Basher Kill (BK). We are establishing long-term water protocol monitoring throughout the DS tributary, which joins the BK along Galley Hill Road (GHR) and placing meters past where the BK joins the Neversink. This activity is coordinated with the Delaware Watershed Initiative (DWI). Key people are Paul Wilson from E. Stroudsburg University and Steven Schwartz of DWI and the Pocono-Kittatinny Cluster. This initiative is sponsored by New York Environmental Sustainability Committee (nyenvironcom.org), a new non-profit founded by Alex Scilla (a DRA and BKAA member).

DRA has also contacted Deerpark and presented ideas on positive community growth/improvement and Brownfields Opportunity Initiatives available for the C&D Technologies site (former battery factory) next to Town Hall. The first down payment into the Superfund was made by past owners the end of October. DEC is designing cleanup and protocol for the next 8 months, which involve regular onsite visits. It will be 2021 before cleanup starts. The former battery factory will never be a residential site, but has commercial potential. It is the heart of the hamlet of Huguenot, located next door to Deerpark Town Hall. Quite probably, the degraded and toxic factory will be demolished. A tributary, (romantically named D-17) impacted by the site, flows directly into the Neversink. Tributary water testing is sophisticated and paid by the superfund. We envision community involvement with the town and current owner for positive revitalization of this site and neighborhood.

**Dragon Springs:** DS had a 2018 jug handle plan for buses and trucks on Guymard Turnpike rejected. New: The old plan has been re-conceived and permitted with no public discussion. A new driveway/entry road is underway on Guymard Turnpike. It is uphill several hundred feet from the established entrance on Guymard Turnpike. It has limited sight lines on a bend in the road and adjacent to a hidden driveway across from it. Further, the new driveway

joins the interior parking (covered over wetland) and now doubled parking space at the entrance. A Class B stream is nearby. This action will possibly be challenged in court. No Planning Board or Building Department reviews were involved. The Permit was issued through Deerpark's Highway Department and has been FOILED. This is stunning given DS penchant and history of ill-advised plans, illegal actions and disregard for safety and the community outside its compound. The new entry way will serve DS traffic—cars, construction trucks, deliveries and Shen Yun buses, on a country road that cannot handle the traffic.

The shopping mall/apartments application on GHR is still alive. A high water table and wetlands compromise the site's ambitious plans. Stay tuned.

Have a safe winter everyone. Seeing buffleheads and common mergansers rollicking on Guymard Lake make all the struggles seem worthwhile.

## Updates:

*Paula Medley*

**Beautiful Earth (BE)** - Word has it that BE finally purchased Yukiguni Maitake Manufacturing Corporation of America (YM) assets including YM's 47-acre property, (off McDonald Road) site of an earlier proposed mushroom plant.

On November 13, a public hearing was scheduled before the Delaware River Basin Commission on "an application to renew the approval to withdraw up to 13.14 mgm (million gallons per month) of groundwater from existing Well No. PW-2 for geothermal heating and cooling, agricultural production, industrial purposes such as cleaning, and potable supply at the docket holder's proposed pilot-scale and subsequent full-scale agricultural production and processing facility. The initial allocation for use at the pilot facility remains limited to 1.95 mgm. The well is screened in outwash sand and gravel in the Gumaer Brook - Basher Kill Watershed in the Town of Mamakating, Sullivan County, New York within the drainage area of the section of the main stem Delaware River known as the Middle Delaware, which the Commission has classified as Special Protection Waters." The Commission votes on this application December 11.

BE consists of 3 phases: 12 - 3,000 sq. ft. greenhouses, a 40,000 sq. ft. pilot building for production, and a 200,000 sq. ft. production processing and research/development facility. Almost three years have transpired since BE received site plan approval from Mamakating's planning board for an endeavor that has not yet begun.

**Hopper Hill, 7 Peaks:** No further activity.