



## What'SUP Berks Newsletter September-December 2025 Volume 1, No. 2

### **New Collaboration With Reading City Environmental Advisory Council**

What'SUP Berks is excited to be starting a new level of collaboration with the City of Reading Environmental Advisory Council as of this December with an ongoing invitation to participate in their 2026 monthly meeting schedule. Attorney David Beane of the EAC has communicated that it is the intention of city officials to develop an ordinance for banning single use plastics, including bags, using model ordinances that have already proven successful. What'SUP Berks will be providing input and support for them in this process, hopefully generating momentum that will transfer to other townships and boroughs, particularly along the Penn Avenue corridor. What'SUP Berks has had a relationship with Reading City from our start-up, with early support from Bethany Ayers-Fisher, Sustainability Manager for the City of Reading. Reading EAC members, including Bethany and David, are welcome to participate in What'SUP Berks monthly members meeting as well.

### **Wyomissing Borough Council Presentation**

What'SUP Berks representatives presented the case for a single use plastic (SUP) bag ban at the October Wyomissing Refuse and Recycling Committee, a committee of the Wyomissing Borough Council. Jana R. Barnett, who was instrumental in arranging the presentation opportunity, is the Chair of that Committee and a supporter of What'SUP Berks mission. Members of our Executive Team Judge Art Grim, Louise and Tom were present to make the case for banning single use plastic bags in the borough. Positive support was expressed by committee members, also identifying the importance of documenting support from the business community. In addition, several



Wyomissing residents attended the meeting in support of the initiative. What'SUP Berks hopes to continue to collaborate with Council members and present the case for a SUP bag ban to the entire Wyomissing Borough Council at some point, including sharing documentation of endorsements from members of the business community (See below, Penn State Berks EACAP).

### **Penn State Berks Environmental Awareness and Community Action Project (EACAP)**



Every fall semester Dr. Mahsa Kazempour of Penn State Berks teaches a class in which she solicits teams of students to complete Environmental Awareness and Community Action Projects (EACAP). What'SUP Berks was pleased that its canvassing project seeking endorsements from local businesses for our single use plastic bag ban campaign was chosen by the Recyclables and the Ecologic student teams of 4 and 3 students respectively. Louise, Judge Art Grim, and Tom coordinated with the two team liaisons, Ryan La and Jaeden Proctor. Their participation in the What'SUP Berks canvassing project to local businesses in the West Reading and Wyomissing areas resulted in staff endorsements from several businesses including *Old Navy, Made Jewelry, Be Mine Boutique, Ady Cakes, Finch and Fern, Shearer Tech, Rise Up Nutrition, Cheryl L. Miller DDS, Art Plus Gallery, Anthony's Barber, Diller's, Muddy Creek Soap Company, Ross Dress for Less, Tower Health, GNC, and Bartlett Tree Experts*. In addition Executive Team members Judge Art Grim and Louise have been active in obtaining signatures and endorsements from managers and staff at *Ocean State Job Lot in Shillington, Master Creations, Salsa Burrito, Great China,*



*Subway, and Tri Beer Shoppe.* Results from the student projects were exhibited at the Penn State Berks Sustainability Expo December 1 (see above photo of Dr. Kazempour, left, and Eshaan Tolani, one of the participating Penn State Students).

### **Final List of 2025 What'SUP Berks Tabling Events**

It has been a busy spring, summer, and fall of 2025 with What'SUP Berks volunteers tabling at 11 different events over the year. Volunteers collected signatures, handed out pamphlets, and shared What'SUP t-shirts and re-usable bags. Thank-you What'SUP Berks Volunteers! We look forward to spreading the good word in 2026 about the multiple advantages of re-usable bags over single use plastic bags!

March 27 Governor Mifflin Schools Student Expo

April 21 Penn State Berks Earth Day

April 25 Alvernia University Earth Day

April 26 Berks County/Reading City Earth Day

June 28 Good Medicine Indigenous Wellness Celebration

July 20 PRIDE Festival

August 9 Smokey's Birthday Bash, Berks Parks and Recreation

August 16 District 2 Second Annual Party in the Park, Pendora Park

October 4 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Guts and Glory Digestive and Wellness Expo

October 12 Hay Creek Apple Festival and Flea Market

December 1 Penn State Berks Sustainability Expo



## **Collaboration with Berks County Community Foundation Grant sponsor Berks Nature**

Berks Nature hosts a quarterly meeting called the Municipal Networking for Conservation Luncheon that invites stakeholders in the Berks community to meet and network on conservation issues. Tami Shimp, recently elected President of Berks Nature after Kim Murphy's retirement from that position, has extended an invitation for What'SUP Berks to participate in the next scheduled meeting February 25, 2026. Both Kim and Tammy have been early and strong supporters of What'SUP Berks efforts. We are excited to participate in this coming meeting which will focus on model ordinances including bans on single use plastic.

## **Youth Participation**

What'SUP Berks has been pleased to welcome to it's Executive Team Mars Felker and Janelle Barnett of Fleetwood High School as Youth Representatives. Mars and Janelle have generously taken on efforts to develop and manage What'SUP Berks social media presence on media platforms including Facebook and Instagram. Janelle reports over 400 contacts to the Facebook site which continues under development.

## **Whatsupberks.org Website Makeover**

What'SUP Berks Executive Team Secretary Deanna Witzel and her husband Kevin have added several new and exciting features to the [whatsupberks.org](http://whatsupberks.org) website! Among these updates are a more streamlined presentation of What'SUP Berks *Mission and Goals*, a *Highlights* section of recent activities with photographs, an extensive list of links to *Helpful Information* including newsletters, meeting minutes. Also provided is *Reference Information* to



state legislative initiatives to limit SUP bags, including locator maps for state and local legislators. *Tabling Events*, and *Media Mentions* pages have added to our ability to publicize our presence in the community. Also, an *Events* calendar with meeting dates and times, a *Photo* section, and an updated list of our sponsors and supporters have been added.

### **Meeting with SPOTLIGHT Representative**

Louise, Judge Grim, and Tom met together with SPOTLIGHT PA General Manager Jose Joel Delgado-Rivera to educate him about What'SUP Berks Mission. Although as a media organization, they do not endorse any advocacy organization, Mr. Delgado-Rivera expressed interest in following our plastic bag ban campaign. He also offered to do a “newsletter swap” if What'SUP Berks agreed to include a link to SPOTLIGHT PA in our newsletter (see below SPOTLIGHT PA link) SPOTLIGHT PA would then include a What'SUP Berks announcement to their 3300 subscribers. We thank SPOTLIGHT PA for the hard work they do every day to inform Pennsylvania and Berks County residents on important local and state-wide issues. Think globally and act locally!

### **Berks County Television Hot Topic**

What'SUP Berks representatives Louise Grim and Tom Crotty made the case for Single-Use Plastic Bag Ban on [BCTV League of Women Voters Presents Hot Topics](#) in November 2025. Judge Grim of What'SUP Berks acted as moderator.

### **Update on Youth Member State-Wide SUP Bag Ban Initiative**

Senator Judy Schwank continues to seek co-sponsors for a Pennsylvania state senate bill to ban single use plastic bags state-wide, an initiative of youth members from Governor Mifflin High School. Another initiative to ban single use plastic bags has been introduced in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives by Representative Maureen Madden of northeastern



Pennsylvania as House Bill 1547. The House Bill is currently co-sponsored by 20 additional members of the state house of representatives. The bill is titled *Safeguarding Pennsylvania's Consumers and Fishing Industry from Harmful Microplastics*. Please reach out to your state senator or state representative asking them to co-sponsor and support these initiatives. If you're not sure who your legislator is, please visit our website [whatsupberks.org](http://whatsupberks.org) and link to the *Info* section, *List and Maps of Local and State Legislators*.

### **Spreading the Word in 2026!**

Educating our fellow citizens and elected local officials has been a major goal of What'SUP Berks in 2025 and that effort will continue and intensify in 2026! In service to our Berks County communities, we will continue to spread the very bad news about the negative impacts of single use plastic bags on our environment, our economy, and our health, and the very good news that millions of people across the country and in Pennsylvania have already acted to change that! As of now, 12 U.S. states and some 40 Pennsylvania municipalities have banned SUP bags as the most effective way to promote the use of sustainable, less harmful re-usable bags. The Statista website reports full or partial SUP bag bans in 91 countries and territories world-wide. In addition to our several tabling events planned next year, What'SUP Berks intends to continue to reach out to churches, Grange's, service clubs, and other community groups to share our message. We need your help as community members who know of or are affiliated with any of these local organizations to connect us so we can share the good news. E-mail us with your community connection idea at [whatsupberks@gmail.com](mailto:whatsupberks@gmail.com) and we'll follow up---Thanks!



As part of our “newsletter swap” with SPOTLIGHT PA, we include the important message and link below! In return a copy of our newsletter is featured in their mailings, reaching over **3400** subscribers. Thanks to Spotlight PA and their Berks Bureau for the important information they provide daily to the citizens of Berks County!



## Local news, fresh daily

Sign up for Good Day, Berks — Spotlight PA’s free daily newsletter for Berks County

Your daily dose of Berks County curated local stories, practical updates, and community highlights delivered straight to your inbox every Monday-Friday morning.

What matters most in our community in five minutes or less!

Sign up at [www.spotlightpa.org/newsletters/gooddayberks/](http://www.spotlightpa.org/newsletters/gooddayberks/)

## What’SUP Berks needs you!

If you aren’t already an active What’SUP Berks member, we invite you to participate either on-line or in person in our What’SUP Berks monthly General Meetings.

Meetings are held the fourth Wednesday of every month 6:45-8 pm at the Wyomissing Public Library in-person or via Zoom. Check our web-site at [whatsupberks.org](http://whatsupberks.org) Events tab for changes. Request Zoom invite at [whatsupberks@gmail.com](mailto:whatsupberks@gmail.com)