

WESTCHESTER ENVIRONMENT



FCWC

Federated Conservationists
of Westchester County, Inc.

Message From the President

By Steven J. Levy

Happy, Healthy, Prosperous, and Clean Environment to you in 2012. As you probably are aware, 2011 was one of the most challenging funding years for non-profits, FCWC included. However, as FCWC enters its 47th year we are rejuvenated and enthusiastic about tackling the issues ahead. A part-time program director has been hired, and we have multiple plans to strengthen the Federation by assembling every member and member organization through conferences, our website, online FCWC E-News and social media.

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Hydrofracking

Record - As many as 50,000 comments received. Why should Westchester residents be concerned and what actions should they take?

By Grassroots Environmental Education

New York State enjoys a reputation for protecting its natural resources and taking bold steps to protect public health. But that reputation is hanging precariously in the balance as the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation has ended the public comment period for its Revised Draft Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement (RDSGEIS) on High Volume Slickwater Hydraulic Fracturing. Hydraulic fracturing, also known as "hydrofracking" or "fracking" is a relatively new technology developed to extract natural gas trapped in bedrock below the surface. The technique uses millions of gallons of water mixed with thousands of gallons of highly toxic chemicals and sand (fracking fluid or slickwater), which is then forced under high pressure down and across into horizontally drilled

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A River Runs through Yonkers Daylighting of the Saw Mill River

By Groundwork Hudson Valley

Just before the Saw Mill River reaches the Hudson River in Yonkers, New York, it used to flow in a concrete flume under a parking lot known as Larkin Plaza. However, in 2011, that changed. The base flow of the Saw Mill River was diverted from that underground flume and now flows in a new natural riverbed and into the daylight.

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Mass Transit Needed NOW for TZ Bridge

By Carolyn Cunningham

As a main focus in 2012 FCWC will be working to ensure that the new Tappan Zee Bridge includes mass transit from day one. In order to fast-track the building of the bridge itself, the governor and President Obama have indicated that funds would be found (\$5 billion plus) to build the bridge soon, but no funds have been provided for incorporating mass transit on the bridge or for the improvements necessary to accommodate it in the I-287 corridor on both sides of the bridge.

During the previous almost 10 year planning process for the corridor and bridge, FCWC has always urged that the bridge must be replaced to accommodate mass transit as well as cars and trucks in order to reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality. FCWC strongly favored (and continues to favor) a

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Long Island Sound Update

In December, FCWC joined with 59 other organizations, businesses and municipalities to sign on to a letter to the Long Island Sound Congressional Caucus in support of the Long Island Sound Restoration and Stewardship Act. A week after signing onto the letter, we received the wonderful news that both the House and the Senate introduced this legislation.

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(Hydrofracking Cont.)

wells, thousands of feet below the surface. This pressurized mixture causes the shale to crack. The fissures are held open by the sand particles so that the tiny bubbles of natural gas can be released. Some of the toxic mixture is returned to the surface with the gas and additional contaminants, including volatile organic compounds (VOCs), brine, heavy metals and radioactive elements including radon and polonium. This toxic "flowback fluid" is then removed to evaporation pits or ponds or transported to municipal wastewater treatment plants, while the gas is piped from the wells to other locations for further refinement.

To fully grasp the scale of potential gas development in New York State, one needs to look at the numbers being proposed. A single fracking operation requires an access road, 2 to 8 million gallons of fresh water, between 10,000 and 40,000 gallons of chemicals, and at least 1,000 diesel truck trips. Now, add the heavy-duty infrastructure of diesel-powered generators, condensers and compressor stations all running 24/7. Multiply all of this by the number of wells envisioned for New York State - somewhere between 34,000 and 95,000. Then multiply the number of "fracks" per well (each well can be fracked up to 18 times). Get out your calculator and do the math. The numbers are truly staggering.

The mad rush to drill in the United States was abetted by the 2005 Energy Policy Act which exempts companies engaged in hydrofracking from the Clean Water Act, Safe Drinking Water Act, Clean Air Act and the Superfund Act - all of the federal environmental regulations that were created to protect our health and our most precious natural resources. The lack of those safeguards, combined with the likelihood of accidents (fracking companies themselves warn of "well blow-outs, explosions, craterings, uncontrolled flows of natural gas" and other potential disasters) makes eventual problems a virtual certainty. Accidents happen. Containment methods fail. Carelessness and "corner cutting" are well documented in the oil and gas industry. Other states that have permitted hydrofracking have learned the hard way, and many local communities have suffered the consequences. People living near areas of widespread fracking are experiencing health effects, families are leaving their homes, and local economies are suffering.

So why should Westchester residents care about this issue? Why should they sit up, take notice and action? There are several reasons.

First, air pollution from shale gas operations is a certainty, not just in the area immediately surrounding drilling areas but in the 200-mile air corridor which, in this case, includes Westchester County. The output of diesel exhaust from fracking operations is prodigious. Well-heads vent VOCs such as benzene and toluene, highly toxic emissions that combine with combustion byproducts to create smog. In the gas producing areas of Wyoming, formerly pristine air now contains more ozone than downtown Los Angeles. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, Westchester is already classified as a "non-attainment area" for air quality standards under the Clean Air Act. That's our starting point. The air pollutants from fracking operations are linked to

lung, bladder and breast cancer, diabetes, stroke, neurological disorders, asthma and premature death. This kind of harm to human health comes with a hefty price tag for taxpayers.

Another concern for Westchester residents is potential water contamination resulting from fracking. Despite the gas industry's claims, the fact is there have been over 1000 documented cases of water contamination from fracking operations. Some families in Pennsylvania and other states with fracking have lost their water supplies forever. Westchester residents access their drinking water primarily from the New York City watershed. The DEC's SGEIS specifies setbacks of 4,000 feet from New York City's watershed and 1,000 feet from New York City watershed's infrastructure. However these setbacks do not adequately account for horizontal drilling and fracking which can extend thousands of feet underground - well beyond the 4,000 foot setback, allowing fracking under the watershed. With approximately 70 percent of the toxic fracking mixture remaining underground indefinitely, it's just a matter of time before geological forces cause it to flow through a web of manmade and natural fractures, eventually reaching and contaminating New York City's water supply.

What will happen to the billions of gallons of toxic wastewater that will be produced in New York once fracking operations begin? There is no disposal plan. The DEC is suggesting that local wastewater treatment facilities all around the state (including some in Westchester County) be utilized to process the toxic, radioactive fluid. Recently, in a public statement, fifty-nine prominent scientists from around the world warned that municipal drinking water filtration systems were not equipped or prepared to handle the kinds of chemicals and contaminants that result from fracking, many of which are considered "trade secrets" by fracking companies who refuse to disclose their contents.

And what about Westchester's foodshed? The area targeted for gas drilling in NY is predominantly active and productive farmland. Contamination of this area with toxic chemical residues, radioactive elements or serious air pollution poses a huge potential danger to our food supply here in Westchester. Moreover, the amount of pristine water used for fracking operations may also eventually impact everyone's water supplies: unlike the water used in farming which remains a part of the water cycle, water used for fracking fluid becomes irrecoverable and the risk of pumping aquifers, rivers, lakes and streams dry is a very serious concern.

What other concerns loom for Westchester residents? The disastrous floods resulting from Hurricane Irene and other 2011 storm events overwhelmed many areas of New York State, including Westchester. Had hydraulic fracturing wells been in place, the floodwaters that raged through communities and acres of farmland would have carried the waste from hydrofracking, poisoning our water, land and air. Pennsylvania is experiencing these dangerous conditions as a result of flooded well pads. These 2011 storm events were ignored by the SGEIS which was released shortly after Hurricane Irene. In fact current floodplain maps in use by the NYS DEC are out of date.

(Hydrofracking Cont.)

Westchester residents have benefited from New York State's great success where environmental health issues are concerned. We've adopted no-idling regulations for diesel vehicles in our communities and schools. We've worked with other states to our west to protect our air and our land from their air-polluting industries. We have protected our clean drinking water sources, and we have developed programs to encourage homeowners to employ non-chemical management of their lawns and landscapes. At significant expense we have restored our great rivers and smaller waterways that have been polluted by industries. We fine industries that illegally dump toxic chemicals into lakes and other bodies of water. These efforts have been undertaken to protect the health and safety of the people of New York State and they have been highly effective.

So it is even more astonishing that the SGEIS issued by the DEC - an organization charged with the responsibility of protecting the public's health - does not even mention public health impacts from hydrofracking. New York residents deserve a comprehensive health impact assessment conducted by independent public health experts who would lead an open public process in cooperation with the New York State Legislature. Given the potential dangers, nothing less should be accepted.

Westchester, we need to take stock of the lessons already learned and work urgently to protect the safety and health of all New Yorkers by opposing hydrofracking.

Here's what you can do:

*Visit www.amillionfrackingletters.com to write a letter to Governor Cuomo and have it hand-delivered to his office and the New York State DEC. You can also use the site to learn more about hydraulic fracturing from the many health and environmental groups linked there.

*Call Governor Cuomo at 518-474-8390 or 212-681-4580 and tell him to protect our air, water, foodshed and public health from the hazards of hydrofracking.

*Contact your elected officials regularly urging them to support renewable energy development and cease subsidies for development and application of fossil fuels and to reject legislation that involves the use of natural gas (methane) in heating, transportation and energy production.

*CONSERVE ENERGY through simple practices e.g. shutting lights, unplugging appliances. For more ideas, visit: www.nyserda.org

*Sign up for renewable energy with your utility provider increasing the demand for renewable energy and reducing the demand for fossil fuels.

*Purchase the most energy efficient products, which preferably use an electric system.

*Explore installation of solar or wind powered systems for your home or workplace.

*Share all of this information with your family, friends, neighbors and colleagues.

(TZB Cont.)

solution that includes a cross county rail option to connect the existing north-south train lines and to firmly cement Westchester to the regional economy. We believe that this would be the best long-term solution for the entire region. Bus rapid transit was chosen to be the primary mass transit element at the end of previous planning process because of a lesser cost than rail, and at the very least, this option must be included from day one on the new bridge while keeping the rail option open.

Near the end of 2011 FCWC met with County Executive (CE) Astorino and other concerned parties to discuss strategies to ensure that mass transportation becomes a reality on the new Tappan Zee Bridge. We are pleased that the CE also sees the need for mass transit on the bridge and in the I-287 corridor now - and not just in the future. In your comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and in contacting the CE, your legislators and Governor Cuomo, let them know that mass transit must be included in this project to bring any improvement to current traffic congestion and air quality in our region.

New Chapter for Davids Island

In September 2010, New Rochelle opened a new chapter in Davids Island's history. Determined to avoid the mistakes of the past, the City resolved neither to advance concepts without first testing their value and viability, nor to react to concepts without first establishing a homegrown, community-supported vision. Acting on this new strategy was a volunteer Task Force composed of neighborhood representatives, development experts, environmental advocates and public officials from various levels of government. Together, the Task Force members reflected the spectrum of perspectives that have traditionally had an interest in - and often clashed over - Davids Island.

The Task Force's report constitutes the most rigorous, comprehensive and useful examination of re-use options for Davids Island. While the report does not recommend a single re-use plan, it does suggest metrics by which different schemes could be evaluated, and it places a heavy emphasis on sustainability as a guiding principle for any activity on the Island. This fresh and forward-looking analysis will be an invaluable tool for the City Council, the people of New Rochelle and the residents of our region as they strive together to shape the future of this remarkable place.

When asked his thoughts on the task force and the work they have been doing, New Rochelle's mayor, Noam Bramson said, "I was greatly encouraged by the Task Force's collaborative spirit, and I feel confident that their report will serve as a sound basis for considering creative new options for Davids Island. By effectively ruling out development schemes and access methods that had previously served as controversial flash-points, and by placing a central focus on sustainability as a design principle, the Task Force may help resolve historical tensions between environmental and economic interests. During the coming year, I expect the City Council to formally signal its support for an updated vision of the Island's future, with further planning actions to follow." FCWC applauds Mayor Bramson for his vision and leadership with Davids Island and will continue to support the Task Force's work. We are enthused about the new direction this process has taken.

(Daylighting Cont.)

Restoring the mouth of the Saw Mill has long been a priority of local officials, residents, nonprofits and public agencies of Yonkers and Westchester County, dating back to the mid-1980s. In 2001, the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) studied the Saw Mill Basin for restoration potential and considered the daylighting project. In 2001, Groundwork Hudson Valley established the Saw Mill River Coalition as a broad-based watershed partnership with one focus being the daylighting project. It presented a series of initial designs to spark interest in the community. The City embraced the idea with enthusiasm as part of its economic revitalization for its downtown. In the last few years, the City completed environmental, planning and engineering design for the Larkin Plaza site. The Saw Mill River Coalition received a grant from the New York- New Jersey Harbor Estuary Program which guided the City's habitat restoration for the site.

In December of 2010, the City of Yonkers broke ground on this exciting project- bringing the Saw Mill River back to daylight in the downtown after it had been buried in the early 1920's for flood mitigation and sanitation management by the USACE. The centerpiece of the entire project is the recreation of a new natural river that flows parallel to the existing underground Army Corps' flume. The existing flume will serve as an overflow channel to protect the integrity of the new park (and the downtown) from floods. Normal river flows will go through an ecological park. When the water flows reach a certain level from rains, the flood waters will "overflow" down the existing flume into the Hudson.

The official daylighting of the river happened, just one year later, on December 6, 2011. A 13,775 square-foot aquatic habitat, including a tidal pool (you will be able to see tidal flow from the Hudson into the park!) and two freshwater pools have been recreated. Plantings along the bank and in the riverbed will include species that will be attractive to insect species, which in turn will draw juvenile American eel and Hudson River fish. An Alaskan steep fish-pass and rock structures (riffles) will allow migration up the Saw Mill.

The Saw Mill River Daylighting project is one of the most significant habitat restorations in the country in terms of its ecological, economic and cultural impacts. Comparable projects are rare and none have been done in the northeastern United States. The newly daylighted section of the river has the potential to revitalize a natural resource where it is most visible and will be noticed by thousands of commuters, shoppers and residents daily. The health of the river will be visible in the river's appearance and educational exhibits hold the promise of teaching the general public about basic important ecological principles, about watersheds and the balance between human development and natural systems- particularly because the project resides in a very urban area.

FCWC commends the City of Yonkers, Groundwork Hudson Valley and all who worked hard to bring back such a gem for all to enjoy.



The newly daylighted Saw Mill River

Recent Meeting on Energy Conservation

By Alicia Molloy

On December 2, FCWC co-sponsored the latest Conversation on Conservation (CoC) in the Conservation Café series. It was entitled “Energy Conservation: Overcoming Resistance”. This CoC highlighted three speakers who presented a wide range of work being done around Westchester County and the region to help reduce energy consumption in our homes and municipalities. With current environmental issues such as fracking, air pollution, oil spills, and of course climate change, it is clear we have to break our addiction to fossil-fuel generated energy. But how can we do this, and how do we get the public to do the same?

Gray Russell, the Environmental Coordinator of Montclair, New Jersey, began the program by sharing some energy conservation success stories. He gave quite a few ideas that municipalities in Westchester could replicate. He sees a lot of potential in solar panels on roofs, green roofs, more bicycling amenities, shuttles or jitneys around town, and LED streetlights run on solar power. Russell ended his talk stating that he believes we can change the world, one town at a time.

Tom Bregman, of Energize New York, spoke about energy conservation efforts happening here in Westchester. Residential energy use is currently over 50% of the energy footprint, so Energize

NY’s goal is to upgrade 1,500 homes by the end of 2013. To date, they have had 405 sign-ups for participation in their program; 213 assessments have been conducted in Northern Westchester; and 70 upgrades have been made. Energize NY tries to reach communities in Northern Westchester by highlighting three areas where upgrades can impact their life: 1) cost savings- there will be a positive return on investment; 2) comfort- homes will be warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer, and drafts and leaks will be eliminated; and 3) health and safety- reduced amounts of mold and mildew in the house. If you live in Northern Westchester and are interested in participating in this program, you can contact Tom Bregman at tbregman@bedfordny.info or 845-300-2877.

Jean Hamerman, the founder of NeighborGreen, then spoke about many of the strategies she uses to build a successful business helping people retrofit and green their homes. She emphasized that in order for people to desire energy efficiency services, the process of upgrading must be made easy for the customer. She feels it is very important to build strong relationships with her customers, which includes building a feeling of trust in the services offered, the contractors hired to complete the work, and that making the changes will actually make a difference. Another key aspect of her business is to make sure that pricing for the services are fair and reasonable; pricing could be one of the biggest barriers to making upgrades.

A panel discussion followed the talks to answer the questions: 1) with so many people working on greening homes and energy conservation generally, and so many resources available to homeowners to reduce their energy consumption, why aren’t more people taking action? and 2) how can we motivate them to make changes? Bregman hinted at an answer to these questions during his presentation, which he jokingly said was easy. He said all we need to do is change people’s behavior. However, this is obviously not so simple, but we can start with small steps and minor improvements. Other ideas touched on by the panelists and audience include a need to shift to a culture of doing more with less and develop a new social norm that comes with living more simply. We need to build trust with our community, one person at a time. We have to continue fostering civic partnerships, and aligning community goals and efforts with our work to reduce our carbon footprint. Finally, many believe we need leadership from civic and community leaders to break our addiction to these cheap fossil fuels.

To learn more about energy conservation and opportunities to reduce home and business energy expenses in Westchester, visit www.rechargewestchester.org. Also, to see steps your municipality is taking to reduce energy consumption, visit www.howgreenismytown.org.



FCWC will again be among the sponsors and participants of Teatown Lake Reservation’s annual EagleFest at Croton Point

FCWC to Again Participate in Eagle Fest

By Carolyn Cunningham

This will be the 8th annual Hudson River Eaglefest on Saturday, February 4, 2012 from 9am-4pm (snow date February 5). We will “man” a table to distribute information on FCWC, our current issues and upcoming events, and meet and greet old and new members and other eagle viewers. This is a great opportunity to view majestic bald eagles here in our Westchester backyard.

Teatown Lake Reservation, FCWC, and a broad collaboration of sponsors and organizations (including Westchester Land Trust, Westchester County Parks, Friends of Westchester County Parks) unite to promote an environmentally healthy bald

eagle population in the Hudson Valley. Attendees of EagleFest enjoy activities from guided and independent eagle viewing to raptor shows, bus tours, storytelling, children’s programs and activities, bird walks and additional eagle viewing. Activities will take place at the Croton Boat Ramp, George’s Island Park in Montrose, Riverfront Green Park in Peekskill and the Kathryn W. Davis RiverWalk Center in Sleepy Hollow. New this year, at the City of Peekskill’s Riverfront Green Park, will be storytelling, ice sculpture demonstrations and a free shuttle bus to EagleFest headquarters at Croton Point Park. For more information call Teatown at 914-762-2912 X110.

If you would like to volunteer at the FCWC table, please call our office: 914-422-4053. See you on February 4!

Westchester County Budget and the Nature Centers

By Jason Klein

As mentioned in a recent E-News, on November 15th the County Executive released the proposed 2012 Westchester County budget including monetary cuts and the elimination of 367 positions of which 210 were layoffs. Among cuts was the defunding of all six Westchester County nature centers, the Deer Management Program (DMP) and all associated staff. The nature centers affected included: Cranberry Lake Preserve, Croton Point Nature Center, Lenoir Preserve, Marshlands Conservancy, Read Sanctuary, and Trailside Nature Museum. Friends groups associated with some of these nature centers are member organizations of FCWC.

The presentation of the budget on November 15th began the legislative process that results in a finalized budget after changes by the Board of Legislators and the County Executive. The public response to the proposed budget was immediate and overwhelming. Hundreds of residents attended the three public budget hearings. Letters, phone calls, and emails were sent to the County Executive and Westchester's Legislators calling for the reinstatement of the nature centers and DMP. The public's outcry was heard. On December 8th the Board of Legislators voted 16-1 in favor of their amended budget which reinstated 187 of the 210 proposed job cuts, and included the funding of all six nature centers, the Deer Management Program, and the staff associated with these. Vetoes released by the County Executive on December 14th did not include the Nature Centers or the DMP. Thus the threat to the nature centers was over. For now.

The nature centers and DMP not only serve the communities of Westchester and the surrounding area, but also play a pivotal role in the environmental education and conservation efforts within the County. Additionally, nature center staff has consistently been at the heart of conservation efforts within the County, helping to protect the fragile ecosystems and rare species which abound in Westchester's impressive parkland. The DMP aids not only County parkland but also surrounding communities as it helps

ensure a regional approach to white-tailed deer overpopulation.

The Federated Conservationists of Westchester County has long supported environmental organizations and causes in Westchester County and its member organizations. We released E-News articles on the proposed budget, wrote letters of support for the environmental programs that were slated for defunding, and presented a position statement at the public budget hearings. We hope to be able to continue our support of these important places within Westchester, and other member organizations that face hard times such as these. Thank you for your continued support of environmentalism, and of FCWC.

Meet Our New Program Director

In September, FCWC welcomed a new Program Director to their organization, Alicia Molloy. Alicia brings a diverse background and passion for environmental issues to this position, and we're glad to have her on board.

Alicia grew up just north of Buffalo, NY, where she spent her summers at Girl Scout camp. It was there that her interest and passion for environmental issues first started. She received her A.A. in Environmental Studies from Paul Smith's College then transferred to SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry to earn her B.S. in Environmental Studies, Policy and Management. While in Syracuse, Alicia had her first taste of working with the local community on environmental issues. She worked with the Partnership for Onondaga Creek, to help rally citizens and guide the City of Syracuse to implement environmentally friendly and just solutions to address sewage treatment issues plaguing local streams and lakes.

Alicia then moved to Indiana to pursue her Master's degree in the human dimensions of natural resource management. She knew that to be effective in changing human behavior, she must understand why and how people think about environmental issues. After graduating, she had the opportunity to work with watershed groups throughout the Midwest to help them collect social

information to better inform programming and implementation of activities.

Last year, Alicia moved to White Plains with her husband, two dogs, and two cats. She's been enjoying learning about her new community, hiking the local trails, using the bike paths and Sunday bike rides on the Bronx River Parkway, visiting the many farmers' markets in the area, and even working on her own community garden plot.

Alicia is excited to have joined the team at FCWC. She is in the office part-time, and if you get a chance, introduce yourself to her and let her know your ideas on how FCWC can continue its important environmental work in Westchester County.



Save the Date

The next Federation
Meeting to bring together
FCWC's member
organizations will take
place
May 2, 2012

Information will follow.

The Governor's 2012 Objectives

By Steven J. Levy

On January 18, 2012, fellow FCWC Board Member Cesare Manfredi and I, attended a special invitation presentation at the Yonkers Public Library, where Governor Cuomo reiterated much of his previous day's announcement on his 2012 budget. Although delighted by the enthusiasm of the second year governor, we were extremely disappointed the Governor did not mention any environmental plan or issues. We are concerned Governor Cuomo was silent on promoting sustainability and preserving our natural resources, most critically the issue of hydrofracking and the building of the new Tappan Zee Bridge without BRT and rail.

Although we were disappointed the Governor never mentioned any environmental issues in this speech, we have faith Governor Cuomo will work to achieve the clean environment and sustainable future that all New Yorkers deserve.

(LIS Cont.)

The Long Island Sound Restoration & Stewardship Act extends two complementary water quality and shore restoration program authorizations that could provide \$325 million in funding for another 5 years. Funding authorized under this legislation will go towards clean up of the Sound, water quality protection and improvements, and shoreline preservation. This legislation also includes new areas of concentration in the remediation efforts including climate change adaptation, sea level rise and resource management. This bill also includes additional reporting requirements to better outline the activities and projects enacted to improve the health of the Sound. The federal attention demonstrates how critical the Long Island Sound is to our community, our environment and our regional economy. We look forward to continuing our work in 2012 to realize successful passage of this legislation through Congress. Keep up to date on a Long Island Sound issues by visiting our website.

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Beczak Has New Name!

Beczak Environmental Education Center announced they have changed their name to Hudson River Valley Environmental Education Institute. This new name reflects a strategic plan that calls for a strong university partner to help advance its environmental education mission.

The work of Beczak Environmental Education Center will continue in its historic riverfront building in Yonkers, NY. But already under this new name, educators with the Hudson River Valley Environmental Education Institute are providing hands on nature and arts programs at the Kathryn W. Davis Riverwalk Center in Sleepy Hollow. Staff will also be partnering with college faculty and graduate students to evaluate environmental education programs.

"Since I came to Beczak Environmental Education Center four years ago, the Board has looked for ways to advance our mission beyond the Hudson River, and beyond this Center," said Cliff Schneider, Executive Director. "This new name allows us opportunity for a more robust collaboration among private sector, university and public interests."

FCWC wishes Hudson River Valley Environmental Education Institute luck as they move forward with their mission.

FCWC 2011 Annual Report

By Steven J. Levy

In 2012, we will continue grassroots advocacy work through proactive efforts for a hydrofracking ban and implementing immediate inclusion of BRT and assuring rail transit in the construction of the new Tappan Zee Bridge. Beyond reducing vehicle emissions through efforts to increase mass transit and promote alternative fuels and technologies, FCWC will also focus on reducing both residential and commercial emissions in 2012. We will work to increase the County's use of cleaner, sustainable fuel sources such as biodiesel, bioheat, and other renewable energy sources as well as promoting energy conservation. Other major issues in our focus will include: reimagining the sustainable future use of Davids Island in New Rochelle, promoting updated stormwater and wastewater infrastructure, tackling climate change issues, and of course supporting our Federation organizations' challenges and objectives.

This report highlights a few of our new and continuing efforts of the past year towards a greener and more sustainable Westchester.

2011 Annual Meeting:

Our Annual Meeting was held in September at Untermyer Park in Yonkers. Stephen Byrns, of Untermyer Gardens Conservancy gave an informative presentation on plans for restoring the beautiful gardens at Untermyer Park. We honored William Janeway, Regional Director, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, Region 3, and the Honorable Dennis Power of White Plains with FCWC's Green Seal award for their outstanding environmental work throughout their careers. The Sleepy Hollow Environmental Action Club and their faculty advisor Mr. Michael Garguiolo, were awarded the Edith G. Read award for their inspiring work to green both their school and community.

Education:

FCWC co-sponsored a well received program entitled: "A Dialogue: Revitalizing Hudson Riverfronts" with Scenic Hudson which addressed sea level rise among many other issues. We also continued to co-sponsor of all of the Conversations on Conservation programs during 2011, which included topics on leaf mulching, pond ecosystems, pollution by medicines in water, how to increase bicycling, and energy conservation.

Advocacy:

FCWC had a busy year. Following are the highlights of our strong advocacy for issues impacting Westchester County. We are proud to have:

Organized and hosted a successful Federation Meeting at Pace Law School, which brought together our Federated organizations to network, support, and explore common initiatives; at this meeting, we welcomed the participation of the Pace Environmental Law Society and later in the year

FCWC participated in an information session for the environmental law students as one of the resources available to them.

We met with County Executive Astorino to discuss how to ensure mass transit is implemented on the new Tappan Zee Bridge from the day the bridge opens. In addition, we testified at a hearing to ensure that both bus rapid transit (BRT) and rail are included in the plans for the new Tappan Zee Bridge;

Rallied our member organizations to oppose components of the proposed Westchester County budget, which called for defunding of all six Westchester County Nature Centers. FCWC gave testimony at a public meeting opposing these budget cuts;

Participated and supported the new task force for the City of New Rochelle effort to develop potential options for Davids Island- a longstanding parkland focus of FCWC;

Continued through many means to advocate a ban on natural gas hydrofracking;

Supported Long Island Sound issues including advocating for the Long Island Sound Restoration and Stewardship Act; which would continue funding for the next 5 years for protection and restoration of the Sound;

Supported federal legislation: Water Quality and Job Creation Act of 2011 that would supply funding for both sewage treatment infrastructure and jobs across our region and country.

Opposed the sale of environmentally sensitive coastal tidal wetlands to the Mamaroneck Boat and Yacht Club.

We are eager to continue to meet environmental challenges in Westchester County, but cannot do this without your support. Please consider supporting FCWC with your time, and/or a gift donation, any denomination helps. FCWC needs your help in our efforts to preserve our environment and work towards sustainability in Westchester.

FCWC is a 501(c)3 organization dedicated to providing leadership that educates people about environmental issues, problems, and solutions; advocates sound decision making; and works with groups and individuals to protect Westchester's natural resources.

Member Organizations and Partners

Beczak Environmental Education Center
 Bedford Garden Club
 Bike Walk Alliance of Westchester and Putnam
 Bronx River Parkway Reservation Conservancy
 Bronx River Sound Shore Audubon Society
 Children's Environmental Literacy Foundation
 Citizens for Sound Government
 Cortlandt WATCH
 Croton Arboretum & Sanctuary, Inc.
 Croton Watershed Clean Water Coalition
 Friends of Edith G. Read Wildlife Sanctuary
 Friends of Hilltop Hanover Farm
 Friends of Marshlands
 Friends of Rye Nature Center
 Garden Club of Irvington
 Grassroots Environmental Education
 Green Acres Garden Club
 Greenburgh Nature Center
 Groundwork Hudson Valley
 Hands Across the Border
 Hudson River Audubon Society
 Hudson River Garden Club
 Hudsonia Limited
 Jay Heritage Center
 League of Women Voters of Westchester
 Louis Calder Center of Fordham University
 Native Plant Center
 Natural Resource Defense Council
 Pace Law Center for Environmental Legal Studies
 Rusticus Garden Club
 Rye Environmental Advocates
 Rye Habitat Project
 Saw Mill River Audubon

Sheldrake Environmental Center
 Sustainable Hastings
 Tarrytown Environmental Advisory Council
 Teatown Lake Reservation
 The Garden Club of Larchmont
 Tri-State Transportation Campaign
 Watershed Agricultural Center
 Westchester Land Trust
 Yonkers Committee on Smart Development
 Yonkers Environmental Coalition
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