



JOURNAL 2015





Photo: Leah Rae

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER



It's hard to believe, but Riverkeeper's campaign for safe drinking water and healthy rivers hits the half-century mark next year. We might be pushing 50, but our recipe for success hasn't changed one bit since we started out as the Hudson River Fishermen's Association in 1966: **Support the grassroots. Be data driven. Don't flinch when the going gets tough.**

Staying true to this code produced amazing results over the past year, like New York's precedent-setting ban on fracking, brought on by massive civic protests and over 400 studies documenting fracking's links to health risks and environmental damage. Helping to ban fracking may have been our biggest victory, but we're just as proud to have defeated potentially ruinous schemes to export local water supplies in the Catskills, hijack half a billion dollars in federal clean water funds to pay for the Tappan Zee Bridge project and expand oil shipment by rail on the banks of the Hudson.

Riverkeeper doesn't just fight bad projects; we help good ones succeed, as well. Grassroots advocates join forces with Riverkeeper because they know they can count on us not only to stand with them to stare down threats, but also to help them promote solutions to water resource and energy challenges – like we did when residents of Rockland County rejected a wasteful plan to “desalinate” water from the Hudson, and turned to conservation and smarter use of existing drinking water supplies, instead.

Partnering with the grassroots just gets more and more important because the state's commitment to clean water has become nearly non-existent. Cuts to New York's environmental staff have been draconian, contributing to a shameful 64 percent decline in clean water enforcement since 2010. Each year, we lag another \$800 million farther behind on needed water infrastructure spending, prompting top state officials to warn of a looming water treatment “crisis.”

In the face of waning government commitment, Riverkeeper is stepping up our own fight for clean water. In the past twelve months we've gone after dozens of polluters, winning big cases from Albany to Brooklyn. And, we've never been more data driven: Riverkeeper joined forces with over 130 “citizen scientists” to collect a record 2,000 water quality samples, which helped compel over \$160 million in new spending to improve water quality. Our one-of-a-kind sampling program is widely considered the “single biggest driver of better water quality on the Hudson” and has folks from South Carolina to Nepal planning to emulate it.

Sure, Riverkeeper hits 50 next year, but there's no sign of any looming midlife crisis around our offices. Who's got time for that sort of thing, when every week brings fresh advocacy opportunities, new sampling results documenting water contamination problems where Hudson Valley families swim and boat? We've never been busier, our work never more vital.

With government increasingly sidelined and threats to the Hudson growing, Riverkeeper hasn't got time to simply “fight the good fight.” We need to turn grassroots action and data-driven advocacy into tangible results. That's been Riverkeeper's formula for 49 years of clean water success, and if we stay true to the old-school values, we think the best years still lie ahead for the Hudson and your drinking water.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Gallay". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Paul Gallay - **President and Hudson riverkeeper**

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Gwendolyn Chambers  
 Leah Rae  
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A gift of any amount makes you a member, and full membership benefits start with annual donations of \$40. Our Sustainers Program includes members who make monthly donations—the most valuable kind of gift because we can count on your continued support while reducing overhead costs. **Contact** Kristie Nilsson at ext. 243.

**Junior Council**

The Junior Council is an active group of young professionals who serve as Riverkeeper ambassadors and are dedicated to increasing Riverkeeper’s awareness through events, social media and fundraising. **Contact** Geoffrey Chorbajian at ext. 253.

**Gifts of Stock**

Riverkeeper accepts gifts of appreciated stock, which are sold upon receipt to support our work and programs. **Contact** Monica Gutierrez at ext. 246.

**Estate Planning**

Planned giving is a lasting way of ensuring our clean water mission endures for generations. Special gifts can be achieved through bequests or charitable trusts, and can include real estate, bonds or other tangible assets. **Contact** Geoffrey Chorbajian at ext. 253.

**Workplace Giving**

A growing number of employees for major corporations and government agencies have access to EarthShare New York, making it easy to designate Riverkeeper as the beneficiary of charitable giving via payroll deduction. **Contact** Chloe Heintz at ext. 232.

**Business Membership**

Businesses support Riverkeeper in a variety of ways, including through direct donations, sponsorship of EcoSalons and the Riverkeeper Sweep, through purchase of tickets to our Fishermen’s Ball, and through participation in our corporate volunteerism and engagement programs. **Contact** Missy Falkenberg at ext. 229.

**Volunteers, Activists, Fans and Friends**

When it’s time to make a big noise, Riverkeeper needs its supporters. Sign up to stay informed about issues and special events, and to take action by visiting our “Get Involved” page on Riverkeeper.org.

**Join Us On:**



**Contact Us**

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**Our Mission:** Riverkeeper’s mission is to protect the environmental, recreational and commercial integrity of the Hudson River and its tributaries, and to safeguard the drinking water of nine million New York City and Hudson Valley residents.

# Patrol boat log

## REPORT FROM THE RIVER



*The core of the boat's work is to be the eyes and ears for the river. If we see a violation, we bring it to the attention of someone who can do something about it. In many cases, we deal with it ourselves.*

*Being out there, and being seen with that word — Riverkeeper — is always good for the river. That word is the entire mission, the entire job. We're conveying to the public on very basic level: The river needs keeping; it's not going to keep itself.*

— John Lipscomb



In Alplaus, a cold sunrise with sea smoke. The Mohawk is lovely. It doesn't get the recognition it deserves.



In April we patrolled the Tappan Zee Bridge construction area with lawyers and students from the Pace Environmental Litigation Clinic. Our role, now that the replacement project is proceeding, is to monitor as best we can to ensure compliance with the environmental safeguards in the construction permit. So far we've uncovered violations regarding dredging procedure, sturgeon monitoring and building without a permit at their prefab facility upriver.



We got a tip one Sunday evening in December about demolition debris getting into the Saw Mill River in Yonkers. Ironically the demolition was part of a project which is "daylighting" the historically blighted Saw Mill. We contacted the City, Scenic Hudson, NYS DEC, and the press. We saw a very nice response by Yonkers — by Monday morning the contractor was pulling back the debris and installing fencing and hay bales.



In December we took WABC-TV journalist Jim Hoffer to examine and film a terribly decayed rail bridge near Storm King which we had documented earlier in the year. TWO bomb trains, each carrying 3 million gallons of crude oil, use this bridge every day. Our initial video captured the attention of Sen. Charles Schumer and WABC. Schumer called for an immediate inspection by the Feds. But as of spring 2015 they had not even bothered to respond. We will be documenting other failing bomb train bridges in 2015. We hope to turn up the heat until federal and state regulators can't help but act.



In June, we raced a giant, beautiful squall across Haverstraw Bay for Ossining. Fantastic sky. The squall won.



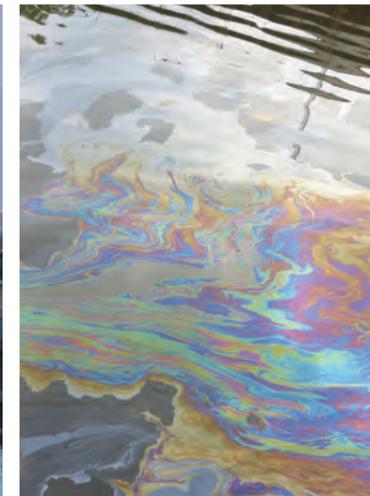
We patrolled the Port of Albany in June looking at industrial properties which might have material handling or stormwater runoff issues. We are investigating several. For this project we are working with a separate partner law firm. It's a way of expanding our capacity to get more done. Cases can be engaged which we don't have time for in-house.



We partnered with John McKeeby (left) and students from the Schoharie River Center in July for a short patrol and water quality sampling on the Mohawk River near Fort Plain. At right is Mark Lucas, Riverkeeper attorney. McKeeby and his program are energetic Mohawk advocates. They're wonderful.



Twelve years ago, when we first patrolled Newtown Creek, these birds would have been swimming in oil covered water if they were foolish enough to set down. But our continuing efforts, along with the work of many others, have stopped the chronic oil discharges into Newtown Creek. We have given back a little of what was taken.



The Gowanus Canal is a different story. Persistent coal tar bubbles up from the bottom creating a toxic layer on the surface and a nasty petroleum stench. The EPA is moving slowly forward with a cleanup plan. Thank you EPA, for taking on a job that New York City and New York State haven't been able to manage.



Wildlife, like this goose, visit the Gowanus because they don't know better. Evolution has not prepared them for this. They have no defense.

Because I live on the river and I have access in my back yard to the Wallkill River, I for simple reasons want it to be clean. Also there's a little bit of a boy in me that still wants to go out on the river and sample. I'm interested in the science of it.

— Richard Piccone, New Paltz

A couple years back I got a passion for fly-fishing. I think (sampling) has made me more conscious of trying to think about the quality of the water. It helps to create awareness. Once people know what's out there and they learn about it, over time the community of involvement will grow. — Sean Monahan, Olivebridge

Everybody that lives around here, when I tell them what I'm doing, they always ask a million questions. How bad is it, can I eat the fish, can I swim in it? I think with the data available, it allows people to really understand it better, and what we need to do to solve it, to make it better. — Carmine Castaldo, New Paltz

Our government people are very involved with us now. They don't see us as complainers, they see us as contributors to how to manage the watershed and the municipal decisions. It's huge. — Laurie Seeman, Sparkill

Creek Watershed Alliance



## Citizens.Science.Results.

Sampling yields powerful data, powerful advocates.

**F**illing a bottle with 100 milliliters of water is an act as small and powerful as casting a ballot. That's what teams of volunteers are finding each time they go out to capture just a bit more information to further the goal of cleaner water.

Riverkeeper's water quality monitoring program has grown to include both our own water sampling boat patrol along the Hudson River and the work of citizen scientists along New York City's waterfront and in 211 miles of Hudson Valley streams. The effort generates a trove of data that produces two tangible results: Cleaner water and people power.

The data drives investments to stop water pollution. Some examples: sewer investments in Westchester and Rockland County to correct longstanding problems, enforcement against illegal discharges in the East River and Catskill Creek, and long-term investments to control combined sewer overflows in New York City and the Capital District.

The data also inspires. Unlike other valuable types of water quality monitoring that inform our understanding of the health of waters, evidence of sewage and other fecal contamination hits people in the gut. If your beloved water, where you and your family swim, boat or fish, is contaminated with sewage, you want it clean, and you want it clean now.

That's why Riverkeeper's work with community scientists in a growing number of tributaries to the Hudson, and the data they gather, has inspired new or renewed watershed-scale protection efforts. These efforts are essential to addressing problems that will require long-term focus, and they use a variety of tools to do work that Riverkeeper simply cannot do alone.

Our Hudson River monitoring project, launched in 2008, had made clear within its first few seasons that tributaries tend to be contaminated more frequently, and to a higher degree, than the estuary itself. Since 2012, we have worked with community groups in a growing number of tributaries to extend monitoring into the watershed.

On the Hudson, huge progress can be made with investments in aging and outdated wastewater systems, especially those designed to discharge combined sewer overflows, and the runoff of polluted street water, in rain. Addressing these issues in New York City, northern New Jersey, the Capital District and a number of river cities is overdue – and it will take years, with the constant vigilance of watchdogs like Riverkeeper.

In the tributaries, many of the same infrastructure problems are present, but the problems are often more complex, involving a suite of other potential sources of contamination, ranging from runoff of manure from farms to failing septic systems and

stormwater systems. Some of these problems unlike those on the Hudson itself, aren't regulated under the Clean Water Act.

Defining the relative contributions of these varied sources, and prioritizing projects to clean the water, will require strong, active community groups, and a reconstituted Department of Environmental Conservation, with the budget, staff and leadership to enforce the Clean Water Act.

What's more, tributaries face a variety of issues other than fecal contamination, and these community scientists help maintain focus on varied problems, from erosion and flooding to nutrient overload, plastic litter, and toxic pollution.

The challenge for Riverkeeper in the coming years will be to play an effective role in channeling the human energy inspired by our monitoring projects, and to strategically support citizen-led efforts to address the multifaceted problems our monitoring has helped bring to light.

The good news is that we have a growing number of allies wading in to do that work with us.

### Our Program

Riverkeeper's water quality program measures *Enterococcus*, which indicates the presence of sewage fecal contamination, and possibly disease-causing pathogens associated with them. Most samples are processed in our "floating lab" aboard the Riverkeeper patrol boat. Our patrol crew samples monthly at 74 locations on the Hudson River.

Our 134 citizen scientist partners, as of 2014, sample 149 locations in seven tributaries (the Catskill, Esopus, Rondout and Sparkill Creeks, and the Pocantico and Wallkill Rivers) and at public access points around New York City.

**Measured against Environmental Protection Agency-recommended guidelines for safe swimming, the tributaries show a higher rate of failure:**

**23%**

of Hudson River estuary samples taken from 2008-2014 failed EPA-recommended guidelines.

**72%**

of samples taken from 2012-2014 in the non-tidal portion of tributaries failed those same guidelines.

### ON THE WEB

See the results of more than 6,700 water samples in a set of interactive maps at [riverkeeper.org/water-quality](http://riverkeeper.org/water-quality). Follow updates about the program, including videos featuring some of the community partners quoted here, in the Boat Blog at [riverkeeper.org/blog/patrol/](http://riverkeeper.org/blog/patrol/)

— Dan Shapley and Jennifer Epstein

# NEW YORK BANS FRACKING!



## Victory: The science was loud and clear – and thanks to you, our leaders listened.

New York's historic ban on fracking was the best sort of victory – based on science, driven by grassroots action.

State officials announced Dec. 17, 2014, that they would prohibit fracking as they detailed a mountain of research linking this natural gas extraction process to birth defects, respiratory illness, air pollution and the contamination of drinking water with carcinogens like benzene and formaldehyde.

The science spoke for itself. But it took community activists, health care professionals, elected officials and others to make sure state leaders heard – and listened. Ultimately, they did.

"I asked myself, 'would I let my family live in a community with fracking?'" Health Commissioner Dr. Howard Zucker said. "The answer is no. I therefore cannot recommend anyone else's family to live in such a community either."

New York became the first state in the nation with significant shale gas or oil reserves to ban high-volume horizontal hydraulic fracturing. The decision followed a nearly two-year review by the New York State Department of Health. In a 176-page report, the department evaluated scientific literature and the results of consultations with public health and environmental experts regarding potential health effects including drinking water contamination, soil and water contamination, air pollution, and climate change.

For example, a study by the Colorado School of Public Health found that residents living less than half a mile from oil and gas wells face cancer risks that are 66 percent higher than those living farther away. Researchers have also found an association between proximity to natural gas wells and increased risk of some birth defects. A recent study by Duke University researchers found average concentrations of methane six times higher and of ethane 23 times higher in water wells within one kilometer of natural gas wells. Both chemical compounds are associated with a significant risk of explosion, making well water unusable.

The next step is for New York State to take legally-binding action to prohibit fracking within its borders. The state's Department of Environmental Conservation will finish its years-long environmental review, which Riverkeeper will carefully examine.

Riverkeeper, along with numerous partner organizations throughout New York, consistently called on the state to thoroughly examine fracking's health impacts. We commend Gov. Cuomo and the agencies tasked with protecting the health and environment of New Yorkers for following the science. And we're proud to stand with so many tireless advocates who year after year made their voices heard and ensured that New York remained frack free.

A victory like this reminds the world that hard work and collaboration among good people can change the course of things for the better. That's important to remember – because we've got work to do.

Two related issues demand our attention: the build-out of gas infrastructure fueled by the rise of fracking in neighboring states, and the mishandling and improper disposal of frack waste from out of state and from conventional oil and gas production in New York.

## Challenge: Natural gas infrastructure and frack waste still pose threats

Riverkeeper is working to address impacts from the expansion of natural gas infrastructure in New York State, improper disposal of waste from Pennsylvania fracking operations, and the use of waste from conventional oil and gas extraction in New York State as a road de-icer and dust suppressant. Our specific concerns include:

**Constitution Pipeline:** Represented by Earthjustice, Riverkeeper continues to raise objections regarding this proposed pipeline, which would carry fracked gas from Northeastern Pennsylvania 124 miles to Schoharie County, N.Y. Despite our request that the environmental review of the project – which was woefully inadequate – be significantly supplemented and revised, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission approved the pipeline in late 2014. Riverkeeper and partners submitted a request for the Commission to reconsider their decision, in

particular because of the fact that the project has not yet received necessary New York State approvals.

**Algonquin Pipeline:** The Algonquin Incremental Market Project (AIM Project) involves replacement and expansion of the current Algonquin pipeline through approximately 15 miles of New York. The project is located within the Hudson and New York City watersheds, and involves a new crossing under the Hudson River. Of particular concern, the AIM Project will entail construction in approximately two miles of the already impaired Croton watershed – part of the New York City drinking water supply system – and appears to be merely the first of a number of related projects that will do so. The same company undertaking the AIM Project has announced an additional four miles of construction within the Croton watershed to complete the Atlantic Bridge Project, which will replace and expand additional segments of the same Algonquin pipeline system.

Despite the concerns expressed about the project and the inadequate environmental review, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission approved the AIM Project in early 2015. Riverkeeper subsequently asked the Commission to reconsider its decision based on several grounds, including the fact that New York State has yet to issue required approvals. We have highlighted concerns about the risk of a gas pipeline rupture near Indian Point nuclear plant, and called for an independent risk assessment.

**Frack waste:** Since 2012, Riverkeeper has been alerting New Yorkers that fracking waste is a current danger in our communities. Toxic waste from conventional oil and gas extraction and natural gas storage operations in New York State is being spread on roadways as a de-icer and dust suppressant, while waste from fracking in Pennsylvania is being sent to New York landfills. Leachate from those landfills can be processed in New York wastewater treatment plants unequipped to handle hazardous and sometimes radioactive contaminants.



Photo: Max Phillips via Creative Commons, Flickr

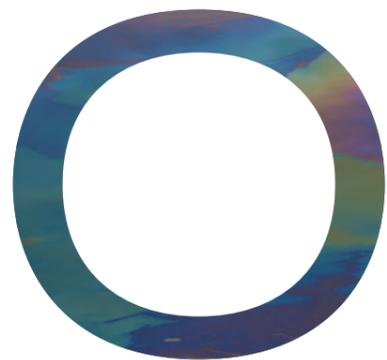


Photo: Oregon DOT via Creative Commons

Read more on "The Facts About New York and Fracking Waste" at [riverkeeper.org/fracking/](http://riverkeeper.org/fracking/)

As of April 2015, at least 15 New York counties have passed measures banning the use of this waste on their roads and/or its acceptance at landfills and wastewater treatment facilities. Riverkeeper is also supporting a ban that would cover New York City, and a state-wide ban that would ensure that waste from oil and gas extraction is not allowed to be spread on our roads, dumped into our landfills, or introduced into our wastewater treatment facilities anywhere in the state.

– Misti Duvall and Paul Gallay



and  
water  
shouldn't  
mix

Increasing amounts of crude oil are being shipped down the Hudson every day: two trains carrying 3 million gallons each, one barge carrying 4 million more, and every week a ship carrying another 8 million.

**In the event of an accident there is no effective way to respond. Every day we are forced to play Russian roulette with our lives and our environment.**

**Riverkeeper won't let up until government does its job: Protect us. Protect our rivers.**

When Riverkeeper stood up to protect the Hudson River from the imminent danger of a catastrophic crude oil spill or explosion, we knew we were in for the fight of our lives. This is a battle by the public against America's powerful petroleum interests and a nearly autonomous rail industry.

In New York State, we have been pushed hard up against the wall. Very few laws exist to protect us, and those that do exist have been used to enable industry instead. So we are joining a grassroots battle to channel public fear and dismay into concrete demands for government to do its job: Protect us from the reckless shipment of massive amounts of highly volatile Bakken crude oil through our state.

The movement of this hazardous cargo through the Mohawk, Champlain and Hudson valleys sprang up virtually overnight. So did our campaign to identify the dangers and solutions. Like so many of our defining battles at Riverkeeper, our effort is a combination of fact-finding, targeted legal work and citizen advocacy.

We're pushing on many fronts against proven dangers: oil barges grounding or colliding and spilling their contents; oil trains derailing and exploding like bombs; heavy "tar sands" crude sinking to the river bottom with no means to find or recover it. Disasters like these keep occurring all across North America. In none of the spills,

collisions or explosions over the last few years have first responders succeeded in putting out the burning oil fires or in recovering spilled oil from rivers. The risks to us and our environment are extreme and unacceptable – yet our state and federal leaders have done shockingly little in response.

**In New York State, we have been pushed hard up against the wall. Very few laws exist to protect us, and those that do exist have been used to enable industry instead.**

## Ban dangerous rail cars

**Problem:** Volatile Bakken crude oil is shipped in outdated, accident-prone rail cars that run next to our rivers and straight through our downtowns. Federal safety proposals for trains carrying crude oil and other hazardous materials are riddled with loopholes and half-measures.

**Solution:** In detailed comments filed as part of U.S. Department of Transportation rulemaking, Riverkeeper called out the federal government for failing to move far enough, or fast enough, to adequately protect communities and the environment from the risks of crude-by-rail.

We submitted exhaustive comments with the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration on behalf of almost two dozen “Keeper” groups and in conjunction with Scenic Hudson. The comments cited the long, industry-friendly phase-out of the DOT-111 tank car as one of the most egregious failures: Federal safety inspectors have regularly stated that these cars “can almost always be expected to breach in the event of an accident.” Instead of banning their use for hazardous material, PHMSA’s proposed rules will allow the 23,000 least-safe DOT-111 and CPC-1232 tank car models to be used to transport tar sands and “DilBit” oils (heavy tar sands crude diluted with flammable and toxic solvents) – no less dangerous a cargo.

**Status:** As these rules take final shape, Riverkeeper will keep demanding that federal agencies adopt the safest possible designs and operating rules. Meanwhile, thousands of people have joined Riverkeeper’s appeal for tighter regulations and an immediate ban on the use of DOT-111 cars. And with Riverkeeper’s help, five New York counties (Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland and Ulster) and several municipalities have passed resolutions against crude oil transport.

## Limit train length, weight

**Problem:** A single oil train can carry 3 million gallons of crude and stretch a mile long with 100-120 cars. Long, heavy trains can damage tracks, crossings and bridges – especially when dozens or more travel the same lines each week. And these heavy trains are harder to stop. Finally, the more oil on the rails when something goes wrong, the more oil ends up on fire, in rivers, and in our communities when those tank cars breach.

**Solution:** Riverkeeper petitioned the federal government for an emergency order that would immediately limit the length and weight of crude-by-rail unit trains to much shorter, lighter, more manageable sizes.

**Status:** As of spring 2015, there has been no response.

## Inspect rails, bridges

**Problem:** Crude oil trains use aging rail infrastructure and bridges that are in questionable condition. Only the rail companies themselves inspect the bridges routinely. Riverkeeper’s boat patrol captain documented crumbling concrete and

other trouble signs below certain bridges along the Hudson River and Rondout Creek.

**Solution:** Riverkeeper helped inform policymakers, the media and the public about the bridge conditions through video evidence, and gathered reports of other suspect spans.

**Status:** Sen. Charles E. Schumer called on the Federal Railroad Administration to inspect the bridges immediately and pledged to seek funding for more rail bridge inspectors. Only one federal inspector is responsible for 3,000 privately owned bridges across New York – and that inspector also responsible for bridges in 13 other states!

## Update spill response

**Problem:** The current U.S. Coast Guard spill response plan is inadequate to deal with a crude oil spill on the mid- or upper-Hudson River, from a barge or tank train accident. Coast Guard and oil shippers’ resources are concentrated in New York Harbor. The plan doesn’t adequately address a spill of Bakken or heavy tar sands crude into the river north of the metro area.

**Solution:** Riverkeeper is working with the Coast Guard to update its Area Contingency Plan and conduct drills for spill scenarios involving Bakken crude or sinking heavy crude oil in the upper estuary (north of Haverstraw and Bear Mountain). Riverkeeper has proposed and supported initiatives to strengthen New York State’s Oil Spill Fund and its capacity to prepare for and respond to a disaster.

**Status:** We continue to work with the Coast Guard, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to seek the best possible spill preparedness and response plans.

## Stop ‘tar sands’

**Problem:** Oil terminals threaten to expand and begin transporting heavy, toxic “tar sands” crude, which sinks when spilled into a waterway and is impossible to recover in a turbid, flowing river like the Hudson.

**Solution:** Riverkeeper and its allies successfully filed a lawsuit, submitted comments and urged the public to stop the state Department of Environmental Conservation from approving an expansion of Global Companies LLC’s rail-to-barge oil transfer terminal in Albany, which would have allowed the transport of tar sands crude on the Hudson. Riverkeeper is also arguing for the revocation of permits already granted that allow transport of large quantities of volatile Bakken crude.

**Status:** Our actions pushed DEC to halt its proposal to grant the Albany expansion, and the agency promised to reevaluate whether its environmental review was sufficient. And, due to legal and public pressure, Global scrapped its application to build a second terminal in New Windsor that would have allowed the company to transport at least 1.3 billion additional gallons of crude oil per year on the Hudson.

– Sean Dixon, John Lipscomb, Mike Dulong and Leah Rae



Photo: Flickr, Joseph a



Photo: Matthew Kierstead



Photo: Leah Rae



Photo: Wikimedia Commons



Photo: James River Association



Photo: John Lipscomb

Right column, top to bottom: Press conference in Kingston, oil train disasters in Lac-Megantic, Quebec and Lynchburg, Va., rail bridge in Orange County, NY.

# The fight for Water Democracy

## Riverkeeper joins local water activists on the front lines



In the past year, Riverkeeper supported citizens in three communities in their battles to have a say in managing their local water resources.

In Ulster County, after almost six months of community advocacy and in the face of the requirement for a full environmental review, Niagara Bottling Co. abandoned its plans to build a large water bottling facility on the banks of the Lower Esopus Creek and bottle up to 1.75 million gallons of water per day taken from the City of Kingston's reservoir in the Town of Woodstock. Ulster water activists are now forming their own water supply task force, with the goal of keeping public water resources in the hands of the public.

In Rockland County, citizens fought against United Water's problematic bid to build a desalination plant on the Hudson River. Over and above defeating this plan, these community members ultimately launched a groundbreaking approach to smart, sustainable water management.

And in Western New York, Riverkeeper has joined in the legal battle over whether the Village of Painted Post can sell up to 1.5 million gallons per day of its

municipal water to the Shell Oil Company for use in its Pennsylvania fracking operations.

What unites these local activists? What threat are they facing? And what is the ultimate goal?

**The Threat:** We have depleted, polluted, and diverted so much of this life-sustaining resource that we have created a water crisis, which may pose as great a threat to the Earth and humans as climate change, but has gotten much less attention. In the face of this growing dilemma, there is a desperate need for public oversight and control of declining water supplies. Government leaders need to step up now and make fundamental decisions about our water supplies, instead of relinquishing decision-making to private interests.

There are at least three significant problems with water privatization. First, water privatization is profit focused, so increased consumption generates profits. So, when water and water infrastructure are privatized, there's no real incentive to conserve.

Also, privatization may ultimately give only those individuals and communities with money access to clean water; water will flow where the money is, and not where it is needed. Finally, when water is withdrawn or diverted from a watershed, the regional ecosystem might be critically altered and even devastated.

**The Fight:** Water resources that have traditionally been viewed as a public resource are increasingly being privatized. Private interests may provide municipal water services, control large quantities of water used in industrial farming and energy production, put massive quantities of freshwater in bottles to sell at exorbitant prices, and buy up groundwater rights and whole watersheds in order to own large quantities of water stock, which they now trade in shares. This shift has been facilitated by the needs of cash-strapped communities because they are unable to meet the ongoing costs of delivering essential water services. The consumer embrace of bottled water itself encourages people to accept the

view of water as a commodity, setting the stage for acceptance of the corporate takeover of water.

But many citizens and communities are mobilizing in defense of their own common interests. Environmentalists and grassroots activists, like the citizens of Rockland and Ulster Counties, are fighting for control of their local water resources and investing time, and attention to the cause. They seek accountability, transparency and public oversight of decision-making over our common water resources. They believe clean drinking water should be held in the public trust for the benefit of all, not controlled by corporations for the benefit of the few.

**The Goal:** The water democracy movement asks for governments to acknowledge that access to water is a fundamental human right. It also insists that it's the obligation of government to deliver sufficient, safe, and affordable water to its citizens as a public service. Activists also seek commitments from government leaders to protect and conserve

water supplies as a part of their civic mandate to work for the public good. Finally, they seek a role in the control of water through local, democratic, and public management.

Riverkeeper stands ready to support our local partners and communities who have taken on this fight in Rockland and Ulster Counties and beyond. After their initial victories against profit-driven plans to build desalination and water bottling plants, the water resource coalitions formed to fight these threats now turn their attention to developing more sustainable water management plans for their communities and watersheds. We are honored and excited to stand by their side.

— Kate Hudson



Cooper Lake

Photo: Michael Neil O'Donnell

“A mighty contest has grown between those (usually powerful) forces and institutions that see water as a commodity, to be put on the open market and sold to the highest bidder, and those who see water as a public trust.”

— Maude Barlow, *Blue Covenant*

# A new energy landscape *without* INDIAN POINT



Photo: John Lipscomb

## It's clearer than ever: Safe and reliable electricity will continue to flow in the absence of the Indian Point nuclear plant. No need to take our word for it.

The planning is well under way for better efficiencies and cleaner sources of energy after the aging, leaking nuclear power plant is shuttered. Evidence continues to mount that the Indian Point plant can be retired without undermining the state's electric grid and with minimal increases in costs to consumers. The growing evidence dispels the propaganda from Indian Point's owner, Entergy, about how "vital" the plant is for the region's power needs.

### Indian Point Contingency Plan

In response to recommendations from Governor Cuomo's Energy Highway Blueprint, in November 2013, the NY Public Service Commission approved a suite of transmission, energy efficiency, and demand-side management projects specifically aimed at fostering electric grid reliability in the event that Indian Point shuts down.

This "Contingency Plan" includes three transmission projects that are scheduled to be in place by 2016 and would reduce the region's energy needs by 600 megawatts (MW), and an energy efficiency/demand response/combined heat and power program designed to reduce downstate electricity use by 180 MW. These projects will improve reliability while actually reducing electricity costs to ratepayers. The PSC says that any remaining reliability need created by the closure of Indian Point would be met by the market: through either the 1,900 MW of new generation resources in the

queue to be available by the summer of 2016 or by the some 1,500 MW of existing generation resources returning to service.

### 2014 Synapse Analysis

Entergy continues to make spurious claims about reliability and supposed increases in air emissions, and skyrocketing electricity costs associated with an Indian Point closure.

By 2011 and 2012, Riverkeeper-commissioned studies by Synapse Energy Economics had already disproved the need for electricity generated by Indian Point. Now, in the context of evidentiary hearings requested by Entergy – where the company is fighting to evade clear requirements to take measures to stop the environmental devastation caused by the plant's destructive once-through cooling water system – Riverkeeper once again commissioned Synapse to evaluate the situation. Its new analysis is consistent with its

previous assessments and backed by modeling reflecting recent energy developments. Synapse found:

- New York's electric system will continue to be reliable after a shutdown of Indian Point;
- Shutting down the plant could result in declines over time in harmful pollutant emissions, even more so when considering increases in energy efficiency and renewable resources in the energy mix; and
- If Indian Point shuts down, impacts on energy prices would be minimal; in fact, energy prices in New York City could actually decrease.

It's no longer a question of whether Indian Point can be shut down, it certainly can. The environmentally destructive, outdated, unsafe, and undependable nuclear plant no longer has a place in New York's energy landscape.

– Deborah Brancato

## Indian Point Legal Update

### Riverkeeper continues to wage a multi-layered campaign aimed at shuttering the aging, incredibly harmful and dangerous Indian Point for good:

**State Water Discharge Permit and Water Quality Certification Proceedings:** In April 2014, Riverkeeper was back at DEC headquarters in Albany for three weeks of adjudicatory hearings related to whether "closed-cycle" cooling can be installed at Indian Point in order to dramatically reduce the slaughter of millions of aquatic organisms in the Hudson River caused by the plant's existing "once-through" cooling water intake structure. Riverkeeper has been fighting to get the owners of the plant to retrofit to this technology for decades, and was finally given the opportunity to make the case. And that we did: DEC and Riverkeeper's experts presented testimony and analysis plainly showing that closed-cycle cooling is feasible and necessary, and unequivocally the best option for minimizing the devastating impact Indian Point has on critically important Hudson River ecosystems.

**NRC License Renewal Proceeding:** After years of delay, in November 2014, the staff of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) finally released an additional safety report that had held the case from moving forward to hearings on various safety issues identified by Riverkeeper as well as the State of New York. Despite the lengthy amount of time the NRC Staff took to complete its supplemental analysis, the safety report, according to Riverkeeper and NYS long-standing expert consultants, was riddled with deficiencies. The NRC staff's report would once again give Entergy a rubber stamp to continue running Indian Point into the ground despite significant safety concerns. In our ongoing effort to hold Entergy's and NRC's feet to the fire, this past February, Riverkeeper and NYS jointly filed yet another safety claim, or "contention" relating to whether internal reactor components will succumb to aging-related degradation during Entergy's requested license renewal period. The licensing board recently ruled in our favor that the new issue warrants a hearing.

**Nuclear Waste Storage Impacts:** In September 2014, the NRC decided to issue an "extended waste storage rule" and generic Environmental Impact Statement, generically disregarding environmental impacts of indefinite storage

of spent nuclear fuel at reactor sites like Indian Point in the event that no long-term disposal solution for the nation's nuclear waste is ever found. In response, in October, Riverkeeper joined a coalition of partners to again sue the NRC in federal court for failing to comply with federal safety and environmental requirements, as well as a previous court decision on the matter. The lawsuit complemented similar lawsuits filed by the states of New York, Connecticut, and Vermont, as all those part of the long-standing battle rallied to challenge NRC's complacency and carelessness at ignoring critical site-specific environmental risks posed by ever growing inventories of nuclear waste at reactors like Indian Point.

### What's Ahead:

**State Water Discharge Permit and Water Quality Certification Proceedings:** With the case all but made on the feasibility and necessity of closed-cycle cooling, just a few issues remain in the state permit and certification proceedings. Next up is the opportunity for DEC staff and Riverkeeper to show that, as a potential alternative to closed-cycle cooling, Indian Point can and should shut down every year during critical fish migration and spawning seasons in order to avoid impacts to aquatic life. In proceedings scheduled for September, once again our experts will assemble in Albany to debunk Entergy's spurious claims that taking necessary measures to protect the aquatic ecology of the Hudson River is somehow not possible.

**NRC License Renewal Proceeding:** Now that the NRC staff has finished its lackluster supplemental safety review, and our licensing board has advanced the new safety issue reality identified by Riverkeeper and New York State, we will finally get the opportunity to have hearings on the various contentions that have been on hold for years. These contentions implicate critical technical issues that easily demonstrate how the badly aging, unsafe Indian Point cannot continue to operate safely for an additional 20 years. The case is currently on track to proceed to these adjudication hearings later this year.



Old Champlain Canal, Schuylerville

Photo: Abigail Jones

## GE isn't finished cleaning Hudson River PCBs yet

A milestone in the Hudson River's recovery from industrial pollution is within reach: **General Electric will complete a major phase of its dredging of PCB-laden sediment from the upper 40 miles of the river this year. In 2016 it will finish an effort to restore the aquatic habitat.**

The Superfund project, called for under a 2002 agreement with the EPA, is ahead of schedule, and GE has been able to remove hundreds of thousands more cubic yards of contaminated sediment than expected. But GE isn't off the hook for the severe long-term damage it has caused to the river, its communities, and its economy. It needs to be held accountable for its decades-long discharge of PCBs from its plants in Hudson Falls and Fort Edward; liabilities that fall outside the 2002 agreement.

Riverkeeper continues its efforts to get GE to take responsibility for the PCBs found in the Champlain Canal navigation channel, which has prevented the New York State Canal Corporation from achieving its mandated duty of maintaining the channel to navigable depths. PCB contamination has also interfered with commercial and recreational economic opportunities on the river. Taxpayers and toll-payers will be forced to pay hundreds of millions for the dredging of the channel if GE doesn't step up. If the burden fell on the state it would be a decades-long effort, yet it would likely amount to a mere half-season of dredging for GE to complete it.

Riverkeeper is also calling on GE to address its liability for 136 acres of PCB hot spots through a voluntary cooperative agreement under the Natural Resource

Damages (NRD) Assessment, instead of turning to the litigation route, which could take a decade or more. This liability is in addition to its Superfund cleanup responsibilities and requires that GE compensate the public for the injury and loss of services from its pollution of the Hudson.

The federal agencies responsible for the NRD Assessment have recognized that such "restoration dredging" is critical for the health of the river and for certain restoration projects to proceed.

Finally, GE and EPA have just begun the next phase of remediation of PCBs on the floodplains. This remediation will be primarily land-based and mostly on the Upper Hudson. Like river dredging, floodplains remediation has the potential to make a notable improvement in the health and economy of the entire river.

These ongoing concerns are the driving force behind Riverkeeper's call for communities and business organizations to sign the "Municipal Resolution Regarding the Removal of PCBs from the Hudson River." The resolution tells GE – and New York State – that we won't settle for less than restoration of the Hudson River to its full health and value as a natural and economic resource.

– Abigail Jones

**Taxpayers and toll-payers will be forced to pay hundreds of millions for the dredging of the channel if GE doesn't step up.**



Photo: Leah Rae

## Blowing the whistle on 'pilfering' of clean water funds

Riverkeeper blew the whistle **when Albany pulled an outrageous move – raiding New York's clean water fund to help pay for construction of the new Tappan Zee Bridge.**

We stood with good-government groups, transportation advocates and fellow environmentalists to fight a \$511 million loan from the state's Clean Water State Revolving Fund. Even as the loan moved through state-controlled agencies, newspaper editorial boards saw the plan for what it was: "Pilfering." "Betrayal." "Bad governance."

The fund was created to help communities finance infrastructure projects for healthy water systems, and restore river ecosystems — not to finance construction, demolition and dredging for a giant bridge.

Even after the EPA disqualified \$482 million of the loan, Gov. Andrew Cuomo's administration, defying law and common sense, vowed a challenge.

Riverkeeper, Waterkeeper Alliance and Environmental Advocates of New York – represented by Pace Environmental Litigation Clinic – filed suit to block the entire loan because it was approved without public notice or comment.

This was just one aspect of our work as watchdog on the bridge project. In August 2014, Riverkeeper tipped off the Department of Environmental Conservation that construction had begun illegally on an upriver staging area where components of the bridge will be pre-assembled. During a patrol of the

Port of Coeymans, near Albany, we spotted poured concrete for piers that will extend into the river, across from sensitive sturgeon habitat. The DEC stopped the work, fined the company \$10,000 for starting the work without the necessary permits, and ordered it to pay \$55,000 toward an environmental project.

Riverkeeper successfully pressed for improvements in the plan for the facility itself, including better handling of dredged sediment to prevent contaminants from returning to the river.

Our Hudson River patrols in 2013 documented poor dredging practices that threatened to contaminate the river, and found inadequate monitoring of endangered sturgeon.

Riverkeeper and Scenic Hudson helped secure a more strict construction permit for the bridge through a settlement agreement with New York State. We continue to monitor the massive construction project to ensure it complies with terms meant to protect the river and the life within it.

– Leah Rae

**Riverkeeper, Waterkeeper Alliance and Environmental Advocates of New York – represented by Pace Environmental Litigation Clinic – filed suit to block the entire loan because it was approved without public notice or comment.**

# NEW YORK CITY

## EXXON SETTLEMENT PAYS DIVIDENDS

Riverkeeper's battle for cleanup of the ExxonMobil oil spill is paying off, with millions being awarded for community "greening" projects in Greenpoint, Brooklyn.



"One by one, the rivers around Manhattan have emerged from decades of industrial abuse. The Hudson River has its five-mile ribbon of parkland and active kayaking community; the Bronx River, the occasional beaver sighting; and the East River, a popular ferry service – all contributing to the sense that New York is, in fact, a river city."

- Lisa W. Foderaro, *New York Times*

Over the past few years, we've written about Riverkeeper's involvement in, and work toward remediation of, the ExxonMobil oil spill in Brooklyn. After discovering significant and ongoing oil pollution in Newtown Creek during boat patrols in the early 2000s, Riverkeeper's investigations team was able to track the pollution back to the former Exxon refinery site in Greenpoint. In the years since, after filing a federal lawsuit against Exxon in 2004, national outcry and media attention brought attention to the unacceptable levels of industrial pollution significantly affecting this community, and the Newtown Creek.

According to the EPA's subsequent investigation, the actual amount of oil spilled was between 17-30 million gallons.

In response to the public concern and media attention, then-New York Attorney General Andrew Cuomo filed a federal suit against Exxon in 2007 that set up settlement negotiations a year later between Exxon, New York State, and Riverkeeper. After over two years of negotiations, a settlement was reached that resulted in an enforceable "consent decree" and remediation plan for ExxonMobil's clean-up activities and a \$19.5 million Environmental Benefit Projects (EBP) payment, to be used to fund benefit projects in the Greenpoint Community.

In 2014, tangible results in this decade-long clean-up fight took shape; the ExxonMobil settlement of \$19.5 million – for use in community greening efforts like wildlife restoration and green roofs – reached a milestone. Riverkeeper, as a member of the "Community Advisory Panel" for the Greenpoint Community Environmental Fund ([www.gcefund.org](http://www.gcefund.org)), is proud to report that – as of this printing – 24 projects have been given \$11 million from the EBF, and leveraged \$35 million in total investments in the community.

As a mix of small and large projects, the awards given out to-date are likely going to make a resounding, permanent, and positive impact on the community, Newtown Creek, and the City. With more work to be done in cleaning

up the oil spill, restoring the ecosystem, and doing so in conjunction with the ongoing Superfund remediation and NYC's combined sewer planning processes, Riverkeeper looks forward to continuing to support the Greenpoint community and Newtown Creek.

- Sean Dixon

**After filing a federal lawsuit against Exxon in 2004, national outcry and media attention brought attention to the unacceptable levels of industrial pollution significantly affecting this community, and the Newtown Creek.**

# Sewage and stormwater – not a good combination

*Combined sewers – where sewage mixes with stormwater and is discharged into waterways – can create significant public health and environmental risks.*

In New York City, the combined sewer overflow (CSO) system discharges 27-30 billion gallons of untreated sewage and stormwater annually from over 400 outfalls across the city's 538 miles of coastline.

These CSOs can be triggered by as little as a tenth of an inch of rainfall, resulting in impaired water quality, swimming advisories, and beach closings. The problem is exacerbated by aging infrastructure, flooding, trash and debris, and other water infrastructure problems.

Riverkeeper has helped to remedy this problem for decades, beginning with legal action in the 1990s. Since that time, there has been federal action (a CSO policy), and several iterations of a binding legal agreement between New York State and the New York City's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Two decades of work are bearing fruit, resulting in some major planning changes. However, there's still a great need for public participation and agency transparency.

In addition to developing these long-term control plans for 10 watersheds around the city, an eleventh LTCP must be developed for the whole city to provide for a final, hard-look at the state of green infrastructure planning and grey infrastructure upgrades across the five boroughs.

The city has reached a crossroads for the future of CSO management, and further action is needed in developing green and grey infrastructures.

## Green Infrastructure

After years of delay, DEP began a new approach to reducing CSO related stormwater pollution by releasing its Green Infrastructure Plan in 2010, and integrating certain aspects of this plan into its 2012 Consent Order agreement with the state. Green infrastructure is a way to capture rainwater before it makes it to the sewers, thereby reducing the likelihood of CSO overflows even during heavy rainstorms.



Photo: Flickr, Edward Blake

Under the state-approved plan, the city is aiming to be able to capture the first inch of rainfall from 10 percent of the city's impervious surfaces (e.g., streets, parking lots, roofs) by the year 2030. In 2014, the city's work toward this goal began in earnest, but Riverkeeper and its partners are concerned that the short and long-term goals of this effort will not be met. Moreover, Riverkeeper is concerned that the roll-out of green infrastructure on private property and in public works projects isn't happening fast enough.

## Grey Infrastructure

Grey infrastructure, unlike green infrastructure, handles stormwater (and in this case sewage as well) once it's reached the storm system. Right now, the city is wrapping up many grey infrastructure repair projects that began about a decade ago.

Over the past year the city has been hosting meetings in several of its watersheds and has been developing plans for the next round of infrastructure projects. In 2014, for example, LTCPs were submitted for Alley Creek and Flushing Creek in Queens, and Westchester Creek and the Hutchinson River in the Bronx. In 2015, we expect to see the final LTCPs for the Bronx River and Gowanus Canal, as well as conversations kicking off the process for Flushing Bay and Coney Island.

The vital element that has been missing at many of these meetings has been the public. With few exceptions, there have only been very few attendees at the meetings held to develop these plans. Because the LTCPs lay out the DEP's plans for mitigating (with grey infrastructure) CSO volumes (from building flood gates and weirs to pumping stormwater into other watersheds, constructing new overflow tunnels and tanks,

or disinfecting the sewage before it is discharged), the plans are complex, costly, and complicated. However, the end result should take into consideration how the public makes use of the city's waters.

Throughout 2015, Riverkeeper will review and react to LTCPs submitted in 2014, work with partners like the SWIM Coalition to inform the public about the next set of LTCP meetings. We'll also continue

our push for a broad-based rollout of green infrastructure throughout the city. As the LTCP process unfolds, Riverkeeper aims to ensure a robust public process, which should give full consideration of grey and green alternatives for CSO reduction, and the protection of the fishable and swimmable uses for all waters in the city.

– Sean Dixon

**Under the terms of Consent Orders (the legally binding agreements between the city and state concerning CSOs), New York City's DEP has been required to:**

- Finish a large-scale infrastructure investment program it began in the 1990s
- Reach specific city-wide milestones in green infrastructure
- Develop Long Term Control Plans (LTCPs) for further CSO reductions in ten city watersheds.

## Superfund Update

### Gowanus Canal

Cleanup work at the Gowanus Canal has been moving forward on schedule since its designation as a Superfund site in 2010. The canal has been a focal point of Riverkeeper's work. In the past year, we have focused on three main areas: water sampling, enforcement, and "sewershed" management.

Last year, a "flushing tunnel" reopened. This tunnel draws water from the canal and into New York Bay along the Red Hook coastline. The year also saw the beginning of the Gowanus Canal LTCP process to control sewage discharges from CSOs. The LTCP process, which will wrap up in early 2015 with a city-developed plan being submitted to the state, will likely remain controversial as the community, city, and EPA grapple with the need to capture stormwater, control run-off, and limit the impact of sewershed remediation work. Next year, Riverkeeper will continue to work in its three focus areas as we strive toward well-informed decision making, the rule of law, and a well-planned future.

### Newtown Creek

After our first patrols into Newtown Creek in 2002, Riverkeeper has maintained its commitment to the waterway's cleanup and restoration. Over the past decade, the shocking levels of contamination, including ongoing oil seeps, sewage discharges, and open dumping, have largely abated, but there is still a real need for a watchdog.

Last year was an active one for Newtown Creek advocacy. Our citizen enforcement activities targeted almost a dozen new sites along the waterway, looking to hold polluters accountable to the Clean Water Act and the needs of the creek.

In conjunction with the Newtown Creek Superfund Site Community Advisory Group, Riverkeeper also took a lead role in reviewing "Phase 2" remediation investigation work underway at the EPA as the agency plans its cleanup strategy.

Riverkeeper also joined the Newtown Creek Alliance in investigating the city's plans for expanded aeration infrastructure and celebrated with the Greenpoint community as Exxon oil spill "green" funds were approved for use in neighborhood greening. Riverkeeper stood with the community as the Community Advisory Group renewed the discussion that reimagines the creek and its potential.

Many businesses are willing to make improvements – after getting nudged in the right direction.

# Boat patrol targets pollution on Gowanus Canal and Newtown Creek – and gets results



Photo: Leah Rae



Photo: Leah Rae



Photo: Sean Dixon

**R**iverkeeper isn't reducing its presence or effort now that two historic Superfund cleanups are under way in New York City's two notoriously polluted waterways.

While the Gowanus Canal's toxic coal tar sludge and Newtown Creek's Exxon oil plume are being targeted by massive EPA cleanup efforts, another campaign, launched from our patrol boat, is steadily identifying pollution sources all along the banks – and producing results.

The two waterways, onetime dumping grounds for factories and refineries, are now lined by cement plants, scrap yards, trucking and delivery operations, construction, recycling and supply companies. For over a decade, Riverkeeper Boat Captain John Lipscomb has taken note of troubling signs like asphalt, cement waste and debris running from the land into the water, and discolored discharges from countless pipes.

Through a combination of letter-writing, education and legal work, our enforcement campaign has taken on waterfront polluters and worked to

ensure compliance with the Clean Water Act, reduce the pollution load on our waterways, and promote solutions such as runoff-absorbent green infrastructure.

Over the past two seasons, eight such enforcement cases along the Gowanus have produced cleanups and improvements at six of the sites and \$62,257 in funds for local environmental organizations for activities that improve the health of the canal.

We're just getting started. Seven additional cases (mostly along Newtown Creek) are in early stages of action. And Riverkeeper is working to catalog additional businesses along the rest of the creek and canal sites which are polluting. Moreover, we have been working with partners on similar efforts in other heavily polluted waterways like the Port of Albany, Flushing Bay and East River.

For most cases, these enforcement actions result in legal settlements that require property owners – under court order – to apply for the proper permits, use the best strategies to eliminate or pretreat their water pollution, and monitor any discharges of water

that do make it into the waterways. Additionally, once a permit is demanded, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation tracks the progress, and Riverkeeper's community partners have a chance to weigh in on that permit's terms and monitor compliance. In some cases, polluters have paid into environmental benefit funds.

Some solutions are as simple as sweeping paved areas more often to keep contaminants from getting into runoff or maintaining barriers between the business and the water to keep debris from spilling over. Others involve the retention of storm water, filtering or even recycling water.

New green infrastructure "pays us back twice," Lipscomb says. It absorbs contaminated runoff from the streets, and reduces the load on the "combined sewers," the underground system of pipes that funnel sewage to treatment plants and also receive rainfall and runoff from the street. During even

moderate rain events, the pipes overflow, a mix of rainwater, contaminated street water and untreated sewage spills straight into our waterways.

Many businesses are willing to make improvements – after getting nudged in the right direction. Riverkeeper's enforcement efforts – actions any citizens can take under the Clean Water Act – are often the push toward pollution reduction that, for these sites, no one has provided before. Most commercial entities are not intentionally polluting the water, but they're not necessarily built to protect the waterways. As such, we often find eager and willing partners in site managers, looking to ensure they're good stewards of the environment and hoping to avoid fines or litigation. Riverkeeper looks for a mutually agreeable environmental outcome. This push for collaborative compliance is all part of a larger strategy. Good stewardship, improved state and federal oversight, and private industry policing all go hand in hand – especially in an

era when the state environmental enforcement budget keeps getting cut.

It's time to stop writing off these waterways because they're presently in such terrible shape. We have faith in a new future for these historic waterways – which, we must always remember, were once super productive salt marshes. Their time has come. We are helping to define a new vision for what's possible, and working – with each patrol – toward that goal.

– John Lipscomb, Sean Dixon, Neale Gulley, and Leah Rae





Photo: Leah Rae

## The grassroots: Planting seeds in fertile ground

In 2012, we embarked on an experiment, creating an annual day of service for the Hudson River – our Riverkeeper Sweep – to engage those living in the region in meaningful action to defend clean water. At that time, our volunteer and outreach programs were in their infancy, reliant on staff to attend a couple dozen events each year, with volunteer support primarily limited to office work. Our Advisory Board counseled us to embrace “open source advocacy” – and the advice has since proven valuable.

Today, one staffer, along with a Bard College Center for Environmental Policy Fellow and an intern are behind a massive volunteer effort that parallels our boat patrol, by providing a public face to the organization in communities throughout the region, and engaging the public in vital work to protect and restore the Hudson River.

Here’s a snapshot of the volunteer program and its impact in 2014:

- 31 tons of trash and recycling removed from our shorelines, and hundreds of trees planted and maintained in 82 communities.
- 2,100 volunteers, who dedicated 11,000 hours of time.
- 400 trained volunteers, including 80 Riverkeeper Ambassadors who contribute professional skills or represent Riverkeeper to the public.
- 61 community events attended, 75 percent of them staffed by Ambassadors.
- 146 local partners, including towns, and municipal departments, businesses, community groups, boat clubs and colleges.

- 50 percent increase in pollution reports made by community “watchdogs.”
- 17,250 actions taken, such as petitions signed and letters written on issues ranging from crude oil transportation to Hudson River water quality.

In 2015, the program will continue to grow and aims to engage the public in more hyper-local advocacy, by supporting initiatives such as county- and town-level bans on single-use plastic bags and plastic foam—products which we find in large volumes during shoreline cleanups, and which are responsible in part for the growing tide of toxic plastic pollution in our rivers, lakes and oceans.

– Dan Shapley



Photo: Leah Rae

## Lucky Sturgeon IPA: Riverkeeper’s beer with a mission

Riverkeeper spreads its mission through volunteers, the media, the courts, Hudson River patrols, shoreline cleanups – and in 2014, there was also beer.

We recruited the Peekskill Brewery and the Captain Lawrence Brewing Company to create a signature Riverkeeper beer that would create a buzz for clean water.

And we invited the public to give it a fitting name: “Lucky Sturgeon IPA” was the winning entry, chosen through social media. “Rupert from Red Hook,” a Riverkeeper Ambassador, submitted the winning name. “Honestly, I think a sturgeon’s a fish that would be a beer drinker,” he told WAMC, Northeast Public Radio. “That thing is gnarly looking. I think a sturgeon would definitely be an IPA drinker, maybe even a stout.”

The name sent a hopeful message about our iconic Hudson River species, the endangered Atlantic sturgeon. With continued efforts to protect the fish and

their habitat – and with some luck – perhaps we’ll see this ancient species begin to recover from a devastating decline.

The hoppy, spirited Imperial IPA was a hit at the Hudson Hop & Harvest festival on Peekskill’s waterfront Oct. 4, and helped to show that good beer relies on clean water.

“Riverkeeper believes in taking a strong stand,” Riverkeeper President Paul Gallay said. “We should have a strong beer.”



## EcoSalon: Moving Renewable Energy Forward

How do we get to the next level in the transition to clean energy? What can we do to promote energy efficiency and renewable sources?

Riverkeeper invited a panel of thought leaders on energy policy, finance and architecture to share their insights in our 2014 EcoSalon, “Taking Renewables and Energy Efficiency to the Next Level.”

Moderated by Michael Gerrard, Director of Columbia Law School’s Climate Change Center, the event on Oct. 9 at Hearst Tower brought together Peter Davidson, Executive Director of the Loan Programs Office at the U.S. Department of Energy; Richard Kauffman, Chairman of the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) Board; Shaun Chapman, Senior Dir. of Policy

& Electricity Markets, SolarCity, and Sean Gallagher, Dir. of Sustainable Design at Diller Scofidio + Renfro.

The good news: The renewable energy technologies we have today are both viable and economical. Innovation in storage technology will help us turn renewable sources into reliable power bases, even when the sun isn’t shining or the wind isn’t blowing.

Renewables, along with their environmental and economic benefits, can offer people a sense of control and independence. The incentives, therefore, are many.

Riverkeeper is proud to help foster conversations that will help us confront the damage that old power plants cause to our waterways, and the threats that climate change poses to our environment.

## How YOU can make a difference



Photo: Leah Rae

**Stewardship:** Volunteer for shoreline cleanups and plantings, including the annual Riverkeeper Sweep from Albany to NYC. Visit our Volunteer page at [www.riverkeeper.org/volunteer](http://www.riverkeeper.org/volunteer).

**Citizen science:** Citizen scientists form the backbone of our water quality program. We need help sampling tributaries of the Hudson for *Enterococcus*, an indicator of fecal contamination. Your samples help us monitor the health of local waterways, inform the public of health threats and advocate for critical wastewater infrastructure.

For information contact Jennifer Epstein, Water Quality Program Associate at [jepstein@riverkeeper.org](mailto:jepstein@riverkeeper.org) or (914) 478-4501 ext. 248.

**Outreach:** Be a “super volunteer” and become a Riverkeeper Ambassador, taking our message to festivals and farmers markets. We rely on volunteers to help us reach more communities than ever before. If you are interested in becoming an Ambassador, Riverkeeper will pair you with a seasoned veteran to help you get up to speed.

**Advocacy:** What’s the difference between signing a petition and taking action with Riverkeeper? Our action alerts are strategically timed, worded and targeted to have the greatest impact. Visit [Riverkeeper.org](http://Riverkeeper.org) to see our current action alerts and sign up for email notices.

For more information on how to become involved with Riverkeeper, contact Dana S. Gulley, Manager of Strategic Partnerships, Outreach and Volunteer Programs, at [dgulley@riverkeeper.org](mailto:dgulley@riverkeeper.org) or (914) 478-4501 ext. 222.

### How to make a pollution report

- Date/time/weather conditions
- Location
- Details – sight/smell/frequency
- Photos, video, narrative
- Your contact information

**DEC Spills Hotline:** 1-800-457-7362  
**Riverkeeper:** 914-478-4501, ext. 231  
**Report online:** [tinyurl.com/rvk-watchdog](http://tinyurl.com/rvk-watchdog)



“People get it now. Ever since Sandy, there can be no doubt that climate change is real. We need to be in the streets, to make sure the politicians listen to us.”

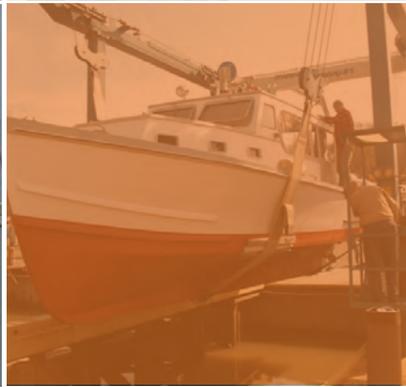
— Paul Gallay, Riverkeeper President, *Daily News*, Sept. 16, 2014

# Riverkeeper helped make history

with our clean water allies from around the world by demonstrating at the People’s Climate March in New York City, Sept. 21, 2014.

Our Waterkeeper contingent moved as a sea of blue within the crowd of about 400,000, joining a unified appeal for action on climate change. It started with a moment of silence at our starting point on Central Park West – giving way to a rallying cry that roared up from the crowd. This is shaping up to be our greatest challenge ever – the

battle to stop climate change from swallowing coastal communities, ruining food supplies and destroying biodiversity. At Riverkeeper we don’t back down from a fight. We hold politicians and polluters accountable. And we channel the power of people.



**NYC – “A river city”**

In New York City, boat clubs and businesses are encouraging tens of thousands to enjoy kayaking, stand-up paddleboarding and other recreation in and on the water. Nearly 6,500 people took part in public, organized swim events in 2014. Riverkeeper works with a variety of partners to help one of the greatest cities in the world appreciate and enjoy some of the world's greatest estuary waters.

Riverkeeper is the only organization to patrol the Hudson, East and Harlem rivers, and other estuary waters around NYC. The monthly patrols help inform the public, support science research and identify threats to the health of the waterways.

Rain triggers the release of 27-30 billion gallons of sewage and street water into NYC waterways every year from 460 pipes known as “combined sewer overflows,” or CSOs.



Photo: Ann Billingsley

## With Gratitude and Appreciation

Riverkeeper gratefully acknowledges the generous contributions from individuals, foundations, and corporations. Space limitations and eco-wise production standards allow us to present donors of \$250 and greater in this presentation. The listing reflects contributions received between July 1, 2013, and June 30, 2014.

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# Financials

## BALANCE SHEET FISCAL YEAR 2013 vs FISCAL YEAR 2014

ASSETS	FY'13	FY'14
Cash and Cash equivalents	507,237	403,622
Pledges receivables	674,810	728,934
Reimbursement receivables	0	0
Property and Equipment (net)	105,043	90,131
Prepaid expenses and deposits	13,650	14,049
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>1,300,749</b>	<b>1,236,736</b>
Contributions and pledges receivables, net of current portion	75,000	425,000
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
Accounts payable	137,954	128,134
<b>Total LIABILITIES</b>	<b>137,954</b>	<b>128,134</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>		
Unrestricted	1,087,975	908,602
Temporarily restricted	150,000	625,000
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>1,237,975</b>	<b>1,533,602</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES and NET ASSETS</b>	<b>1,375,749</b>	<b>1,661,736</b>

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION FISCAL YEAR 2013 vs FISCAL YEAR 2014

SUPPORT AND REVENUE	FY'13	FY'14
Contributions	2,546,188	2,845,910
Special Events	943,367	1,140,616
Donated legal services	704,415	702,416
Other revenue	4,219	1,195
Legal Settlements	0	0
Cost reimbursements	57,376	81,058
<b>Total Support and revenue</b>	<b>4,255,565</b>	<b>4,771,195</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Program services	3,830,716	4,011,301
Management	103,692	101,644
Fundraising	361,446	362,443
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>4,295,854</b>	<b>4,475,388</b>
<b>Surplus/ Increase in Net Assets</b>	<b>-40,289</b>	<b>295,807</b>



Photo: Anri Billingsley

## Fishermen's Ball— Honoring Chelsea Clinton, SolarCity and a 'hardy band of citizens'

Our biggest celebration of the year spotlighted two honorees as "Big Fish" in the cause for a better environment: Chelsea Clinton and SolarCity.

Chelsea Clinton, Vice Chair of the Clinton Foundation, described the importance of linking local and global efforts toward clean water. The foundation is working to improve education and health care access so that children no longer die from severe dehydration due to diarrhea – which annually takes the lives of 750,000 children by age 5.

Lyndon Rive, co-founder and CEO of SolarCity, was honored for the company's success in not only advancing clean energy, but advancing democracy as a result. By making it easy for people to generate their own power, the company is putting energy into the hands of the people and pushing back against an energy system governed by the few, said Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., Riverkeeper's Chief Prosecuting Attorney.

During the event at Chelsea Piers, special honors also went to retiring Riverkeeper board member George Hornig for his superlative commitment to clean water, and Mary Beth Postman, new deputy director of Waterkeeper Alliance. Judge Marty Marcus of the State Supreme Court in the Bronx received thanks for his role in mock trials at Pace Environmental Litigation Clinic, which represents Riverkeeper on many major cases.

Kennedy welcomed guests "who come here because they understand this river belongs to us." He recollected the legal efforts that had led to

improvements since his childhood, when industrial pollution went unchecked and he was not able to swim in either the Hudson or Charles rivers.

Clinton, introduced by George Stephanopoulos, said the need for a better, cleaner environment had taken on new meaning as she and her husband prepared for their first child:

"As I was thinking about what Bobby said, I hoped that the children Marc and I look forward to raising here won't have the same memories that he has of what the Hudson River was like when he was a boy, or has been for much of his life.

"So I'm deeply grateful for all that Bobby and everyone at Riverkeeper, everyone who supports Riverkeeper on nights like this, enable the hardy band of citizens, as George talked about, to keep ensuring that the Hudson River is ever cleaner, more preserved, pristine, for generations to come. That has a different resonance for me now than it did a few months ago."

– Leah Rae

Chelsea Clinton thanked all those who help Riverkeeper "enable the hardy band of citizens ...to keep ensuring that the Hudson River is ever cleaner, more preserved, pristine, for generations to come."

**Rivers and creeks sampled by Riverkeeper and our citizen partners** | **Communities served by Riverkeeper cleanups and plantings** | **Counties where Riverkeeper supported resolutions against dangers of crude oil trains and vessels**

— SERVED AS WATCHDOG — PARTNERED WITH LOCAL GROUPS — ADVOCATED FOR BETTER PLANS AND POLICIES







## Getting in touch

**Address:**

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