

Appendices

Appendix A: Watershed Characterization Templates

From 2022-2024, the Hudson River Watershed Alliance worked with local Advisory Committees to create watershed characterizations for the Sparkill Creek watershed and the Punch Brook-Roeliff Jansen Kill watershed. The process in each watershed included organizing a project advisory committee, delineating the focus watershed, gathering existing data, and organizing and summarizing the information into a written report. The watershed characterization pilot project was supported by funding from the Hudson River Estuary Program, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, with support from the New York State Environmental Protection Fund, in cooperation with NEIWPC.

The Hudson River Watershed Alliance began the process by soliciting applications to provide technical assistance to develop a watershed characterization, adapting the process outlined in the NYS Department of State and Department of Environmental Conservation *Guidebook on Watershed Plans*. Eligible watersheds included those that: 1) were located within the Hudson River estuary watershed, 2) were HUC 12 size or smaller (based on US Geological Survey delineation), and 3) included at least two local municipalities, in addition to the county or counties. The project team intentionally selected one rural watershed (Punch Brook-Roeliff Jansen Kill) and one urban watershed (Sparkill Creek) to better understand watershed issues, data availability, and ways to organize this information across a range of land uses.

The Punch Brook-Roeliff Jansen Kill and Sparkill Creek watershed characterization pilot projects took approximately two years. As part of the application for technical assistance, each watershed identified members of their advisory committee. Each project started with a kick off meeting, to explain the process and make sure the right people were at the table. After the kick off meeting, additional advisory committee members were invited to participate.

Each watershed's advisory committee met four times after the project kick off meeting. Between meetings, the Hudson River Watershed Alliance worked with consultants (Strong Outcomes, LLC and Green Goat Maps) to develop products for the Advisory Committee to review and provide feedback. These included watershed characterization fact sheets at the start of the project, an outline for the watershed characterization report, draft maps, and draft report narrative.

Each watershed characterization pilot project included a community presentation to share the work with the broader public. Each community presentation included displaying the maps; sharing information about the watershed characterization process and product; presentations from the watershed group on next steps and how to get involved; and an opportunity for participants to share their questions, concerns, ideas, gaps in information, what excites them, and next steps. Recordings of the community presentations are available below.

These reports were designed to serve as templates for future watershed characterizations, including the way the information is organized/table of contents, map themes and symbology, background information in various sections, and links to reference material that may be useful for other watershed characterizations in the Hudson River watershed. Templates can serve as a starting point, so that more energy and time can be focused on decision-making conversations to adapt the templates to better address local needs and interests, rather than starting from scratch ([Meierdiercks et al. 2025](#)). This is intended to reduce workload burdens and “decision fatigue” at the beginning of the planning process, enabling more time and capacity to customize maps and other characterization materials to best achieve local goals.

Table 5 includes links to each watershed characterization report to use as a template, along with links to additional project materials and context for understanding which template might be a better fit to use for your watershed. The watershed characterization pilot projects also informed:

- [Appendix B: Sample Watershed Characterization Maps and Layers](#) - copies of each map in the watershed characterization reports, with lists of the GIS data layers used
- [Appendix C: GIS Data for Watershed Characterization Maps](#) - compilation of links to specific GIS data files used in each watershed characterization map
- [Appendix D: Information Checklist for Watershed Characterization Report](#) - types of information referenced in the watershed characterization reports

Table 5. Comparison of the watershed characterization pilot projects (Punch Brook-Roeliff Jansen Kill and Sparkill Creek watershed characterization projects), with links to template reports, presentations, and other resources.

	Punch Brook-Roeliff Jansen Kill	Sparkill Creek
Watershed characterization report Maps	Punch Brook-Roeliff Jansen Kill Watershed Characterization Report (2024) Maps (PDFs) Maps (.pngs)	Sparkill Creek Watershed Characterization Report (2024) Maps (PDFs) Maps (.pngs)
Presentation at Watershed Characterization & Planning Workshop	“Punch Brook Characterization: Process and Lessons Learned” by Colleen Lutz (3/24/26) Recording Slides	“Starting a Watershed Plan for the Sparkill Creek” by Larry Vail (3/24/26) Recording Slides
Community presentation to share the project	Community Presentation video recording from Ancram Town Hall (4/25/24)	Community Presentation video recording from St. Thomas Aquinas College (3/25/24)
Project fact sheets	Project fact sheet (2022)	Project fact sheet (2022)
Land use type	Rural	Urban/suburban
Counties	Columbia County and Dutchess County, NY	Rockland County, NY and Bergen County, NJ
Watershed size	47.5 square miles, 6 municipalities	11.2 square miles, 6 municipalities
Delineation type	HUC 12 portion of larger watershed	Used previous plan’s delineation
Local lead	Colleen Lutz, Town of Ancram and Roe Jan Watershed Community	Larry Vail, Sparkill Creek Watershed Alliance
Project management	Emily Vail, Hudson River Watershed Alliance	
Writing/organizing information	Hudson River Watershed Alliance, with support from Strong Outcomes, LLC	
Cartography/Maps	Green Goat Maps, with support from Kate Meierdiercks, Siena University	
Funding source	Supported by funding from the Hudson River Estuary Program, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, with support from the New York State Environmental Protection Fund, in cooperation with NEIWPCC.	