



Federated Conservationists of Westchester County, Inc. *2016 Annual Report*

This report highlights a few of our new and continuing efforts of the past year towards a greener and more sustainable Westchester during 2016.

After the celebration of our 50th Anniversary in 2015, FCWC continued our advocacy and education efforts on protecting the environment in Westchester County, focusing on climate change. Internally, our board members met for a weekend retreat we embarked on a new strategic plan for our organization that will help guide our path for the next 3-5 years.

Education:

We continued the main theme of the past year — climate change — and we offered a variety of ways for Westchester residents to become educated on climate change.

FCWC sponsored “Birds, Bugs, and Bushes: The effects of climate change on our local flora and fauna,” presented at the Tarrytown Senior Center. Chappaqua Library contacted us as well, and would like to repeat the program in 2017.

FCWC once again participated in the EagleFest and Tarrytown’s Eco-Fest, providing information about Westchester’s environment to attendees of this event.

We helped organize and participated in all the Conversations on Conservation, which included discussions on proposed changes to the passenger limitations at Westchester County Airport, pollution issues in the Long Island Sound, and local pollinators.

Meetings:

Annual Meeting

Our annual meeting was held on June 9th at the Lasdon Park and Arboretum, a magnificent 234-acre property consisting of woodlands, open grass meadows, and formal gardens with flower and shrub specimens from all over the world. We thank the Westchester County Department of Parks, Recreation, and Conservation for the use of this beautiful park. We were happy to present our Edith G. Read and Green Seal awards to Anne Jaffe Holmes, Mianus River Gorge’s Wildlife Tech Program, and Grassroots Environmental Education.

Anne Jaffe Holmes was honored for her long-term and enthusiastic advocacy for the environment. She chaired the Climate Action Task Force to create Irvington’s Climate Action Plan. As Director of

Conservation and Sustainability Education at the Greenburgh Nature Center, she has created programs, conferences, workshops and events to promote many County-wide initiatives and she is instrumental in planning the in-depth programs of the Conservation Café.

Mianus River Gorge’s Wildlife Tech Program is a competitive internship program, the first of its kind, giving high school students the opportunity to undertake a three- year research project in the natural sciences. Their students learn first-hand about the complexities of natural systems and receive expert guidance from Mianus River Gorge staff, graduate students, and professional partners to produce high-level research studies.

Grassroots Environmental Education is a non-profit environmental health organization with a mission to inform the public about the health risks of common environmental exposures. They use science-driven arguments for clean air, clean water and a safe food supply, and for stricter regulation of chemical toxins and have educated and activated Westchester residents on issues including cell phones and wireless radiation, fluoride, fracking and fracking waste, Long Island Sound water quality, pesticides and synthetic turf, among many others.

Federation Meeting

On March 4, 2016, we held our annual Federation Meeting for our member organizations to come together, build networks and share. This year we added to the interest of the meeting by inviting elected officials from the County and State level to discuss environmental legislation on the horizon. We then offered the attending organizations an opportunity to share about their work and issues of interest.

Nine elected officials (or representatives) attended: State Assembly members Thomas Abinanti, David Buchwald, Sandra Galef, a representative from Shelley Mayer’s office, Steve Otis, Amy Paulin, State Senator George Latimer, a representative from Andrea Stewart-Cousins’ office, and Westchester Legislator Francis Corcoran. Legislator Shimsky was unable to attend, but sent comments to be shared with the attendees.

We were very pleased to have representatives from 29 county environmental organizations who came to discuss their work, their concerns, and what help they could use from the policy-makers.

Strengthening the Federation:

The strength of FCWC comes from its member organizations. This year our Federation has continued to grow, welcoming new and lapsed member organizations this year including: Connecticut-Westchester Mycological Association, Hudson River Audubon Society, Riverkeeper, and Purchase Environmental Protective Association.

In addition, FCWC is continuing to pursue ways to be useful to its members. We started a member organization newsletter, and our Federation Meeting on March 4 was very successful. We officially launched our Shared Resources program enabling current member organizations to share resources with other organizations, alleviating some of the concerns caused by the limited budgets of non-profits.

Finally, we supported our member organizations through partnering events (see below).

In the Community:

Partnering and participating in environmental events increased our involvement in the wider Westchester environmental community:

- Participated in the Lower Hudson Watershed Collaboration and Partnership Event presented by CURB and the Hudson River Watershed Alliance, an educational and networking event
- Partnered at Power-Up: Campaign for Clean Energy New York with Bedford 2020
- Sponsored a 'Greening our Towns' event with Greenburgh Nature Center, an opportunity for networking and learning about green projects happening all over Westchester
- Co-sponsored a Renewable and Sustainable Energy Conference with Grassroots Environmental Education and other groups
- Represented the environmental community at the Keep Westchester Thriving event, "Our Budget, Our Values: A Community Conversation," at Pace Law School. moderated by Laura Rossi, Executive Director of the Westchester Community Foundation

Communications:

During the past year, we continued to increase our reach with a variety of different communications. We have been using our website to provide additional space for information that was of interest to our members and supporters. We published our monthly E-News and expanded our use of Twitter and Facebook to keep our members and the community up-to-date on environmental issues and events that are happening throughout the county. We have also continued to publish blog posts. In addition, our Federation Calendar has provided a venue where we advertise environmental events happening all over the county.

Advocacy:

Advocacy was a major part of our work during 2016, ranging from concerns about the Westchester County Airport to partnering with environmental groups on specific issues to continuing efforts to stop the Algonquin Pipeline Expansion. Examples of our advocacy work include:

- Presented statements at Board of Legislators' meetings about the threatened expansion of the Westchester County Airport, which covered proposed legislation to change the passenger cap, the need for a comprehensive environmental review on the airport, the environmental community's opinions of the proposed Westchester County Airport Lease. We also presented a statement on the ban of no 4 and no 6 heating oil
- Presented comments at a scoping meeting for Spectra's 3rd Project and co-sponsored a rally at Senator Schumer's office to tell him to publicly insist that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) halt construction immediately
- Sent an Action Alert to all our member organizations about Hudson River Anchorages and submitted a letter to the Coast Guard protesting the Hudson River anchorages
- Submitted a letter of support to the DEC on the proposed clean up of David's Island
- Signed onto a letter with New York NYLCV about the proposed historic increase to \$35 million for capital projects for parks and waterfronts, with \$20M of that allocated to urban and low-income communities
- Submitted a letter of support on the Reusable Bag Initiative for New Castle
- Participated in a discussion about seaweed cultivation in Long Island Sound

- Signed onto a letter from the Long Island Sound Study CAC to NOAA to protect river herring
- Submitted comments to the Village of Sleepy Hollow on the DEIS for the proposed development of the “East Parcel” of the GM site
- Presented a statement on behalf of the environmental community about clean water infrastructure needs at a press conference put together by Assemblyman Otis
- Signed on to letter by the Connecticut Fund for the Environment/Save the Sound to oppose the nomination of Pruitt as head of EPA
- Presented a statement on behalf of the environmental community about climate change at a press conference organized by Congresswoman Lowey

Looking Ahead in 2017:

This past year, we continued our ‘over 50 years’ of work to preserve and protect Westchester’s environment. We did this with the help of the many organizations and individuals in Westchester that are concerned about the environment. For the coming year, in light of the federal government’s attempts to destroy the EPA and ignore the evidence of climate change, it is imperative that we continue to move the County’s environmental agenda forward. We can do this when we work with the many diverse voices in Westchester’s environmental community.

In 2017, our main topics of work will be to continue to focus on climate change, to promote the restoration and protection of water quality in Long Island Sound, and to diversify and expand the environmental movement in Westchester.

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

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We gratefully thank our many individual and organizational members and donors for their support.

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Member Organizations and Partners

- Bedford 2020
- Bedford Audubon Society
- Bedford Garden Club
- Bronx River Parkway Conservancy
- Bronx River Sound Shore Audubon
- Center for the Urban River at Beczak
- Central Westchester Audubon Society
- Committee to Save the Bird Homestead
- Connecticut-Westchester Mycological Association (COMA)
- Cortlandt CAC
- Croton Arboretum & Sanctuary, Inc.
- Friends of Edith G. Read Wildlife Sanctuary
- Friends of Hilltop Hanover Farm
- Friends of Marshlands, Inc.
- Friends of Rye Nature Center
- Friends of Trailside Nature Museum
- Garden Club of Irvington
- Garden Club of Larchmont
- Grassroots Environmental Education
- Green Acres Garden Club
- Greenburgh Nature Center
- Green Ossining
- Groundwork Hudson Valley
- Hands Across the Border
- Hudsonia Limited
- Hudson River Audubon Society
- League of Women Voters of the Rivertowns
- League of Women Voters of Westchester
- Louis Calder Center of Fordham University
- Mianus River Gorge
- Native Plant Center
- Pace Environmental Law Society
- Pace Law Center for Environment Legal Studies
- Purchase Environmental Protective Association (PEPA)
- Riverkeeper
- Rusticus Garden Club
- Rye Garden Club
- Saw Mill River Audubon
- Sheldrake Environmental Center
- Stewards of Cranberry Lake
- Tarrytown Environmental Advisory Council
- Teatown Lake Reservation, Inc.
- Untermeyer Gardens Conservancy
- Watershed Agricultural Council
- Westchester Land Trust
- Westchester Parks Foundation
- Westmoreland Sanctuary
- Yonkers Environmental Coalition
- Yonkers Land Conservancy

Become a Member!

Individual Membership

\$20 Student/Senior

\$35 Basic

\$50 Contributing

\$100 Sustaining

\$250 Patron

\$500+ Benefactor

Organizational Membership

\$50 Not for Profit
(under 100 members)

\$100 Not for Profit
(over 100 members)

Other Amount \$ _____

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Federated Conservationists of Westchester County, Inc.
 E House ~ 78 North Broadway
 White Plains, NY 10603.

We wish to apologize for any mistakes or omissions we have made in recognizing our supporters. Please let us know of any corrections. You may also find our list of supporters on our website: www.fcwc.org

Message from the President

Over the past year, we've continued to address the challenges that Westchester will face due to climate change, including by sponsoring workshops and partnering with other organizations. For instance, we sponsored two presentations of "Birds, Bugs, and Bushes: The effects of climate change on our local flora and fauna." We've focused on presenting a variety of perspectives on these topics and on tangible actions that we can each take here at home.

In addition, we created forums for networking and important dialogues in the County; at our annual Federation Meeting, we invited elected officials from the County and State level to discuss environmental legislation on the horizon.

We also continued to partner with member organizations through our "Greening our Towns" event, with Greenburgh Nature Center, and the Sustainable and Renewable Energy Conference, with Grassroots Environmental Education and others. We continued to co-sponsor the popular Conservation Cafés on proposed changes to the passenger limitations at Westchester County Airport, pollution in the Long Island Sound, and about what we can do to help local pollinators.

Advocacy continued to be a core part of our mission during 2016, ranging from voicing concerns about the Westchester County Airport to partnering with environmental groups on specific issues, like stopping the Algonquin Pipeline Expansion. We also presented a statement on behalf of the environmental community about climate change at a press conference organized by Congresswoman Lowey.

Our Federation has continued to grow and we are constantly pursuing ways to be useful to its members. We started a newsletter exclusively for member organizations and continued our Shared Resources program.

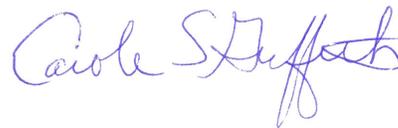
In 2017, we will continue to focus on climate change and on diversifying the environmental movement in

Westchester. As part of that, we are planning an Environmental Justice conference next spring.

In addition, we are hoping to work closely with partners to encourage more communities to pass single-use bag legislation and to continue to advocate to the Westchester County Board of Legislators and County Executive to preserve our parks and open space. Internally, we are embarking on a new strategic plan for our organization that will help guide our path for the next 3-5 years.

Our efforts at a local level are even more important now to ensure environmental progress in Westchester County, and we thank you for your support.

Sincerely,



Carole Griffiths, FCWC President

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.