

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 6, 2014



Communities Rise Up to Stop Proposed Dam in South Mountain Reservation

Maplewood, NJ (March 6, 2014) – A growing group of community members and environmentalists have formed a movement called [Save Our Reservation](#) with the intent to stop a proposed 880-foot long, 70-foot high dam across the southern section of the South Mountain Reservation in Essex County for flood abatement that is being considered by the by the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). USACE has issued a [Rahway River Basin Flood Risk Management Feasibility Study](#) that includes seven flood risk management alternatives.

Save Our Reservation finds that the construction of the proposed dam and the associated 110-acre dry detention basin is misguided and would irreparably damage the treasured century-old South Mountain Reservation. In cooperation with the [Rahway Alternative Flood Solutions Alliance](#), comprised of the South Mountain Conservancy and a number of local environmentalists and other stakeholder organizations, the group hopes to provide an alternative perspective and champion a more balanced, equitable approach to flood solutions along the Rahway River watershed.

“The community is alarmed by the proposal to put a 70-foot high dam in South Mountain Reservation,” said Fred Profeta, chair of the **Save Our Reservation** organization and the former mayor of Maplewood. “In just one week since our launch, we have had over 1,700 people sign on to the movement. Communities stretching from Passaic, Essex, Union and Middlesex counties are getting informed and organizing to stop the proposed project from moving forward.” **Save Our Reservation** is asking the US Army Corps of Engineers to engage in a more open process and seek better input from the public about the plans.

“A 70-foot deep South Mountain Reservoir, even if dry most of the time, would destroy vegetation, and many trails and roads in one of the few large, natural open spaces in central New Jersey. Essex County is already challenged by proportionately less open space than neighboring counties, so any acreage lost would be keenly felt,” said Dennis Percher, chair of the South Mountain Conservancy’s Board of Trustees. “This loss would be especially tragic considering that this new reservoir, damming only the upper part of the west branch of the Rahway River, is likely to affect too little of the total river flow to prevent the most serious flooding downstream. The damage to the Reservation would be irreparable without solving the flooding problems.”

Save Our Reservation will be circulating an on-line petition and is planning a community rally to educate more people about the proposed dam. In advance, the group is meeting with elected officials and other stakeholders to help strengthen the movement and inform the general public.

ABOUT SAVE OUR RESERVATION

Save Our Reservation is a non-profit organization dedicated to stopping the 880-foot long, 70-foot high proposed dam across the southern section of the South Mountain Reservation.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SaveOurReservation>

Save Our Reservation Contacts: [Fred Profeta](#), [Dennis Percher](#) and [Tracey Woods](#)

###