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## MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Albany County  
Department of Health

Albany County Office  
of Natural Resources

Albany County Soil & Water  
Conservation District

Audubon Society  
of New York

Capital District Regional  
Planning Commission

Citizens of Albany County

Citizens Campaign  
for the Environment

City of Albany Department  
of Water & Water Supply

City of Watervliet

Cornell Cooperative  
Extension of Albany County

Hudson Mohawk  
RC&D Council Inc.

League of Women Voters  
Of Albany County

NYS Department of  
Environmental Conservation

NYS Soil & Water  
Conservation Committee

Town of Colonie

Town of Rensselaerville

Trout Unlimited,  
Clearwater Chapter

U.S.D.A.  
Farm Service Agency

U.S.D.A. Natural Resources  
Conservation Service

Village of Menands

Village of Voorheesville

W. Haywood Burns  
Environmental Education  
Center

## ALBANY COUNTY WATER QUALITY COORDINATING COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2005

Formed in 1991, the Albany County Water Quality Coordinating Committee (ACWQCC) has been working diligently to protect the County's water resources. Over the years, members have completed many water quality improvement projects. The Committee also serves as an educator and as a clearinghouse for water quality information, as well as a forum where members and stakeholders can collaborate on activities to enhance water quality in the county.

The committee has completed over \$700,000 in grant projects and has recently taken a role in coordinating activities of regulated communities related to implementation of the Phase II Stormwater Regulations. ACWQCC is working closely with regional municipalities, engineers, contractors, and NYS DEC to foster a comprehensive regional approach to stormwater management.

### Water Quality Improvement Projects

Annually, Water Quality Coordinating Committees across the state are offered the opportunity to apply for mini-grants to complete water quality improvement projects.

- This year, the ACWQCC was awarded a \$10,000 grant from NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) to fund a catch basin maintenance program proposed by Albany County Department of Public Works. The County's program will include a map of catch basins, priority water bodies, and sensitive areas in MS4s; an inventory and assessment of the condition of catch basins; priorities for repair; and establishment of a schedule for catch basin cleaning. Workshops will be organized to train county employees to identify structural failures and conduct proper repair and maintenance. This funding will also allow the county to purchase equipment necessary to make repairs and provide OSHA confined space training required to allow county DPW staff to conduct repairs.
- The previous year, funds for this mini-grant program were awarded to the committee to conduct the Albany County Clean Sweep Program. Albany County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), in cooperation with New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Division of Solid and Hazardous Materials Pesticide Management Bureau, hosted a one-time collection event for the environmentally safe removal of cancelled, unwanted, or unusable agricultural and commercial pesticides. This program was well received and considered to be a great success, collecting and safely disposing of 11,610 lbs. of pesticides from 27 participants.

### Outreach and Education

Education and outreach about nonpoint source pollution (NPS) is a top priority for the committee because understanding NPS is a crucial step in identifying pollution sources and reducing or eliminating them. The committee has an ongoing commitment to putting knowledge about NPS pollution and water quality issues in the hands of children, educators, and local decision-makers. We periodically sponsor seminars and training on relevant topics such as septic system maintenance, wellhead protection, environmental regulations, and NPS pollution

- ACWQCC provides a forum for local high school and college students to present and get feedback on their research on water quality issues. Brian Tomasik, a senior at Guilderland Central HS, presented his *Investigation of Internal Phosphorous Loading of the Watervliet Reservoir* completed in August of 2004. His sampling and chemical analysis examined the role that phosphorous, temperature and dissolved oxygen plays in increasing macronutrients for plant growth, and their contribution to eutrophication. Several SUNY Albany students also presented their research on the effects of impervious surface on water quality in the Patroon Creek and Ten Mile Creek.
- Albany County Water Quality Coordinating Committee funded the printing of 300 copies of Guilderland Study Circle's 32-page booklet on water quality which serves as a community guide to information on the Watervliet Reservoir which is the drinking water supply for Guilderland and the City of Watervliet.
- Each spring, ACWQCC contributes to sponsoring local students in the Annual Capital Region Envirothon. Through the Envirothon program, schools partner with the County Soil and Water Conservation Districts to teach students about the natural environment using a unique hands-on approach. The Envirothon activities are designed to help students become environmentally aware, action oriented adults.

During the Envirothon, teams of five students from grades 9-12 compete in an outdoor competition that tests their knowledge of five topic areas: Soils, Aquatics, Forestry, Wildlife and Current Environmental Issues. Two Albany County schools, Clayton A. Bouton (Voorheesville) and Watervliet High School, participated in the 2005 Capital Region Envirothon. One of the Voorheesville teams won the overall event and went on to represent Albany County at the State Envirothon where they took 6th place out of 50 competing teams.

- Annually, ACWQCC pays for interested committee members to attend the NYS Conservation District Employees Association Water Quality Symposium and also contributes to district employees' registration fees. This symposium includes an intense four-day training session for District Employees, Natural Resource Conservation Service Employees, WQCC representatives, and other conservation partners across the state. Participants are offered a unique opportunity to learn from experts in the field of water quality protection and are provided an opportunity to network and learn from other environmental professionals.
- ACWQCC is in the process of developing a website and presentations to increase awareness about the committee's work, build local support for our efforts, establish a medium to communicate with the county legislature, local officials, and the public, and make the committee's resources readily available and easily accessible.
- ACWQCC is a founding member of the Onesquethaw-Coeymans Watershed Council and works on targeted outreach, education and planning efforts in that watershed. <http://www.ocwatershed.org>
- The committee conducts continued outreach efforts to assist communities and landowners in understanding and addressing Phase II Stormwater Regulations.

#### Technical Assistance

- ACWQCC members assisted NYS DEC in compiling information about the county's waterbodies and identifying impacted stream segments and potential pollution sources as part of the Lower Hudson River Basin assessment which included tributaries of the Hudson River in Albany County. In order to meet requirements of the Federal Clean Water Act, NYS DEC periodically conducts assessments of the water resources in the state and publishes a Waterbody Inventory with their findings. This report compiles data into an inventory of waterbodies that are known or suspected to have water quality problems and tracks progress toward their resolution. These reports can be accessed at <http://www.dec.state.ny.us/website/dow/bwam/305b.html>
- A subcommittee of municipalities was formed, comprised of the communities that own and operate municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s) in urbanized areas and are regulated by the Phase II stormwater regulations. This committee meets regularly to discuss local activities related to stormwater management and implementation of a \$100,000 state grant awarded to Albany County and the MS4s to address requirements of the stormwater permit. The committee members work closely with the grant coordinator in the County Planning Department to organize regional efforts. This cooperative effort allows MS4s to maximize resources and reduce the costs of funding the required program components.

- ACWQCC provides letters of support for grants and projects, and provides comments and recommendations on local planning efforts.