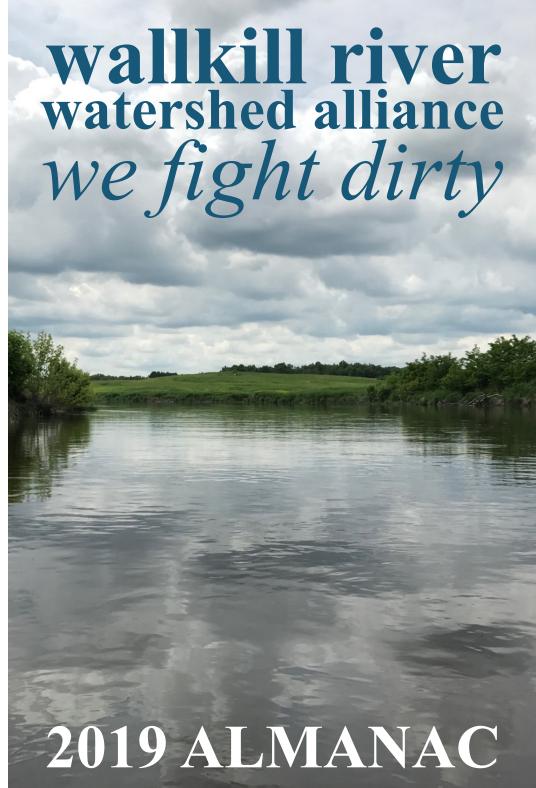




Hudson River Estuary Program

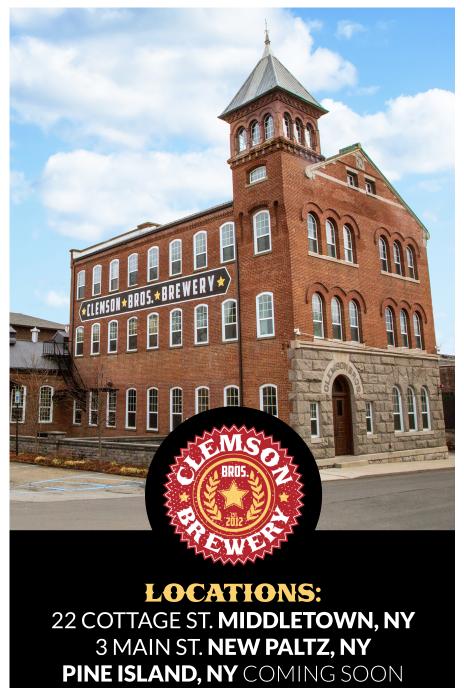
A Program of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation







The Wallkill River at Forest Glen Road, New Paltz, 2018



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wallkillalliance@gmail.com



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Cover: "Promised Land", Brenda Cemelli 2017

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Alliance at the New Paltz Regatta, 2017

Hauling tires out of the river at the 2018 Tire Pull, Wallkill



Citizen scientists preparing to sample the river, 2017.



Finding water bugs at Earth Day 2016

About the Wallkill River Watershed Alliance

Soon to be a 501c3 nonprofit, the Wallkill River Watershed Alliance was founded in 2015 to restore the river to its former health. We have three priorities:

Water Quality, meaning a Wallkill and tributaries that are swimmable, with pollution levels below acceptable limits and no Harmful Algae Blooms.

Public Access & Engagement, fostering a public individually and personally invested in the wellbeing of the river and its' watershed, as well as involved in its restoration. Recreation is critically important to addressing this Priority, and efforts to expand and promote recreational opportunities are a key focus of the Alliance.

Capacity Building, or increasing the time, funding, and people dedicated to restoring the watershed, for both the Alliance and our allied organizations, agencies, and governments.

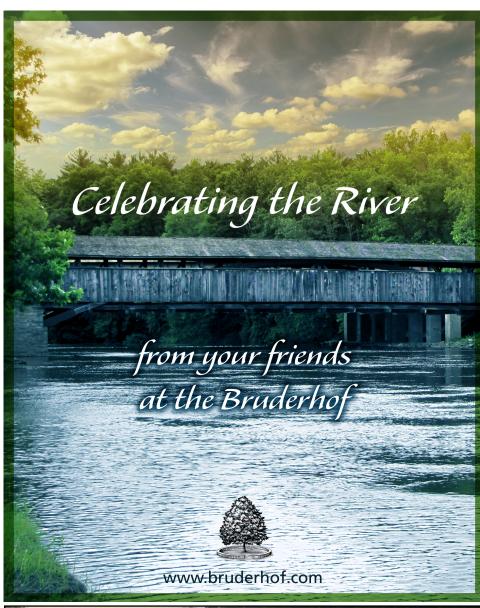
Our Mission

There is no life without water, and the water that flows through our communities is our responsibility. A river we can swim in and eat from is both our right and our responsibility. The Wallkill River Watershed Alliance was founded to restore the Wallkill River to its prime, to act as the voice of the River, and to advocate for the restoration of its entire watershed, using what- ever means we find necessary.

www.wallkillalliance.org wallkillalliance@gmail.com www.facebook.com/wallkillriver



The 4th Annual Wallkill River Summit, 2018





The Alliance Boat Brigade launches another river expedition, 2017.

A Wallkill River Water Trail

Orange County Water Authority, in cooperation with Ulster County, Wallkill River Watershed Alliance and the Hudson River Valley Greenway, has been mapping existing and potential public access points on the Wallkill River to facilitate paddling. A Wallkill River water trail is being created in the New York State portion of the river, with the goal of promoting paddling as a way to boost quality of life for those who live in the valley, and the river's role in attracting tourists.

You can join the Alliance and New Paltz Kayaking Tours on Thursday, June 20, at 6 p.m. for a sunset paddle from Sojourner Truth Park in New Paltz. Kayak rentals will be available for a discounted \$10, or bring your own kayak to join the paddle. To reserve a rental or RSVP, contact Craig Chapman at info@npkayaking.com or 845-594-6353.

There are at least 14 existing public access points, and several potential new access points, that have now been mapped. Visit **paddlethewallkill.org** or **waterauthority.orangecountygov.com** to find maps of the access points.

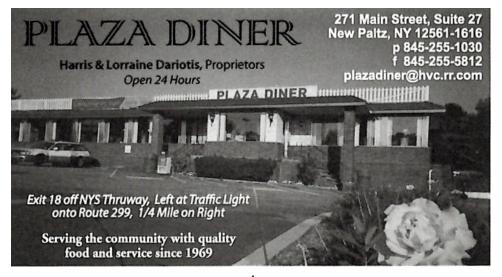
Here is the list, from south to north, upstream to downstream:

- Wallkill River National Wildlife Refuge- Winding Waters Trail, 8 State Line Rd, Westtown (there are two additional paddling access sites in the New Jersey portion of the refuge)
- 2. Exit 122 Launch, E. Main St., Middletown
- 3. Thomas Bull Memorial Park, 211 St. Rte. 416, Montgomery
- 4. Benedict Farm Town Park, 1675 St. Rte. 17K, Montgomery
- 5. Veteran's Memorial Park, Montgomery
- 6. Riverfront Park, 11 Farm Meadow Ln, Montgomery
- 7. Twin Islands Fishing Park, River Rd., Montgomery
- 8. Marcus Millspaugh Boat Launch, Maple Street, Walden
- 9. Popp Park, 3081 Rte. 208, Wallkill
- 10. Gardiner Launch, 215 Farmer's Tpke., Gardiner
- 11. Ulster County Fairgrounds, 241 Libertyville Rd., New Paltz
- 12. Sojourner Truth Park, 55 Plains Rd., New Paltz
- 13. OŚI River to Ridge Trailhead, Â 41 Springtown Road, New Paltz
- 14. DEC Boat Launch, 395 Springtown Rd., Rosendale



An early Boat Brigade out of New Paltz, 2016.





2019 Events

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Second Wednesday of the Month Alternating between Walden Village Hall and various locations in New Paltz Email wallkillalliance@gmail.com for more information

Saturday, April 27 11-5 p.m. **Earth Day Fair** Reformed Church of New Paltz

Saturday, May 4 Riverkeeper Sweep Multiple Locations (see riverkeeper.org/sweep)

Thursday, June 20

Thursday, May 16 5:30-7 p.m. 5th Annual Wallkill River Summit SUNY New Paltz, Terrace

6 p.m. Sunset Paddle with New Paltz Kayaking Tours Sojourner Truth Park, New Paltz

Saturday, June 22 10 a.m. Adopt a Highway cleanup Route 208, New Paltz (park on Old Ford Rd)

Sunday, June 23rd 11am-5 p.m. **New Paltz Regatta** Village of New Paltz

Sunday, June 23 **Boat Brigades Tire Investigation (BYO** kayak) TBA

Saturday, September 7 10 a.m. Adopt a Highway cleanup Route 208, New Paltz (park on Old Ford Rd)

Saturday, September 14 Wallkill River Race & Festival Village of New Paltz

Popps Memorial Park in Wallkill in the Town of Shawangunk, 2018. 5

Watershed Legislators from New York

Governor Andrew Cuomo

Email via governor.ny.gov 518-474-8390

Congressman Sean Patrick Maloney

Email via seanmalonev.hous.gov 845-561-1259

District 18: All Orange County watershed towns

Congressman Antonio Delgado

Email viadelgado.house.gov 845-443-2930 District 19: All Ulster and Sullivan County watershed towns

Senator James Skoufis (D)

skoufis@nysenate.gov 845-567-1276 District 39: Chester, Crawford, Montgomery, Montgomery (Village), Newburgh, New Windsor, Plattekill, Walden (Village)

Senator Jen Metzger (D)

metzger@nysenate.gov 845-344-3311

District 42: Ellenville (Village), Florida (Village), Gardiner, Goshen, Goshen (Village), Greenville, Hamptonburgh, Mamakating, Middletown, Minisink, Mount Hope, New Paltz, New Paltz (Village), Otisville (Village), Rosendale, Shawangunk, Warwick, Warwick (Village), Wawarsing, Wawayanda

Senator George Amedore (R)

amedore@nysenate.gov 845-331-3810 District 46: Esopus, Lloyd

Assemblyman Karl Brabenec (R)

brabeneck@nyassembly.gov 845-544-7551

District 98: Florida (Village), Greenville, Minisink, Warwick, Warwick (Village)

Assemblyman Colin Schmitt (R)

schmittc@nyseembly.gov 845-469-6929

District 99: Chester. Goshen. Goshen (Village), Hamptonburgh, New Windsor, Wawayanda

Assemblywoman Aileen Gunther (D)

GuntheA@nyassembly.gov 845-794-5807

District 100: Mamakating, Middletown, Mount Hope, Otisville (Village), Wallkill

Assemblyman Brian Miller (R)

millerb@nyassembly.gov 845-895-1080

District 101: Crawford, Ellenville (Village), Montgomery, Montgomery (Village), Shawangunk, Walden (Village), Wawarsing

Assemblyman Kevin Cahill (D)

CahillK@nyassembly.gov 845-338-9610

District 102: Esopus, Gardiner, New Paltz, New Paltz (Village), Plattekill, Rosendale

FIGHT DIRTY - CALL YOUR LEGISLATORS

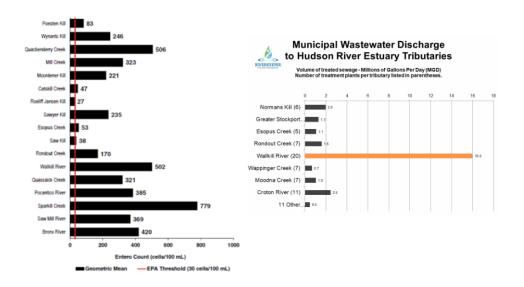
Call your New York State Senate and Assembly representatives, and the Governor (see page 20). Tell them this:

- I love the Wallkill River, and I am concerned about its water quality.
- I support the Wallkill River Watershed Alliance and its efforts to protect and restore the river.
- I support the Clean Water Infrastructure Act*, and the grants it provides to municipalities in the Wallkill River Watershed. Please make good on Governor Cuomo's commitment to double the \$2.5 billion investment made in 2017.

Why? According to Riverkeeper, 90% of 937 samples from the Wallkill River taken by community scientists since 2012 have failed to meet U.S. Environmental Protection Agency criteria for safe swimming. The Wallkill has among the highest concentrations of fecal bacteria of any Hudson River tributary that has been sampled.

No tributary to the Hudson River Estuary receives more treated wastewater than the Wallkill River. Twenty municipally owned treatment plants discharge 16 million gallons per day of treated wastewater.

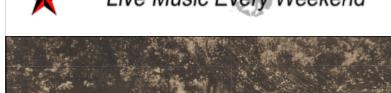
This means that the maintenance and upgrading of wastewater infrastructure in the Wallkill River Watershed is critically important to water quality in the river.





The Black Dirt farming region in southern Orange County, 2017.







Swimming in the Wallkill in New Paltz, 1920's. Photo courtesy Haviland-Heidgerd Collection.

^{*}If you live in New Jersey, ask your representatives to invest in water infrastructure grants to local municipalities, as New York has.



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Help Save Tillson Lake Friends of Tillson Lake is fighting to save this lake in Minnewaska State Park Preserve More Info: SaveTillsonLake.org Read: Ecological studies we have supported Read: Save Tillson Lake facebook group posts (you don't have to be a member) info@savetillsonlake.org Friends of Tillson Lake is a 501 c3 not-for-profit PO Box 228 Gardiner, NY 12525



Riverkeeper supports the Wallkill River Watershed Alliance and our joint efforts to improve water quality and public access.

riverkeeper.org/water-quality



membership meetings. Make a donation to become a member: https://tinyurl.com/wallkilldonation

Attend a monthly membership meeting

At monthly membership meetings, ongoing projects are discussed, members give feedback on Alliance activities and volunteer for projects, and otherwise drive the mission of the organization. You may also want to attend a meeting of a group focused on one of the tributaries with active projects ongoing: Mill Brook/Trib 13, Monhagen Brook, Saw Mill Brook, Shawangunk Kill and Tin Brook. Learn about meetings by signing up for our newsletter by sending a blank email to wallkill+subscribe@google-groups.com

Become a River Monitor

In 2015 the WRWA Boat Brigade started organizing paddles to observe river conditions and report any problems to localities and The DEC. A The effort has led to better management of stormwater runoff at construction sites, more inspections of wastewater treatment facilities and assistance to municipalities in their compliance with stormwater regulations. The Alliance has changed our approach and is now recruiting River Monitors who will commit to observing a section of the river at least once in 2019. Participants will use an online Google form to report their observations. To get involved send an email with "River Monitor" in the subject line to wallkillalliance@gmail.com.

Join a project team

The Alliance relies on volunteers to complete projects, including the organization of the annual Summit and the Wallkill River Race and Festival; the building of the Alliance's New Paltz Regatta boat; the gathering of water samples; fundraising in support of this publication; and more. Most projects are discussed at monthly membership meetings, and that's the best way to get involved. If you are interested but can't attend a monthly meeting, send an email with "Volunteer Interest" in the subject line to wallkillal-liance@gmail.com.

Attend a volunteer cleanup

The Riverkeeper Sweep and the Alliance's Adopt a Highway cleanups are great opportunities to get your hands dirty, and get your river clean. See the calendar for opportunities to get involved.



The Wallkill River close to where it meets the Shawangunk Kill in Gardiner, 2017

Signs of Progress for the River

\$36 million to improve water quality through commitments by state and local communities to invest in sewer systems in the watershed, including projects in the City of Middletown, Town of Wallkill, Village of New Paltz and Village of Warwick.

16,000 pounds of trash removed since 2014, including **nearly 300 tires**, during Riverkeeper Sweep, Alliance Tire Pull and Alliance Adopt-a-Highway events.

8,781 trees and shrubs planted along river and stream banks in partnership with DEC Hudson River Estuary Program's Trees for Tribs program, since 2007.

550 people educated about the Wallkill River at Alliance events in 2018.

46 businesses that sponsored the Alliance's 2018 Wallkill River Festival.

30 locations sampled by DEC to measure water quality in second year of an intensive whole-watershed assessment in 2018.

375 water samples gathered in 2018 by community scientists coordinated by Riverkeeper, including many in partnership with Wallkill River Watershed Alliance.

18 public paddles hosted by the Wallkill River Watershed Alliance, since 2015.

14 public access points for paddlers mapped by Orange County Department of Planning to help develop a Wallkill River water trail.

1,000 acres improved by farmers working with Orange County Soil & Water Conservation District with best management practices to reduce erosion and improve water quality.

5 stormwater reports delivered to municipalities by the Wallkill River Watershed Alliance to assist with their compliance with clean water regulations.

7 local governments trained in how to use land use law to protect water resources in 2018, with Pace Land Use Law Center and Wallkill River Watershed Alliance.

5 tributary projects to study, protect and restore the Monhagen Brook, Shawangunk Kill, Saw Mill Brook, Mill Brook/Trib 13 and Klein Kill. A 6th, for the Tin Brook, is on underway.

15 Facts About the Watershed

- 1. The Wallkill River Watershed covers 800 square miles, including 42 cities, villages and towns in New York and New Jersey. The Wallkill River is 88 miles long, and flows northward from an artificial lake in Sparta, NJ, to Sturgeon Pool, an artificial lake in Rifton, NY, before meeting the Rondout Creek.
- 2. Despite its name, the Wallkill River is the larger of the two arms of the Rondout Creek Watershed. The Rondout is the largest tributary to the tidal Hudson River, and it is part of the source waters for the 100,000 people who rely on the Hudson River Estuary for drinking water.
- **3.** One of the oldest human habitation sites east of the Mississippi is in the Wallkill River Watershed. Known inelegantly as the "Dutchess Quarry Cave," the site overlooks what is now the Black Dirt farming region, and is thought to be about 10,000 years old.
- 4. A Native American name for the Wallkill is Twischsawkin, "the land where plums abound." The Lenni-Lenape people who lived in the valley were farmers, as well as hunters and fishers. Today, agriculture remains a dominant land use. According to GIS analysis undertaken by the Wallkill River Watershed Alliance, the watershed is currently 60% undeveloped, 27% in active agriculture of some kind, and 13% urban/suburban development.
- 5. The first settlement of European colonialists was in New Paltz, where 12 French Huguenot families and their slaves settled in 1678. The rigidly conservative Huguenots went on to found a town that would become synonymous with hippies and gay marriage.
- **6.** The Wallkill Valley Railroad operated from 1866 to 1977, and helped to spur the growth of Middletown and other population centers. Today many miles of railroad bed have been transformed into a rail trail.
- 7. Six hydroelectric dams are operating in the Wallkill River, creating a series of impoundments that alter the natural flow of the river. Extensive networks of drainage ditches and channels have been created to drain the Black Dirt farmland and reduce flooding risks there.

How You Can Fight Dirty



Riverside Park. Montgomerv

"If there's a world here in a hundred years, it's going to be saved by tens of millions of little things. The powers-that-be can break up any big thing they want. They can corrupt it or co-opt it from the inside, or they can attack it from the outside. But what are they going to do about 10 million little things? They break up two of them, and three more like them spring up!"

Pete Seeger

The Wallkill River Watershed Alliance is looking for your help - not to do one big thing, or even two little things - but at least ONE little thing. Here are some ways you can help the Alliance and our mission to protect and restore the Wallkill River Watershed:

Fight Dirty: Call your state legislators

Tell your representative that the Wallkill River is important to you, that you support the Wallkill River Watershed Alliance's efforts to protect and restore the river, and that you support programs to clean it up. One of the most important of these programs is the New York State Clean Water Infrastructure Act, which provides grants to local municipalities so that they can improve water quality by upgrading wastewater infrastructure. In 2018 alone, state and local communities committed to \$36 million in sewer upgrades





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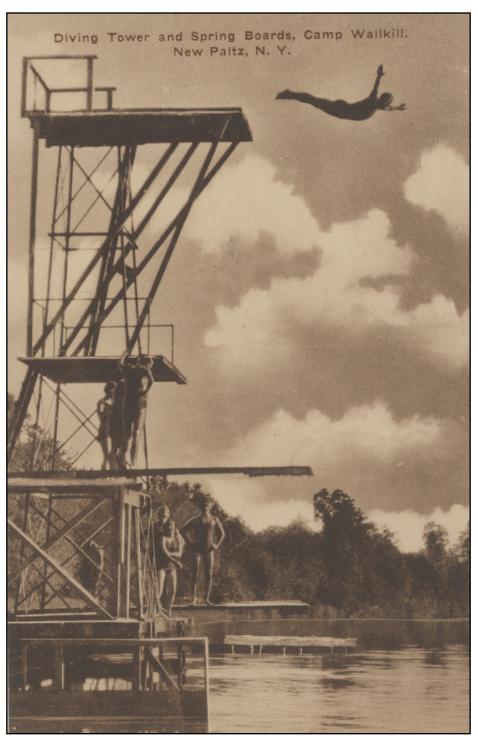
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17

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Mini Fridge
32' LCD TV
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50+ Free "On Demand" Channels
and more!



- **8.** The Wallkill River has a great diversity of fish species, though this is largely due to the presence of many non-native species. The Oriental weatherfish, a recent invader to the Hudson River Watershed, was first introduced in a Wallkill tributary in 2009, and spread to the Hudson.
- 9. Twenty municipally owned wastewater treatment plants discharge to the Wallkill River or its tributaries. At least \$71 million is needed to maintain and upgrade this critical water infrastructure. In 2018, the Department of Environmental Conservation documented the impairment of the river by Phosphorus, the removal of which may require additional treatments at these plants. Also in 2018, the state and local communities committed to \$36 million in sewer infrastructure projects to improve water quality.
- **10.** In 2015 and 2016, the Wallkill experienced Harmful Algal Blooms when cyanobacteria proliferated, producing toxins that impaired use of the water for recreation and irrigation. In 2016, the algae was observed over 30 miles of the river, from Montgomery to Rifton, and downstream in the Rondout; it persisted in parts of the river for as long as 60 days.
- 11. The Wallkill River is not safe for swimming at most locations, most of the time, according to data gathered by community scientists partnered with Riverkeeper. Since 2012, 90% of the 937 samples gathered from the river and its tributaries have failed to meet U.S. Environmental Protection Agency criteria for safe swimming.
- **12.** Other pollutants of concern in the Wallkill River include DDT and arsenic. DDT was identified in 1997 long after its ban in the U.S. Arsenic is recognized as an impairment to water quality in parts of the river in NJ
- 13. The Wallkill has 14 public paddling access points more than any other Hudson River Estuary tributary. A Wallkill River Water Trail is under development by the Orange County Water Authority.
- **14.** The Wallkill River Watershed Alliance formed in 2015, building on the work of the Wallkill River Task Force, and a 2007 management plan.
- **15.** The future of the Wallkill River is in your hands. The Wallkill River Watershed Alliance, with its partners and supporters including Riverkeeper and the DEC's Hudson River Estuary Program, is leading the effort to restore the river. We envision a river that is healthy for wildlife and humans, and central to the lives of those who live in the valley. We are working to build and support the community of people necessary to achieve that goal.



Camp Wallkill, New Paltz, 1920's. Photo from Haviland-Heidgerd Collection, Elting Library.

11

MS4-regulated municipalities in the Wallkill River Watershed

The following 19 local governments in New York State and 10 in New Jersey have MS4-regulated areas in the Wallkill River Watershed:

- City of Middletown, NY
- Villages of Goshen, New Paltz, Otisville, Walden, NY
- Towns of Gardiner, Goshen, Montgomery, Mount Hope, New Paltz, Newburgh, Plattekill, Rosendale, Shawangunk, Ulster, Wallkill, Wawayanda, NY
- Orange County and Ulster County, NY
- Townships of Frankford, Hardyston, Lafayette, Sparta, Vernon, Wantage, NJ
- Boroughs of Franklin, Hamburg, Ogdensburg and Sussex, NJ

Stormwater Coalitions in New York State

The following Stormwater Coalitions are among those active in New York State:

- Monroe County (26 municipalities)
- Saratoga County (16 municipalities)
- Erie County (42 municipalities)
- Albany County (11 municipalities + University)
- Tompkins County (11 municipalities)
- Rural Stormwater Coalition (3 Counties: Chemung, Schuyler, Steuben)
- Central New York (29 municipalities in Onondaga and Oswego Counties)

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A Stormwater Coalition for the Watershed

What is urban stormwater pollution?

When rain or melting snow runs off pavement, flows off of rooftops, or escapes construction sites, it collects and transports pollutants such as excess nutrients, bacteria, sediment, oil and grease, and pesticides. Nationwide, half of the waterways that are recognized as "impaired" under the Clean Water Act are affected by urban, suburban or construction runoff.

Why does it matter for the Wallkill River?

Pollutants flow with stormwater into the Wallkill River and its tributaries. The Wallkill River is impaired due to excess phosphorus, a nutrient that can cause the explosive growth of algae, including cyanobacteria that caused Harmful Algal Blooms in 2015 and 2016. The Wallkill River is also affected by excess sediment, bacteria and pesticides. Urban stormwater is not the only source of these pollutants, but with a city and several villages in the watershed, urban runoff is one significant source of concern.

What is the Wallkill River Watershed Alliance doing about it?

The Alliance is fortunate to have Rob Ferri on its advisory board. Rob recently retired from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, where he became an expert in the Clean Water Act rules for reducing the impacts of urban stormwater pollution. In 2018, he produced reports for five municipalities that are members of the Alliance, providing valuable assistance in complying with Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) regulations. In 2018 Alliance members and volunteers contributed over 1,000 hours of environmental work along the Wallkill River. These activities fulfill many legal requirements for public outreach and education.

What are the benefits of a Stormwater Coalition?

In 2019, the Alliance is exploring the possibility of forming a Stormwater Coalition to create a formal program for the watershed that would both give MS4-regulated municipalities assurance that they are in compliance with the law and help to achieve the goal of the law - to improve water quality. A coalition would also be in a better position to attract state and federal support. The project in 2019 is in partnership with Riverkeeper and has funding from the Environmental Protection Fund, via a grant from the DEC's Hudson River Estuary Program.

How can you get involved?

This effort may include outfall monitoring and other activities that will require help from volunteers, so stay tuned for how you can help. If you represent a municipality interested in Alliance's MS4 services, email wallkillalliance@gmail.com and put "MS4 interest" in the subject line.



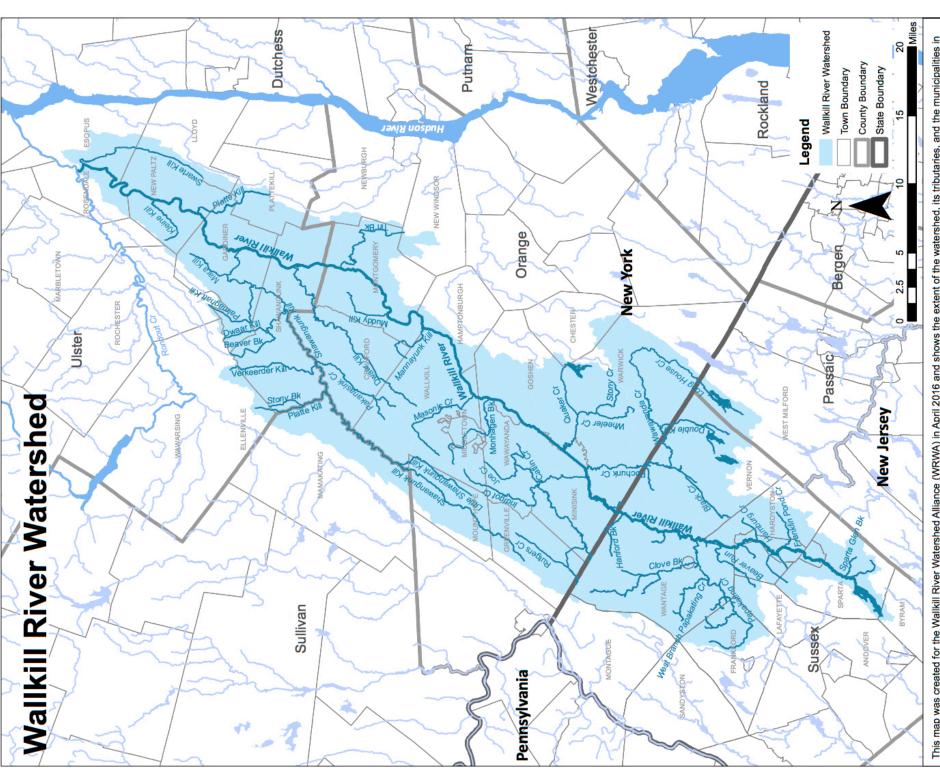












Cornell University This map was created for the Wallkill River Watershed Alliance (WRWA) in April 2016 and shows the extent of the watershed, its tributaries, and the municipalities in the watershed. Data sources include the United States Geological Survey, United States Census, and NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. The map was created by the Hudson River Estuary Program and Cornell University, with assistance from SUNY Geography
Intern Paulina Lustgarten. Contact Laura Heady at laura-heady@dec.ny.gov with questions about the map.

To learn more about WRWA, visit www.wallkillalliance.org or email wallkillalliance@gmail.com.