



Hudson River Watershed Alliance

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

SUPPORT WATERSHED GROUPS

We held **34 education programs**, including our annual conference, technical workshops, roundtables, and lectures, with **1,592 people** participating.

In response to COVID-19, we moved our programs online and **reached 82% more people** across the watershed than we did in 2019.

Over **32 watershed groups** benefited from our programs and direct technical assistance, including using our Zoom account to continue their meetings and outreach.



Annual Watershed Conference session on Shared Leadership with the Good Work Institute and Kingston Land Trust.



The Community Resilience Building Workshop in Ossining, held in February 2020 before COVID-19, brought together municipalities to identify assets vulnerable to flooding.

COMMUNICATE AS A COLLECTIVE VOICE

We published the **Work on Watersheds report** to share the accomplishments of 32 watershed groups. The first of its kind, the report highlights the diverse ways that watershed groups are making a difference, and is available at: hudsonwatershed.org/work-on-watersheds

Our monthly **Watershed Digest newsletter** provided information on events, opportunities, and case studies to over 1,800 people across the region.

IMPROVE INTER-MUNICIPAL COORDINATION

In partnership with The Nature Conservancy, we held 2 Community Resilience Building Workshops and wrote 4 reports to help **15 municipalities plan for climate change** in Dutchess, Ulster, and Westchester counties.

We brought Pace University's award-winning land use training to local leaders from **7 municipalities** in the Wappinger Creek, Saw Kill, and Roeliff Jansen Kill watersheds. We facilitated follow-up meetings to help municipalities in each watershed prioritize next steps.



Water quality monitoring on the Roeliff Jansen Kill.

The Hudson River Watershed Alliance unites and empowers communities to protect their local water resources.

GEOGRAPHIC REACH

A watershed is the area of land from which water drains into a river, stream, or other waterbody. The Hudson River watershed covers almost 13,400 mi², from the Adirondacks to New York City, and includes hundreds of tributary streams. We provide education and technical assistance throughout this region to support a healthy and resilient Hudson River watershed.

Despite the hardships, 2020 has been a year of growth for the Hudson River Watershed Alliance. We have learned so much during this challenging time. We're not going back to "normal," but adapting our work moving forward to shape a better future.

Online programs are effective. We held a monthly lecture series; a workshop on stream buffer protection; roundtables and topic-based conversations for watershed groups; the Toast to the Tribes, our annual awards benefit; and our annual watershed conference, all as virtual programs. We reached many more people across our large watershed, and continued to make connections with people and resources. We had 82% more participants in our programs in 2020 compared to 2019, and our monthly Digest email newsletter list grew by 40%.

"[T]he transition to a virtual conference was pretty seamless. The presentations were just as valuable as they would have been in person."



Work on Watersheds during COVID-19 panel discussion during our Annual Watershed Conference.

Clean water and access to nature matters.

So many people found solace along rivers and streams during the pandemic. We celebrated the Hudson River and its tributaries early in the pandemic, as we asked people to share photos from their walks, paddles, and outings. We continued to provide targeted technical assistance to community-based watershed initiatives. Specific projects included supporting Newburgh's drinking water Restoration Advisory Committee by serving on the Science Committee, helping the Wallkill River Watershed Alliance hold their 6th annual summit online, and providing feedback on the Wappinger Creek nine-element watershed management plan.

We must be committed to anti-racism. This year, it became clear that we needed to do much more to support diversity, equity, and inclusion in the Hudson River watershed. After attending trainings, our board and staff held a strategic visioning session to identify where these issues show up in our work and what actions to take. We joined the Hudson Valley Environmental Justice Coalition to help bring nationally-recognized speakers on environmental justice to local audiences.

"The HRWA is a powerful hub, and with the growing number of satellite groups and organizations, and the ever-expanding knowledge exchanges, ...holding the central place of reporting in the Alliance is important to all the water actions we undertake."



Paddling the Esopus Creek in Saugerties. We wrote a Community Resilience Building report with The Nature Conservancy for the Town and Village of Saugerties to plan for flooding, now and into the future.

Climate change is happening. We held two Community Resilience Building workshops in partnership with The Nature Conservancy and wrote four follow-up reports to help municipalities identify assets that are vulnerable to climate change and flooding. These brought municipalities together to collaborate, discussing shared resources and next steps. Our annual watershed conference shared updates on New York State's Climate Smart Communities program and the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, which provide opportunities to mitigate and adapt to climate change.