

ORANGE COUNTY SOIL & WATER
 CONSERVATION DISTRICT
 225 Dolson Avenue, Suite 103
 Middletown, NY 10940
 845-343-1873 Fax: 845-344-1341
 www.ocsoil.org

ULSTER COUNTY SOIL & WATER
 CONSERVATION DISTRICT
 Times Square Office Park
 652 Route 299, Suite 103
 Highland, NY 12528
 845-883-7162 Ext. 5 Fax: 845-883-7184

STEERING COMMITTEE

WALKKILL RIVER WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN

Dear Residents of the Walkkill River Watershed,

The Walkkill River Watershed Management Plan Steering Committee would like your help. We are drafting a plan to assist communities in the watershed with planning for the future of their water resources. The Committee wants to be sure we are addressing your concerns as we develop recommendations to include in the Plan. Environmental, economic, and quality of life concerns differ depending on where you live in the watershed and the enclosed, short survey will help us in identifying citizens' interests and concerns in the watershed. Please take a few minutes to look it over and fill it out. We appreciate and value your response!

Some background on the Project: The Walkkill River is an important resource in both Orange and Ulster Counties. A north flowing river, the Walkkill begins from its source, Lake Mohawk in New Jersey, then enters Orange County where it flows for approximately 40 miles, draining 386 square miles or nearly half the County, before entering Ulster County. Once there it continues for another 34 miles, draining approximately 190 square miles, then emptying into the Rondout Creek which empties into the Hudson River, making the Walkkill a part of the Hudson River Estuary. The Walkkill River watershed, with a watershed being all the land that water flows across or under on its way to a river, stream, or lake, is 806 square miles in size.

Growth in the watershed has resulted in concerns about water quality and quantity, pollution and loss of habitat. Given the size of the watershed, the diversity of land uses, the number of political subdivisions and the constantly changing social and economic patterns of the landscape, this Plan will identify critical issues impacting the future of the watershed.

This is a cooperative project between Orange and Ulster County with a goal to provide assistance to communities in the watershed with planning for the future of their water resources. Approximately 40 individuals representing various organizations, municipalities and agencies in Orange and Ulster Counties and New Jersey initially met in September 2004 to provide input about the important issues facing the watershed. Meetings continue as more information is obtained to include in the Management Plan. At one of the meetings it was suggested that a survey be sent out to watershed residents to see what interests and concerns they have for today and the future of the Walkkill River Watershed. The information gathered will be part of the Watershed Management Plan so we would request that you take a few minutes to complete the survey. The more information gathered the more comprehensive the Plan.

We appreciate your interest in this project and want to thank you for taking time to fill out the survey. Please feel free to contact the Soil and Water District office in your County if you would like more information or have questions.

WALKKILL RIVER WATERSHED MAP IS ON THE BACK OF THIS PAGE

CITIZEN'S SURVEY - WALLKILL RIVER WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN

Please indicate your town/village/city: _____

Are you a: _____ Homeowner _____ Farmer _____ Landowner _____ Business _____ Municipal Official

How long have you lived, worked or represented residents within the Wallkill River Watershed?

_____ 1 - 5 years _____ 6 - 10 years _____ 11 - 20 years _____ 20+ years

Which of the following definitions best fits your definition of what a watershed is?

_____ Low area that retains water _____ Reservoir that serves a municipal water source
_____ Area that drains into a specific river or lake _____ Don't know

In your opinion conditions on the Wallkill River are generally:

_____ Excellent, need no change in management
_____ Good, but could use some improved management
_____ Fair, need much more management
_____ Poor, need urgent management

How concerned are you with pollution and environmental quality?

_____ Very concerned _____ Not at all concerned
_____ Somewhat concerned _____ Do not know
_____ Not very concerned

I enjoy the Wallkill River and/or its tributaries (streams) for the following activities: (Check all that apply)

_____ Swimming _____ Watching birds and other wildlife _____ Horseback riding
_____ Fishing _____ Hunting _____ Boating
_____ Walking along the River _____ Camping along river banks _____ Other (please specify)

Which tributary(ies) have you used for recreation? _____

I use the land and water in the following ways: (Check all that apply)

_____ Household water supply _____ Source of gravel or sand material
_____ Lawn or garden water supply _____ Irrigation
_____ Area for disposal of leaf and yard waste _____ Other (please specify) _____

Please rank your top five concerns about the Walkill River Watershed.

1 = most important

5 = least important

- | | |
|--|--|
| _____ Stream bank erosion | _____ Public Awareness and Education |
| _____ Land development | _____ Nuisance wildlife (e.g. mosquitoes) |
| _____ Recreational opportunities | _____ Riverside wildlife habitat enhancement |
| _____ Flooding of property | _____ Extent of impervious (paved) surfaces |
| _____ Litter and debris dumping | _____ Wastewater treatment facilities |
| _____ Construction of roads | _____ Farm operations |
| _____ Water running off roofs & streets into storm drains | _____ Fertilizers & lawn chemicals that people use on their lawns and garden |
| _____ Construction of new businesses and industry | _____ Construction of homes |
| _____ Golf course, playing fields, & other high maintenance green spaces | _____ Other (please specify) _____ |

Below are some concerns about environmental quality and land use in your region. How much of a problem do you think each is where you live? (Circle your answer)

	<i>Not a problem</i>	<i>Slight problem</i>	<i>Moderate problem</i>	<i>Serious problem</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Water quality of streams and the River	NP	SLP	MP	SP	DK
Groundwater quality	NP	SLP	MP	SP	DK
Frequency and extent of flooding	NP	SLP	MP	SP	DK
Loss of wetlands	NP	SLP	MP	SP	DK
Soil erosion	NP	SLP	MP	SP	DK
Quality of fish habitat	NP	SLP	MP	SP	DK
Quality of wildlife habitat	NP	SLP	MP	SP	DK
Woodlands and other natural communities occurring only as small scattered areas	NP	SLP	MP	SP	DK
Expansion of housing development into rural areas	NP	SLP	MP	SP	DK
Job opportunities	NP	SLP	MP	SP	DK
Way in which public lands are managed	NP	SLP	MP	SP	DK
Availability of incentives for private landowners to adopt practices that benefit the environment	NP	SLP	MP	SP	DK
Coordination among public programs to provide assistance to private landowners for land management activities	NP	SLP	MP	SP	DK
Loss of small family farms	NP	SLP	MP	SP	DK
River and streams with eroding banks	NP	SLP	MP	SP	DK

I personally have been affected by flooding: (Check all that apply to you)

____ Never ____ Once ____ A number of times

____ Damage to my home

____ Washout of road access

____ Washout of bridge access

____ Erosion of stream banks

*This section concerns **FUTURE ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS**. Please indicate whether you would like to see less, more, or about the same of each in your area. (Circle one answer for each statement)*

Areas of natural cover, including forests, woodlands and wetlands	Less	Same	More	DK
Area of new residential development	Less	Same	More	DK
Area devoted to the protection of plant and animal species	Less	Same	More	DK
Area of new light industrial development	Less	Same	More	DK
Area of public land managed using techniques that attempt to imitate nature	Less	Same	More	DK
Area of wetlands that have been restored or conserved	Less	Same	More	DK
Number of recreation areas devoted to non-motorized outdoor recreation	Less	Same	More	DK
Area of River flood plains that have been maintained or restored to their natural state, free of structure	Less	Same	More	DK
Areas in towns and cities planted to trees and shrubs	Less	Same	More	DK

Additional comments: _____

(Optional) Name: _____ Email _____

Address: _____

Please mail or fax your completed survey to the Soil and Water District Office in your County. Their addresses are on the cover sheet.

THANK YOU for your participation in this survey.

**CITIZENS SURVEY SUMMARY
ORANGE AND ULSTER COUNTIES
WALLKILL RIVER WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Total responders: 230 (93 from Orange Co. and 137 from Ulster Co.)

The survey was distributed by hand at various venues, gatherings, etc. in both Counties)

Are you a: 191 Homeowner 20 Farmer 17 Landowner 8 Business 9 Municipal Official

How long have you lived, worked or represented residents within the Wallkill River Watershed?

39 1 - 5 years 89 6 - 10 years 65 11 – 20 years 74 20+ years

Which of the following definitions best fits your definition of what a watershed is?

27 Low area that retains water 29 Reservoir that serves a municipal water source
135 Area that drains into a specific river or lake 28 Don't know

In your opinion conditions on the Wallkill River are generally:

5 Excellent, need no change in management
100 Good, but could use some improved management
89 Fair, need much more management
32 Poor, need urgent management

How concerned are you with pollution and environmental quality?

145 Very concerned 3 Not at all concerned
62 Somewhat concerned 4 Do not know
10 Not very concerned

I enjoy the Wallkill River and/or its tributaries (streams) for the following activities: (Check all that apply)

22 Swimming 107 Watching birds and other wildlife 15 Horseback riding
84 Fishing 17 Hunting 54 Boating
103 Walking along the River 23 Camping along river banks 26 Other (please specify):

Photography-3/Farming/
Drainage/Driving past/Sitting by
water/Running by/Aesthetics/Picnic
pavilion/Trail bicycling/Gorgeous
stream in my property

Which tributary(ies) have you used for recreation?

Wawayanda Creek-1/Rutgers Creek-4/Pochuk-4/Tin Brook-5/Papakating Creek-3/Beaver Run-2/Little Shawangunk Kill-1/Dwaar Kill-2/Shawangunk-7/Muddie Kill-2/Pleasure Ground Park-1/ Rondout Creek-5/Esopus Creek-4/New Paltz-1/Many areas from Minisink, NY to Hamburg, NJ-1/Wallkill-19/Split Rock- 1

I use the land and water in the following ways: (Check all that apply)

- 97 Household water supply
- 78 Lawn or garden water supply
- 25 Area for disposal of leaf and yard waste
- 6 Source of gravel or sand material
- 11 Irrigation
- 3 Other (please specify) Recreation, local food source/Nice view/Emergency water for hikes along the “A” trail

Please rank your top five concerns about the Wallkill River Watershed. 1 = most important 5 = least important

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>X's</u>
____ Stream bank erosion	22	11	22	13	5	6
____ Land development	73	19	9	11	6	13
____ Recreational opportunities	19	15	4	7	11	5
____ Flooding of property	33	10	14	10	12	1
____ Litter and debris dumping	48	21	16	10	11	14
____ Construction of roads	10	6	6	3	9	2
____ Water running off roofs & streets into storm drains	14	8	15	6	5	8
____ Construction of new businesses and industry	24	21	15	7	13	3
____ Golf course, playing fields, & other high maintenance green spaces	13	5	7	8	18	3
____ Public Awareness and Education	22	11	7	12	13	4
____ Nuisance wildlife (e.g. mosquitoes)	9	10	10	4	11	2
____ Riverside wildlife habitat enhancement	15	13	11	11	9	3
____ Extent of impervious (paved) surfaces	7	11	10	9	9	4
____ Wastewater treatment facilities	34	10	8	12	12	9
____ Farm operations	12	10	9	8	2	4
____ Fertilizers & lawn chemicals that people use on their lawns and garden	26	8	15	12	9	4
____ Construction of homes	19	14	3	18	18	6
____ Other (please specify) Maintaining high water quality/more horse trails-multiuse/public access/ and invasive species						

Below are some concerns about environmental quality and land use in your region. How much of a problem do you think each is where you live? (Circle your answer)

	<i>Not a problem</i>	<i>Slight problem</i>	<i>Moderate problem</i>	<i>Serious problem</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Water quality of streams and the River	11	36	70	64	18
Groundwater quality	18	41	59	52	27
Frequency and extent of flooding	34	61	48	37	17
Loss of wetlands	26	37	46	61	24
Soil erosion	26	40	61	41	29
Quality of fish habitat	17	35	42	71	33
Quality of wildlife habitat	20	34	46	69	25
Woodlands and other natural communities occurring only as small scattered areas	18	39	50	76	18
Expansion of housing development into rural areas	10	20	44	112	15
Job opportunities	29	32	41	50	32
Way in which public lands are managed	8	41	64	47	31
Availability of incentives for private landowners to adopt practices that benefit the environment	15	28	56	58	40
Coordination among public programs to provide assistance to private landowners for land management activities	13	25	52	41	59
Loss of small family farms	11	21	34	107	20
River and streams with eroding banks	11	37	58	57	20

I personally have been affected by flooding: (Check all that apply to you)

- 150 Never 20 Once 48 A number of times
- 23 Damage to my home 29 Erosion of stream banks
- 39 Washout of road access 1 Other: Crop damage
- 20 Washout of bridge access

This section concerns **FUTURE ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS**. Please indicate whether you would like to see less, more, or about the same of each in your area. (Circle one answer for each statement)

	<i>Less</i>	<i>Same</i>	<i>More</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Areas of natural cover, including forests, woodlands and wetlands	1	58	138	9
Area of new residential development	160	28	13	10
Area devoted to the protection of plant and animal species	5	39	146	12
Area of new light industrial development	84	64	34	19
Area of public land managed using techniques that attempt to imitate nature	30	50	101	25
Area of wetlands that have been restored or conserved	9	52	134	12
Number of recreation areas devoted to non-motorized outdoor recreation	5	53	137	14
Area of River flood plains that have been maintained or restored to their natural state, free of structure	7	53	105	17
Areas in towns and cities planted to trees and shrubs	5	27	165	8

Additional comments: **ORANGE COUNTY'S ATTACHED**

(Optional) Name: _____ Email _____

Address: _____

Please mail or fax your completed survey to the Soil and Water District Office in your County. Their addresses are on the cover sheet.

THANK YOU for your participation in this survey.

SUMMARY CITIZEN SURVEY RESPONSES

- Total of **230** responses (**87** from Orange County, **6** from New Jersey and **137** from Ulster County)
- **83%** of the responders were homeowners.
- **38.7%** had lived in the watershed 6-10 years; **32.2%** for 20+ years; **28.3%** for 11-20 years; and **17%** for 1-5 years.
- **43.5%** feel conditions on the Wallkill River were good.
- **63%** are very concerned with pollution and environmental quality.
- **The top 3 activities people participate in are:**
 - o Watching birds and other wildlife **46.5%**
 - o Walking along the River **44.8%**
 - o Fishing **36.5%**
- **42.2%** use the land and water for household water supply.
- **The top 5 concerns (listed as #1) were:**
 - o Land development
 - o Litter & debris dumping
 - o Wastewater treatment facilities
 - o Flooding
 - o Fertilizers & lawn chemical
- While the 4th major concern listed was flooding, **65.2%** of the responders never experienced any kind of flooding.
- **The top 2 serious problems listed were:**
 - o Expansion of housing development into rural areas **48.7%**
 - o Loss of small family farms **46.5%**
- **The top 3 Future environmental concerns listed were:**
 - o More areas in towns & cities planted to trees **71.7%**
 - o Less areas of residential development **69.6%**
 - o More areas devoted to the protection of plant & animal species **63.5%**