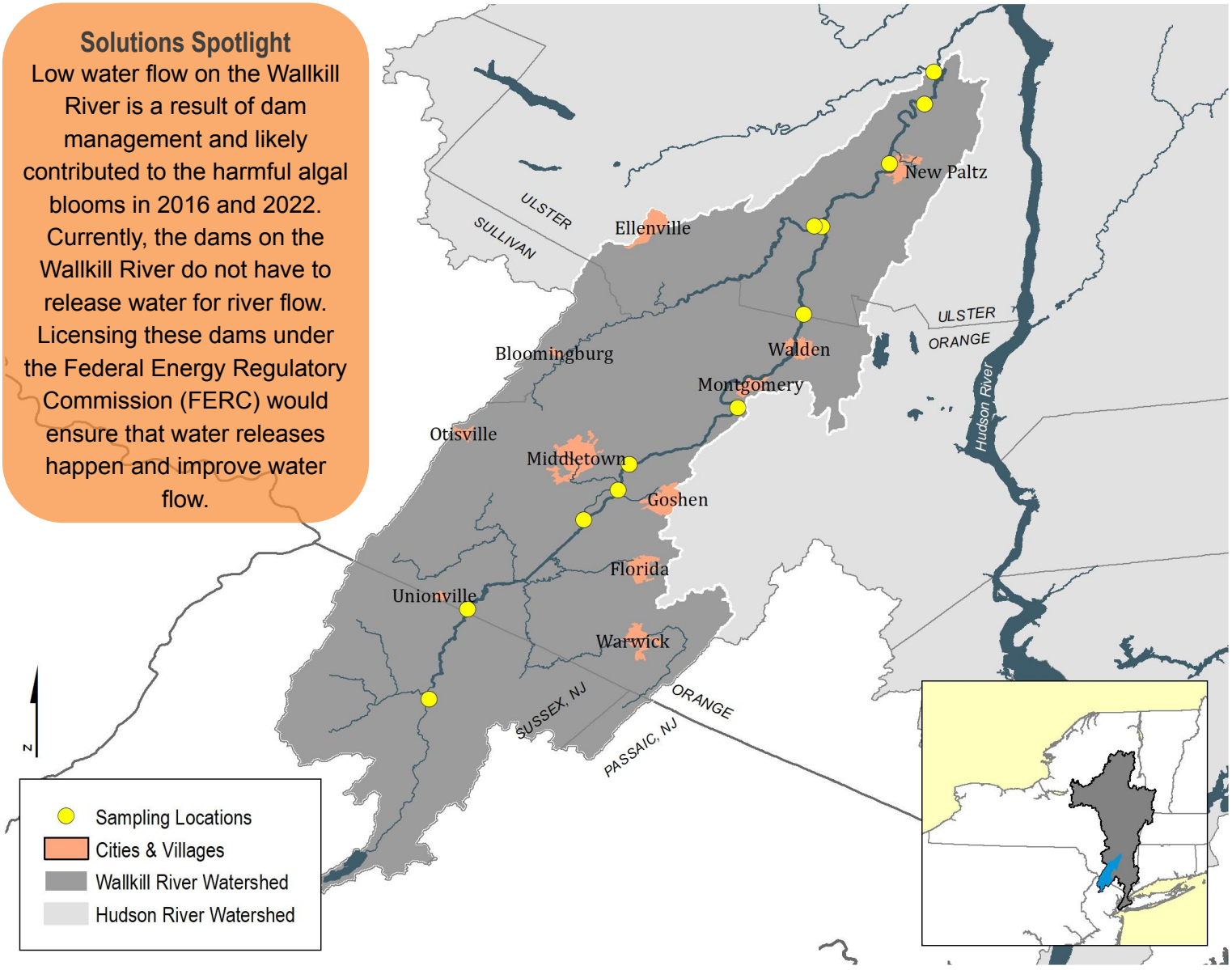
# WALLKILL RIVER

## E.coli Water Quality Monitoring Results 2021-2022

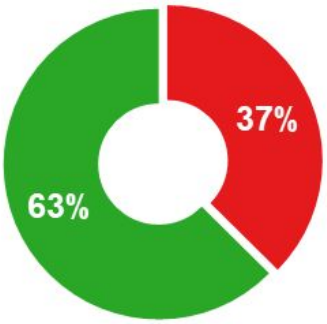
### Solutions Spotlight

Low water flow on the Wallkill River is a result of dam management and likely contributed to the harmful algal blooms in 2016 and 2022. Currently, the dams on the Wallkill River do not have to release water for river flow. Licensing these dams under the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) would ensure that water releases happen and improve water flow.




## What portion of our samples were safe for swimming?

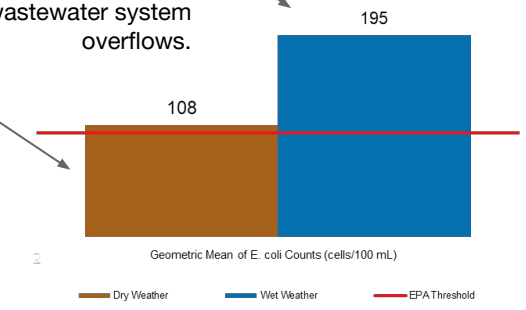
No one swims in average (geometric mean) water, so to help understand risk this graph shows the percent of samples that met the single sample EPA guidelines for safe swimming, and the percent of samples that didn't.




## How does weather affect bacteria levels?

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

Even in dry weather, levels exceed the safe swimming threshold.




**More**: Explore a watershed map, data from each sampling site, and more at [riverkeeper.org/water-quality/citizen-data/wallkill-river](riverkeeper.org/water-quality/citizen-data/wallkill-river).
Learn more about the Wallkill River Watershed Alliance at [www.wallkillalliance.org](www.wallkillalliance.org).

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NY's clean water advocate

## Community Science

The water quality data presented here are based on an analysis of 131 samples collected since 2020 by Gardiner and Montgomery CAC members and watershed residents. Samples are collected monthly (May to October) and processed by Riverkeeper. To get involved, contact Sebastian Pillitteri at spillitteri@riverkeeper.org.

### Why We Measure Bacteria

Fecal indicator bacteria such as *E.coli* 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.

Sources of fecal bacteria may include sewer overflows and failures, inadequate sewage treatment, urban or farm runoff, septic system failures, wildlife and contaminated sediment.

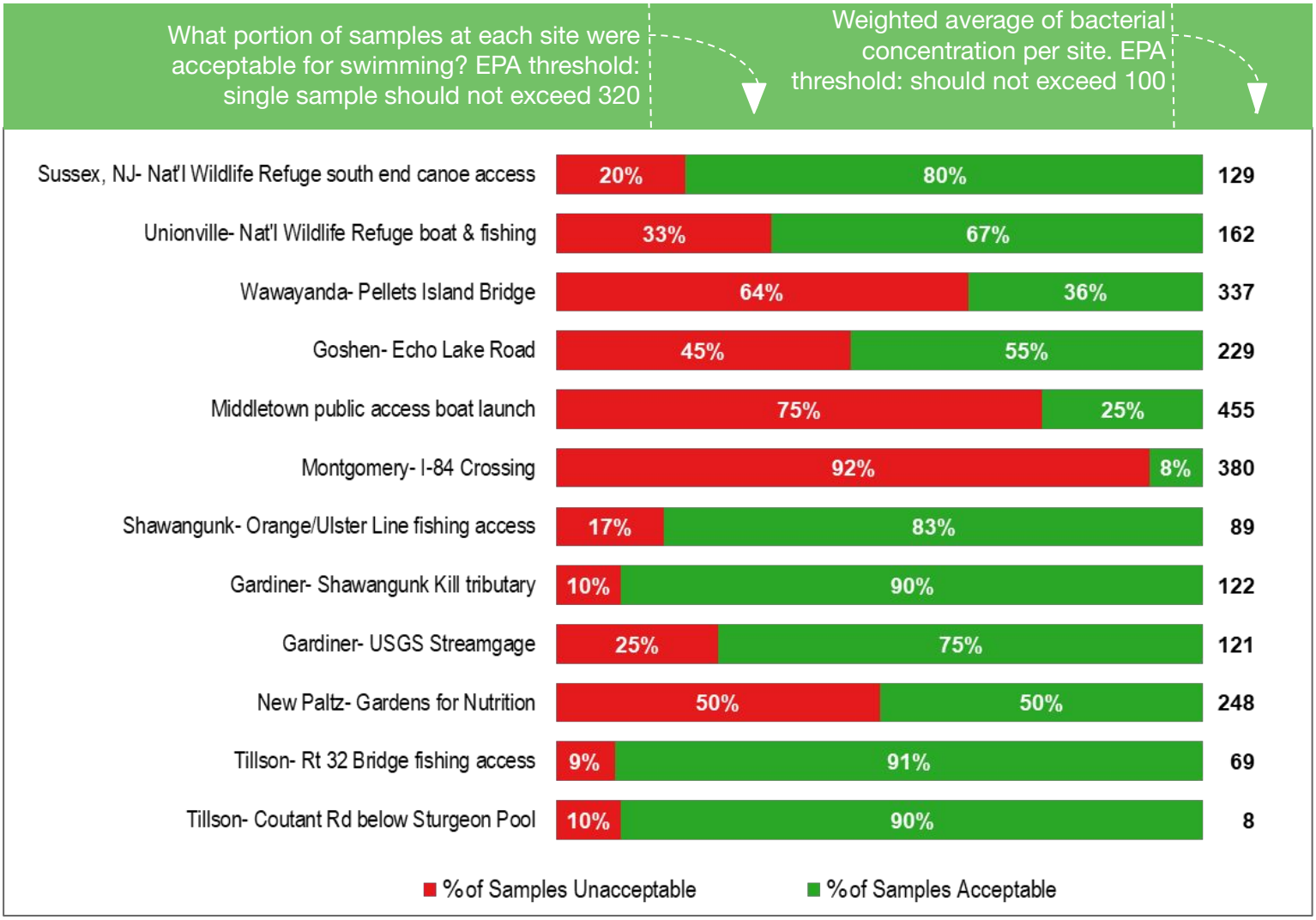
While research continues, the EPA has set thresholds to define if water is safe for swimming based on decades of science relying on measurements of these bacteria. Data are shown in E.coli cells per 100 mL.

## A Little About the Wallkill River

One of the largest tributaries to the Hudson, the Wallkill is home to the New Paltz Regatta, a singular wacky boat race, and a haven for paddlers and anglers.

## Signs of Progress

The Wallkill is in the second year of a state organized Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), or clean water plan, that would limit nutrient discharges from wastewater treatment plants, reducing a factor that contributes to harmful algae blooms. The Wallkill River Watershed Alliance is monitoring and educating others about the process as it unfolds.




*Sampling at this site began in 2015.