

611 DELAYED INDEFINITELY! Up Date

By i80dwgcoalition
Water Gap - NEW
ADDED - PennDOT
- November 22: Read
the PennDOT update
added below
Reminder & Fact -
Both NPS and PennDOT
have been providing
regular updates, as
requested and as the
situation deserves.
Negative comments on
either agency might get
deleted.



What the PennDOT update suggests: I suspect PennDOT engineers need to determine if they can remove much less rock than they proposed, sufficient to both make the roadway legally safe, and not have a major impact to the federally protected environmental and historic/cultural values of the Mount Minsi slope.

While no one has said a Phase 1 (Tree/Rock Removal) or Phase 2 (Stabilization) will require a NEPA Environmental Assessment (EA), that is where we are headed. IMO that is what is likely being decided upon right now for Phase 1. PennDOT's goal has always been to get one lane open, while they move towards Phase 2 Slope Stabilization. I never saw how Phase 2 would have avoided an EA.

What is an Environmental Assessment – Read here: Environmental Assessment | National Preservation Institute (npi.org). This is the same process NPS, DEP and the State Historic Preservation Offices appropriately triggered for the NJDOT I80 Rock-fall Mitigation.

Feel free to ask questions in the comments.

PennDOT UPDATE: PennDOT Engineering District 5 Executive Chris Kufro wanted me to update you on the latest development regarding the Route 611 closure in Delaware Water Gap Borough and Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area.

Yesterday District Executive Kufro and Assistant District Executive for Design Scott Vottero received a communication via an email from the National Park Service (NPS).

At this time the NPS is unable to issue a Special Use Permit. PennDOT's intent and goal is to open PA 611 to a single lane condition controlled with temporary traffic signals as soon as it can be done. PennDOT will continue to work with NPS to provide them with anything they may need to issue a Special Use Permit.

The NPS stated they are still reviewing the Special Use Permit application and supporting materials. In reviewing information submitted by PennDOT as well as information gleaned from meetings and site visits, the NPS has considerable concern with the quantity of rock that is proposed to be removed. NPS believes the quantity is enough to possibly trigger a higher level of environmental review due to the increased scope and potential to impair park resources.

NPS stated they are working with their regional and Washington support staffs to continue to review submissions to determine the best course of action and to best comply with the law. In addition, NPS has initiated mandatory tribal consultation with the four Federally-recognized sovereign tribes for whom the Delaware Water Gap, including Mt. Minsi, has a high level of significance as their ancestral homelands, as required by law.



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