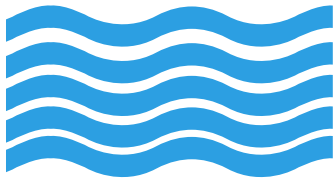


# Hudson River Watershed Alliance



## What is a Watershed?

A watershed is the area of land from which water drains into a river, stream, or other waterbody. Water flows off the land into a waterbody by way of rivulets, streams, and eventually rivers, and underground through groundwater aquifers. Watersheds are defined by the lay of the land, with mountains and hills typically forming their borders. Watershed boundaries rarely match state, county, or municipal boundaries. Every watershed is unique due to its combination of geology, wildlife, vegetation, climate, development, and history.

## Why Take a Watershed Approach to Our Work?

The Hudson River watershed, from Lake Tear of the Clouds in the Adirondacks to New York City, covers 13,400 square miles. Each stream that flows to the Hudson is connected to the health of the river, as is each community that is connected to the Hudson River directly or through its vast network of streams and tributaries. The large Hudson River watershed can also be broken down into smaller watersheds, to better align with issues or make management more feasible.

To protect and improve the health of the Hudson River and its ecosystem, we must take a watershed approach. This allows Hudson River Watershed Alliance and other watershed stewards to partner and work across city, town, and county lines with our thinking, planning, decision-making, and projects. When we have a specific water quality or flooding problem, we can look to the watershed to better understand the issue and potential solutions. A watershed approach also allows us to consider and integrate water-related social and environmental justice issues that are sometimes overlooked when a narrower approach to a problem is taken.



Hudson River Watershed Alliance works across the Hudson River watershed to support watershed groups, help communities work together on water issues, and communicate as a collective voice. Hudson River Watershed Alliance is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Hudson River Watershed Alliance acknowledges that the Hudson River watershed includes the traditional land of indigenous people, including the Munsee Lenape, Wappinger, Mohican, Schaghticoke, Abenaki, Haudenosaunee, Oneida, and Mohawk, whose relationship to the land and water is mutually sustaining and built around the recognition that humans are part of nature, not separate from it.

## Hudson River Watershed Alliance



**Vision** We envision a healthy Hudson River watershed and communities that support the watershed with meaningful and lasting environmental stewardship.

Watershed groups from the Adirondacks to New York City are empowered and respected voices that confidently advocate for healthy watersheds. Residents and visitors understand their connection to the Hudson River and local streams. Community leaders understand the significance of the watershed and the impacts of their decisions on it. Hudson River Watershed Alliance serves as a knowledgeable and trusted ally that supports watershed champions and their efforts towards watershed health and environmental justice.

**Goal 1:** The Alliance supports watershed groups' planning and leadership development and building their core strengths and skills through programming that is responsive to their needs.

The Alliance is a respected leader that strengthens watershed groups and helps connect groups and water champions to partners in the Hudson River watershed. Using a variety of methods, the Alliance supports a network of engaged people and long-standing and emerging watershed groups that are working together to protect and improve watershed health in their communities. By providing support, tools, and training, the Alliance supports their capacity for growth and success.

**Goal 2:** The Alliance advances meaningful integration of watershed community values, planning, and implementation across regional and municipal boundaries.

Regulatory structures, zoning, historic practices, and cultural norms can result in siloed and cross-purposed approaches to watershed planning and protection. These challenges exist across watershed boundaries at state, regional, and local scales. The Alliance aims to lead and increase community awareness and incorporation of cross-municipal and regional watershed approaches to planning, zoning, and other legal and regulatory frameworks.

**Goal 3:** The Alliance supports watershed communities planning for and responding to climate change.

The Alliance recognizes the critical need for watershed-based thinking, planning, and actions to be incorporated into climate planning at local, regional, and state levels. The Alliance focuses on climate change impacts to water and watersheds, which may include flooding, water quality, harmful algal blooms, source water protection, infrastructure, and other topics that would benefit from a watershed-based approach to problem-solving.

## Mission

# Hudson River Watershed Alliance unites and empowers communities to protect our shared waters.

**Goal 4:** The Alliance advances the integration of diversity, equity, inclusion, environmental and social justice (DEIJ), and becomes a trusted ally for watershed champions working towards their own DEIJ efforts.



The Alliance promotes diversity of thought, experience, and composition on its board and staff, and supports programs and collaborations where different perspectives are encouraged and welcomed. Advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice is critical to achieving our goals of clean water and healthy tributaries in the Hudson River watershed. We can't find solutions to the complex and intertwined problems of water pollution, climate change, and racism without working together as a community.

**Goal 5:** The Alliance communicates as a collective voice for watershed management across the Hudson River Valley, while respecting and supporting the identities and needs of individual watershed communities.

For over a decade, the Alliance has played a foundational role in promoting watershed management. Many watershed groups and champions rely on the Alliance as a trusted guide to issues, policies and opportunities. The Alliance plays an important role as a connector of grassroots groups to state- and regional-level decision-makers. We strive to be a thought leader that uses our integrated viewpoint and partnerships to elevate watershed-wide needs and successes while respecting individuality and supporting the voices of watershed communities.

**Goal 6:** The Alliance increases organizational capacity, consistent with mission, vision and values, in order to achieve the goals outlined in this strategic plan.

The Alliance strives to embody its Core Values through its everyday practices and procedures to embody excellence in nonprofit organizational culture and to align its administrative activities with the broader goals of this Strategic Plan.

## HRWA Strategic Plan 2022



# Hudson River Watershed Alliance



## Core Values

**Healthy Watersheds:** We value a sustainable and holistic approach to healthy watersheds that support public health and the natural environment.

**Equity and Inclusion:** We respect and strive to amplify the voices of those who have traditionally been excluded from water conservation and environmental decision-making.

**Interdependence:** We recognize that past, present, and future people depend on and are integrated with the Hudson River watershed for its many values.

**Collaboration:** We believe the Hudson River watershed and our communities will have a better future if we focus on our similarities and acknowledge our differences while we work together to address watershed-based problems.

**Integrity:** We are guided by honesty and ethical principles, and we strive to be a trusted resource and partner for watershed groups, government agencies, and peer organizations.

**Growth through Knowledge:** We value and trust different forms of knowledge and science to guide our work, and we recognize opportunity for growth in both success and failure of our undertakings.

## PROCESS

The strategic plan represents the Hudson River Watershed Alliance's mission, vision for the future, and our core values. It also lays out our strategic goals and the actions we will take to achieve our mission. This strategic planning process was conducted in 2021–2022, including a scenario planning workshop in September 2021. It built on prior internal planning and incorporated outcomes from the Alliance's 2022 *Watershed Needs Assessment*. The process was facilitated by Common Ground Consulting with full participation from the board of directors and staff.

## CONTACT

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