

SAW MILL RIVER

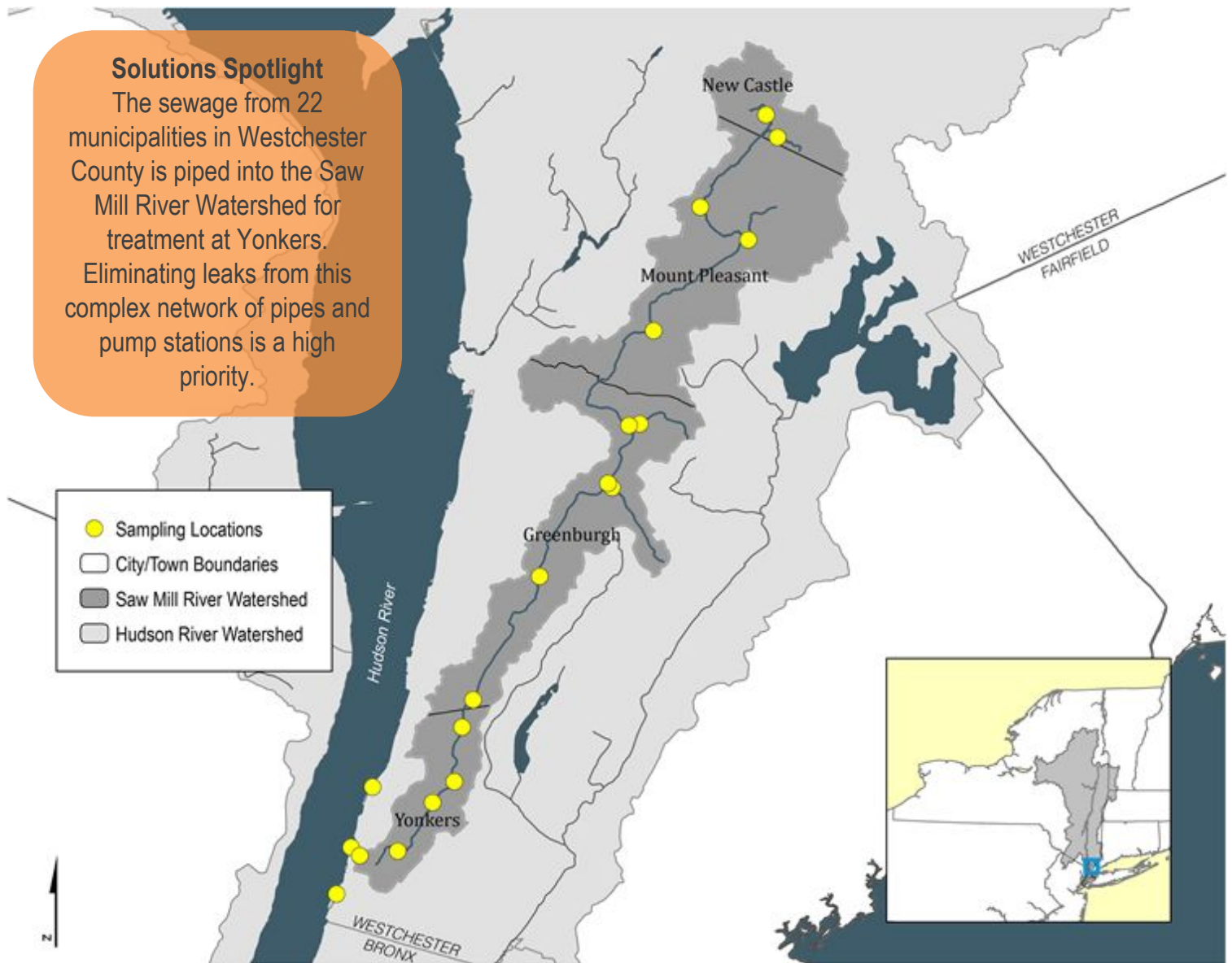
Community Water Quality Monitoring Results

2015-2019

Solutions Spotlight

The sewage from 22 municipalities in Westchester County is piped into the Saw Mill River Watershed for treatment at Yonkers.

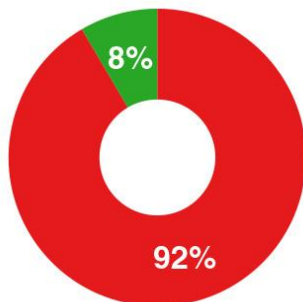
Eliminating leaks from this complex network of pipes and pump stations is a high priority.



What the Data Show

What portion of samples were safe for swimming?

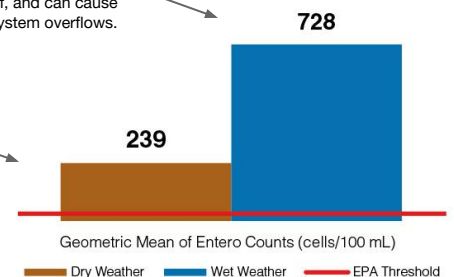
Less than 10% of samples collected at non-tidal sites met the EPA guideline for safe swimming.



How high were the bacteria levels?

Bacteria levels are much greater after rainfall, which causes runoff, and can cause wastewater system overflows.

In dry weather, levels exceed the safe swimming threshold by almost 10 times.



More: Explore a watershed map, data from each sampling site, year-to-year patterns and other info at www.riverkeeper.org/water-quality/citizen-data/saw-mill-river/.

Community Science

The water quality data presented here are based on an analysis of 862 samples collected since 2015 by community scientists. Samples are collected twice per month from May to October and processed by the Sarah Lawrence College Center for the Urban River at Beczak. To get involved, contact Katie Lamboy at klamboy@sarahlawrence.edu.

A Little About the Saw Mill

No, it's not just a parkway! The Saw Mill River flows more than 20 miles from Chappaqua to Yonkers. The river has been extensively disturbed to make way for transportation and wastewater infrastructure, and for flood control.

Why We Measure Bacteria

Fecal indicator bacteria such as *Enterococcus* ("Entero") usually do not make us sick. But because they live in the guts of warm-blooded animals, when these bacteria are present in water, pathogens that can make us sick may also be present.

quate sewage treatment, urban or farm runoff, septic system failures, wildlife and contaminated sediment.

While research continues, the EPA has set thresholds to define if water is safe for swimming based on decades of science relying on measurements of these bacteria. Data are shown in Entero cells per 100 mL.

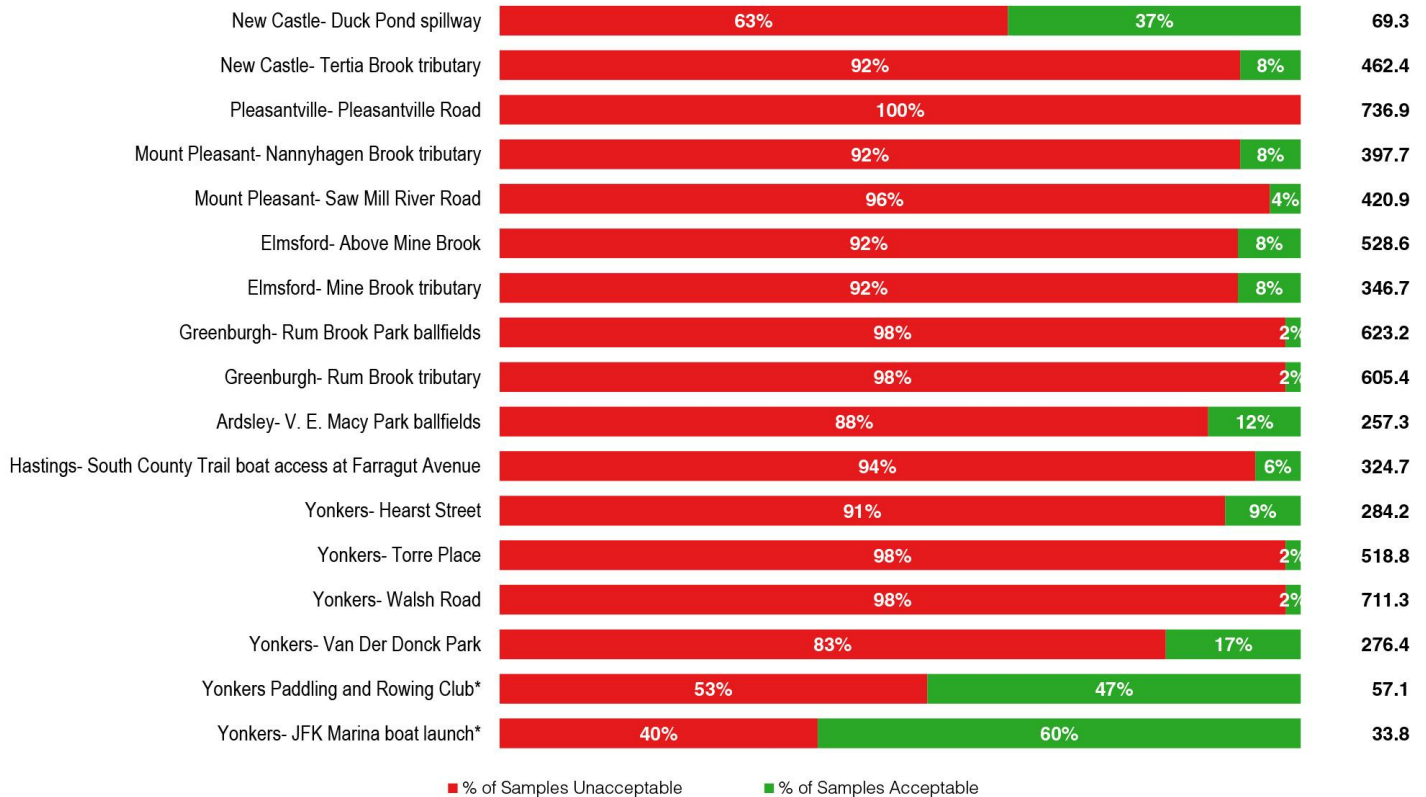
Sources of fecal bacteria may include sewer overflows and failures, inade-

Signs of Progress

Through a grant from the Westchester Community Foundation, CURB and Riverkeeper will coordinate water quality testing to update New York State's Waterbody Inventory, the basis for many programs and grants for water quality improvement. The current assessment is based on data that are 17-28 years old.

What portion of samples at each site were unacceptable for swimming? EPA threshold: single sample should not exceed 60

How high were bacterial levels? EPA threshold: Geometric mean should not exceed 30



*These Hudson River sites were sampled weekly in 2015-2016, twice monthly beginning in 2017.