

Enjoying the River

FISHING ON THE RIVER

New York residents, visitors and tourists have always taken pleasure in Hudson River fishing. To ensure that fish populations stay high enough to allow for continued fishing, the Estuary Plan conducts surveys of how many and what kinds of fish are caught, and how many are kept and how many are released. Surveys also are conducted to determine which fishing techniques are best for fish survival, and the information is used to help establish fishing regulations.

In addition to maintaining high populations of sport fish, the Estuary Program provides access to the shoreline for fishing and other uses. In order to reach the river, shore anglers need to be able to travel safely across the railroad tracks that run along much of the Hudson. The estuary program supports improvements to fishing piers and other types of access. People who want to launch boats also need access to the river. There are not enough boat launches to meet demand, and some existing boat launches are badly in need of repair. Many people also use public boat launch sites for swimming, recreational fishing, picnicking or just as places from which to enjoy the river's beauty. The Estuary Plan is working to provide both safer access to shore-fishing sites and additional boat launch sites.



Newburgh boat launch site before renovation.



Newburgh boat launch site today.

SWIMMING IN THE RIVER

Years ago, swimmers enjoyed the river. Then, unfortunately, pollution from sewage and garbage made the water unsafe for swimmers. Since 1965, when the Pure Waters Bond Act was passed, improving water quality has slowly made the Hudson swimmable again. Today, several public beaches provide people with beautiful places to swim. Estuary Plan projects are in place to increase the number of available swimming sites and to ensure that water quality in the Hudson continues to improve.



Families enjoying Kingston Point Beach.



ACCESS ACROSS THE RAILROAD TRACKS



A bridge over the railroad tracks will give the public access to Schodack Island State Park for the first time ever. Schodack Island State Park is a 1,058-acre area with seven miles of shoreline.

Safe access to the river across the railroad tracks is important for fishing and for other forms of recreation along the shores of the Hudson. In 1998, Governor Pataki established a task force to increase river access opportunities. With staff support from the Estuary Program and partner agencies, the task force is working in cooperation with railroad corporations, the New York State Department of Transportation and other state agencies to provide increased recreational opportunity for all New York State residents.

HUDSON RIVER WATER TRAIL



On Earth Day, 2001, Governor George E. Pataki announced a \$1 million grant to the Hudson River Valley Greenway to establish a Hudson River Water Trail stretching from Battery



This fishing pier will give the residents of Verplanck a new way to enjoy the river.



The "Great Hudson River Paddle" celebrated the beauty of the Hudson River. Governor Pataki paddled in the first leg of the trip.

Park in the Village of Waterford, Saratoga County, to Battery Park in Manhattan. The trail will provide access for small boats along 156-miles of the river.

This effort, which is being coordinated by the Hudson River Valley Greenway in conjunction with DEC, OPRHP, the Department of State and local shoreline communities has already identified 36 existing public trailer and hand launch sites for inclusion in the water trail system which will eventually have at least 50 launch areas. The project is expected to be fully implemented over the next three years.

(Inset) Governor Pataki, on Earth Day 2000, greets paddlers at a stop at Kingston Beach in Ulster County.



Estuary Action Plan Report Card: River Access

- ✓ Funded a municipal fishing pier for Verplanck in the town of Cortland and grants for handicapped shore fishing access at the Village of Castleton-on-Hudson and for shore fishing access in Peekskill.
- ✓ Conducted surveys of recreational striped bass fishing on the Hudson. Estimated catch rates and total harvest for striped bass.
- ✓ Planned four-season creel survey of recreational fishing for all species.
- ✓ Secured \$1 million in Environmental Benefit Funds for a new 1.7 mile fishing and recreation trail on the shore of Beacon. The ten-foot wide trail will make it easier for the public to reach the river for fishing, hiking and other recreation.
- ✓ Worked with Governor's Task Force on Estuary Access to establish three new shore fishing sites and six river access sites at railroad crossings in the Metro-North corridor.
- ✓ Initiated survey of past and present public swimming sites on the Hudson. Safety issues will be analyzed and opportunities to increase swimming on the Hudson will be explored.
- ✓ Approved Estuary Grants for the following:
 - Wildlife observation and bird banding station platform at Livingston-Ramshorn Marsh (Greene County)
 - Waterfront trail in Peekskill (Westchester County)
 - Walkway for Wildlife Observation at Sleightsburgh Spit, Town of Esopus (Ulster County)
- ✓ Provided \$7,830,156 in estuary access improvements through the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act Transportation Enhancements.
- ✓ Inventoried current boat launch sites and identified possible locations for new state-sponsored launch sites.
- ✓ Upgraded trailer boat launch sites in Newburgh, Peekskill, Mills-Norie State Park and Athens. Initiated development of an upgrade at Cossackie.
- ✓ Built a new boat launch site in Bethlehem and initiated development of a bridge providing access to Schodack Island State Park and a planned new boat launch site there.
- ✓ Approved grants to fund ten hand launches on the estuary (Newburgh, Cortland, Cold Spring and seven in NYC,) and a feasibility study for a county boat launch proposed for Haverstraw.