Citizen Science Engagement & Outreach in a Peri-Urban County

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New York
Content Outline

• Scale
• RC SWCD mission
• Programs
• Methods of Outreach
• Working Together
• Output
• Impact
• 330,000 residents (2016 Census)
• 119 sq. miles
• ~20 miles from NYC
• Preserve America Community
• 64 Public Schools
  • 40,000 students

• Hudson River Estuary
• 14 County Regulated Streams
• 1/3 Open Space
• MS4 Communities
• Privatized Water Supply (Suez- NY)
• Environmental Organizations
Rockland County SWCD

• Mission: The RC SWCD is responsible for developing Soil and Water Conservation District programs to protect and conserve soil, water, prime and unique farmland, wildlife, energy and other renewable resources to meet the needs of the local land user on non-federal lands

• The Rockland County Soil & Water Conservation District and the Rockland County Division of Environmental Resources Department is committed to encouraging municipalities and residents to conserve water and to protect our existing water resources for future generations

• Board
  • 5 Town Highway Superintendents
Programs

- Stream Biomonitoring
  - Professional
  - NYS DEC WAVE
- Storm Drain Marking Campaign
- NYS DEC sponsored American eel project
- Road-Stream Crossing Assessments
- Green Infrastructure Demonstrations
- Dog-Waste Dispensers
- Farm Tours
- Trout Stocking
- Education Programs
Methods of Outreach

• Website: http://rocklandgov.com/departments/environmental-resources/boards-and-committees/

• Social media
  • Facebook
  • Instagram
  • YouTube

• Google
Methods of Outreach Continued...

- Visiting Community Locations:
  - Town and Village Halls
  - Community Centers
  - Community Collaboratives
  - Libraries
  - Local High Schools, Colleges and Universities
Working Together ...

Stream Biomonitoring & Road-Stream Crossing Project

Storm Drain Marking

American eel Project

Cornell Cooperative Extension Rockland County

Sparkill Creek Watershed Alliance
Federal Partners

• EPA
• Equipment Loan Program
  • Taken from EPA.gov website
  “EPA Regional Equipment Loan Programs: Lending programs assist communities with citizen science monitoring projects. Currently, programs operate in US EPA Region 1 and Region 2 for water monitoring only.”
  Water and air quality monitoring equipment available*
State Partners

Hudson River Almanac

The Hudson River Almanac is a natural history journal that covers the Hudson from the High Peaks of the Adirondacks to New York Harbor. It seeks to capture the river’s spirit, magic, and science by presenting observations from many individuals who delight in the diversity of nature in the Hudson Valley.

6/17/12 - Town of Poughkeepsie: in mid-morning, the NYBC eagle nestlings, 82 days after hatching, become fledglings. At 11:45 AM, I followed the "passive" bird as it made its maiden flight - a short circle over the edge of a field, before circling, unharmed, into the canopy of a tall white pine 200 feet north of the nest. I entered the "passive" bird’s first flight, but it was longer - across a wide field at least 100 feet to some invisible hazards where I lost it in the greenery. I could hear the adults in the distance. It was a successful launch! Be sure the adults have enough experience to handle things now.

- Tom Lane

Since 1994, observtions have been compiled from the contributions of more than 1750 volunteers, ranging from elementary school students to professional biologists. In presenting these accounts, the Almanac provides valuable real information to the public, places contemporary observations in historical perspective, and encourages others to look more closely at the Hudson and share what they see. In addition to recording what nature is doing over the year, the entries offer a fascinating measure of human emotional responses to natural phenomena.

Over time, the Almanac may serve as a cumulative program to document changes in the ecosystem. Often, information about obscure animals and obscure changes can come only through direct observations made in many places over long periods of time. By sampling results from volunteers who observe nature as scientists or simply for their own pleasure, the Almanac builds a data base that can be used to guide future studies of Hudson Valley ecology.
County Partners

YOUTH

KEEP ROCKLAND BEAUTIFUL

ROCKLAND WATER Task Force

Stormwater Consortium of Rockland County

PROTECTING OUR WATER RESOURCES

Cornell Cooperative Extension
Rockland County
Watershed Groups

Hudson River Watershed Alliance

Sparkill Creek Watershed Alliance
Average Number of Annual Participants by Citizen Science Program

Number of participants or number educated

Program
- Environmental Education
- American eel
- WAVE
- Storm Drain Markers
- TOTAL

Environmental Education
American eel
WAVE
Storm Drain Markers
TOTAL
Impact

Step 1
Training = Education

Step 2
Real-world experience = empowerment and building skill set

Step 3
Connection with local environment

Step 4
Building stewardship

Step 5
Continued participation, Pathway program into career, Community Action Council
Contact Information

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