


How it happened before:

- In early 2008, with fracking just starting to boom, New York State modified its oil and gas regulations to accommodate fracking, and hearings were held as part of the regulatory SEQRA process required for approval. At first, industry and its experts dominated the hearings, and it looked like fracking might prevail all over the state—including the New York City watershed.
- **Damascus Citizens for Sustainability** (DCS) believed that NYC was an ideal place to initiate statewide resistance, being a non-voting member of the DRBC. In keeping with that purpose, a group was formed named NYH₂O, which attended meetings of 59 of the 60 the community boards that effectively govern the city to educate them about the harms fracking would do. (The New York City council comprises representatives of those boards, and answers to them). All 59 subsequently passed resolutions opposing hydrofracking in the NYC watershed; about two thirds passed resolutions opposing drilling in the state as a whole.
- Even a strong pro-industry mayor like Bloomberg couldn't ignore a vote like that. Instead, he had the City do the very first study taking a deep look at fracking and its environmental impacts. The conclusion of **the report**^[1] is that there should be no drilling any closer than 7 miles from the border of the watershed. About a year later, NYC voted to ban drilling in its watershed.
- But it didn't end there. The public awareness of the damage fracking could do, raised by that Hazen and Sawyer report, and people's realization that they had the power to actually protect themselves had a domino effect. Municipalities in both New York and adjacent PA became active in developing zoning strategies to restrict or ban fracking. Thousands of people submitted comments opposing fracking in public hearings. New York's governor Cuomo bowed to public pressure, and eventually issued a "no action" decision for the SEQRA study, with the effect of prohibiting it in the state. That was followed in 2020 by the passage of a NY law making that ban permanent. ^[1] <https://www.damascuscitizensforsustainability.org/2009/12/15/final-impact-assessment-report-of-natural-gas-production-in-the-new-york-city-water-supply-watershed/>

DCS PLANS FOR 2023

1. **Providing more informational packets regarding fracking waste impacts to health and grassroots groups throughout the river basin.** One of DCS's key contributions throughout its history of organizing resistance to fracking is its development and distribution of CDs, DVDs, DCS-designed and published posters, printed and online documents that lay out the scientific facts about the impacts of gas and oil drilling in concise, easy-to-understand formats that can be used by other grassroots groups to recruit and educate members. We will engage in similar distribution specifically with regard to the proposal to import drilling waste over the next year.
2. **Our educator/advocate program has nurtured progress for years** through our one-on-one work helping households report their health impacts and navigating past hostile local officials to media and helpful authorities.
3. **Working to protect pollinators—the Birds and Bees Act**—a first in the nation law banning neonic pesticides is in New York State legislature and needs passage. We hope other states can also do the same. Without pollinators we have no food! We are reaching out to educate individuals, groups, municipalities and collecting your signatures for this. 
4. **Finding ways to support the build-out of renewables and refocusing consumption—efficiency could save half our current energy use!** We have to force the elimination of fossil fuel subsidies. Tackling climate change requires bold positive actions! We will presenting events with The Narrowsburg Union on these topics.
5. **Invoking the power of municipalities** to take a public stand against waste import into the river basin and water export for fracking elsewhere. Towns and cities' stance was a significant element in the DRBC's 2011 decision to abandon its original proposed regulations for fracking in the river valley, leading to a de facto moratorium until the eventual DRBC vote to ban high volume fracking in the Delaware Basin in February, 2021. In the early days of our fight against fracking in the Delaware River Valley, DCS, as NYH₂O, educated and persuaded all but one of the Community Boards that make up the New York City Council pass resolutions banning fracking to protect the NYC watershed. The Council subsequently passed a non-binding resolution urging then New York Governor David Paterson to declare the watersheds off limits. The city's continuing opposition was key to the eventual banning of

fracking throughout New York State in 2014, because of its potential impact on the state as a whole. The New York State governor is one of five voting members of the DRBC, and NYC's population represents roughly half of the state, so any governor ignores the wishes of New York City at their own peril, and! NYC on its own is also a non-voting member of the DRBC.

6. Spreading our NEW Upper Ohio Basin What's in the Water Poster to the public in its focus area— western Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Ohio in the Ohio River Basin— and to people who care about those places.

Second in the series, explaining how all the processes work, their impacts and the facilitating exemptions that remove liabilities for the damages the industry has put on the surrounding and downstream communities. DCS distributed over 18,000 of the Delaware Basin focused poster all through the DRB and way beyond to many other states and internationally, with a lot of influence, educating so many.

7. Special focus on engaging interfaith groups. Interfaith groups are a so-far largely untapped resource for reaching the public and educating it about the dangers of fracking wastewater. In addition to engaging the network of community and advocacy groups that we developed in our years of fighting for a ban of frack drilling, we are initiating a focused outreach to interfaith groups on these matters, encouraging them to similarly sign resolutions, urge members to send letters and sign petitions to the DRBC and their governors. We have brought on board an individual to do so, but need funding to continue effectively over the coming year.

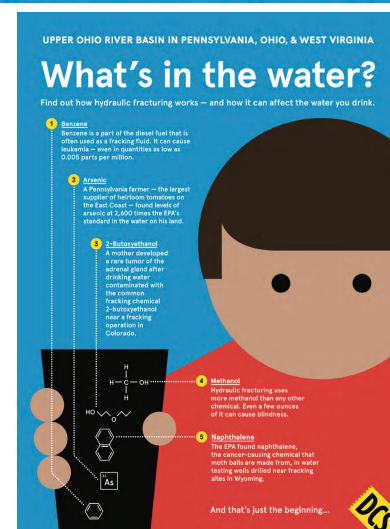
8. Engaging in media outreach. We are also planning on-going printed columns in The River Reporter local newspaper, and radio segments on several programs on WJFF Radio Catskills station., both growing out of our continued work, and collaboration with them. We we also will engage in a collaboration with The Narrowsburg Union in Narrowsburg, NY, where our new office is also housed, to develop monthly programs on sustainability, regenerative agriculture, renewable energy and other related topics.

9. We also are keeping our storefront on Main Street in Narrowsburg, to provide a welcoming space where inquisitive passers by in the community can come in person to learn, ask questions, pick up information, and share ideas. Our goal is to create a learning hub that engages and connects the community in an exploration and celebration of sustainable solutions that protect our shared natural environment.

We've seen it before. A ban of fracking in one area, NYC's watershed, led to a ban in New York State as a whole. Other states and even some countries have followed. A ban of fracking waste importation and water exportation from the interstate area governed by the DRBC could have an even greater impact, among the member states like Pennsylvania and other states. it would not be just a narrow victory for the river basin—it could be the means towards helping all faced with fracking and its impacts. That means it is in the interests of everyone everywhere who is threatened by fracking and the contamination it causes to do what they can to make this ban happen. **Right now, that means DONATING to DCS.**

VISIT our new office - upstairs in The Union, 7 Erie Ave.—where the Narrowsburg Farmers' Market is on summer Saturdays—same email dcs@DamascusCitizens.org and phone is still 845-252-6677

UPPER OHIO RIVER BASIN IN PENNSYLVANIA, OHIO, & WEST VIRGINIA



Please make your contribution today!

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