Presented to the Hudson River Estuary Management Advisory Committee and the NYS Legislature December 2021
in accordance with the provisions of the Hudson River Estuary Management Act, NYS Environmental Conservation Law Section 11-0306

2021 ANNUAL
HUDSON RIVER ESTUARY PROGRAM
COORDINATOR’S REPORT

Kathy Hochul, Governor | Basil Seggos, Commissioner
The Hudson River is the defining natural feature of a major region of New York State, familiar to millions who drive across its bridges or admire its grandeur from parks and historic sites on its banks. The river influences our economy and supports local communities and key industries, and we must help manage it appropriately. This report highlights the actions DEC’s Hudson River Estuary Program is taking to help protect, restore, and improve the Hudson and benefit the people and communities that depend on this resource.

As I write this, Hudson River Estuary Coordinator Fran Dunwell is getting ready to retire following her long career with DEC. Fran has been leading the Estuary Program since its creation by the New York Legislature in 1987. Her vision and love of the Hudson have guided the program for more than 35 years, building key partnerships and implementing projects that use an ecosystem-based approach to managing the tidal Hudson and its watershed.

The water quality of the Hudson, health of its tributaries, protection of the aquatic habitat vital to the survival of migratory fish, conservation of natural areas within the watershed, and an engaged public are all critical to the Hudson’s intricate web of life and ecosystem management. DEC Estuary Program staff now work in 10 counties, 256 villages, towns, and cities, and three DEC regions to carry out the program’s mission. Government partners, civic and environmental groups, and local residents are all part of this effective team.

With the strong support of Governor Kathy Hochul, who enacted an increase in the Environmental Protection Fund from $300 to $400 million, DEC’s vital work will continue. We look forward to your participation as we work to implement a shared, targeted, and inclusive vision for the future of this historic national treasure.

Sincerely,

Basil Seggos, Commissioner
RECOLLECTIONS
AND HOPES FOR
THE HUDSON

In preparing this report and prior to my retirement this summer, I wanted to reflect a bit on our program’s history since DEC’s Estuary Program was created in 1987.

I recall how the Estuary Program emerged. It was a time when other key nonprofit, state, and federal programs were also getting underway. In 1981, the Hudson River Foundation was formed as part of the agreement not to build a power plant at Storm King Mountain. In 1982, the Hudson River National Estuarine Research Reserve was federally designated, and the New York State Coastal Program’s Local Waterfront Revitalization Act was adopted in state law. In 1991, the State created the Hudson River Valley Greenway. The law that created the Estuary Program was part of this fertile period. Scenic Hudson, Riverkeeper, and Clearwater—environmental groups founded in the 1960s—were strong advocates for this legislation.

In 1996, the Estuary Program was added to the State’s Environmental Protection Fund as a multimillion-dollar annual line item, and with this new support, DEC carried out scientific studies of key fish populations and river habitats needed to effectively implement management decisions. This set the stage for major habitat restoration projects and the promise of recovery for endangered Atlantic sturgeon and other signature species. We helped the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation open a new park and boat launch at Schodack Island and repair deteriorating boat launches up and down the Hudson River. In these early years, we started supporting exhibits and programs at nonprofit environmental education centers, so people would understand the issues we need to tackle. We also began developing teacher training and outdoor programs with schools and community organizations. We developed scientific partnerships to continually study conservation needs and identify management priorities.

In 1999, DEC started a grant program and soon began outreach to encourage conservation of tributaries and habitats in the watershed, developing tools and trainings for our conservation partners. The DEC Estuary Grant Program enabled us to empower local groups to implement the best practices we advocated. Our work on land use is now helping dozens of communities to develop natural resource inventories, open space plans, and local policies to conserve key environmental resources.

A network of watershed associations has evolved in the Hudson Valley to change the way we relate to our streams. As a result, DEC is helping to remove dams, right-size culverts, and planting stream buffers, improving water quality and stream habitat.

Based on a 2005 Action Agenda goal to make the river suitable for swimming, we began working on a 20-year effort to improve water quality in the Albany Pool communities, beginning with the development of sewer overflow control plans. Recent statewide investments in infrastructure funding are resulting in major cleanups. In 2006, we convened 350 community leaders to discuss how climate change would affect the Hudson River. After that, we worked with the DEC climate staff to pilot the Climate Smart Communities certification program in the Hudson Valley region, which is now flourishing statewide. Since then, we have helped dozens of municipalities with climate-adaptation plans and actions for climate-related sea-level rise and flooding.

The Estuary Program continues to grow and evolve thanks to its capable staff. Throughout this time, the Hudson River Estuary Management Advisory Committee has provided essential advice and assistance. Hudson River National Estuarine Research Reserve, DEC’s Hudson River Fisheries Unit, Cornell University, the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission, and the Student Conservation Association have been key partners in carrying out this essential work.

It has been a pleasure to work for DEC and for the people of the State of New York to conserve the tidal Hudson and its watershed. Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

Fran Dunwell, Hudson River Estuary Coordinator,
June 2022
OUR MISSION

The Estuary Program’s staff and partners work to achieve the following benefits for the public:

● A Vital Estuary Ecosystem
  – Sustainable Estuarine Fisheries
  – Robust River Habitats
  – Clean Hudson River Water
● A Thriving and Resilient Watershed
  – Healthy Tributaries
  – Climate-Adaptive Communities
  – Conserved Natural Areas
● People Living Well with Nature
  – An Informed and Engaged Public
  – An Accessible Hudson River for People of All Ages and Abilities

DEC’s Hudson River Estuary Program helps people enjoy, protect, and revitalize the Hudson River. The program provides funding and technical assistance, and conducts scientific research to empower citizens, communities, and agencies to make informed choices.

Estuary Program Advisory Committee

● Stuart Findlay, Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies, Committee Chairman
● Corey Allen, Habitat for Humanity of Greater Newburgh
● Allan Beers, Rockland County Dept. of Environmental Resources
● Andy Bicking, Scenic Hudson
● Jim Bonesteel, Rensselaer Plateau Alliance
● Peter Brandt, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
● Janet Burnet, Ramapo River Watershed Council
● Diana Carter, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
● Carla Castillo, Hudson Valley Regional Council
● Scott Croft, Hudson River Boat and Yacht Club Association
● Martin Daley, Capital District Regional Planning Commission
● David Decker, Constitution Marsh Audubon
● Chris DeRoberts, New York Power Authority
● Noreen Doyle, Hudson River Park Trust
● Todd Erling, Hudson Valley Agri-Business Development Corporation
● Walter Garschagen, Sea Tow Central Hudson
● Oded Holzinger, Groundwork Hudson Valley
● Karen Imas, Waterfront Alliance
● Lucille Johnson, Vassar College and Environmental Consortium of Colleges and Universities
● Scott Keller, Hudson River Valley Greenway
● Jessica Kounen, NY Sea Grant
● Jon Kramer, Hudson River Foundation
● Suzette Lopane, Westchester County Dept. of Planning
● John Mylod, commercial fisherman
● Peter Park, SUNY Farmingdale
● Rob Pirani, NY-NJ Harbor and Estuary Program
● George Schuler, The Nature Conservancy
● Dan Shapley, Riverkeeper
● Ed Skorupski, recreational angler, outdoor writer
● Richard Slingerland, Historic Hudson River Towns
● Steve Stanne, Hudson River Sloop Clearwater
● Emily Svenson, Hudson 7
● Shino Tanikawa, NYC Soil and Water Conservation District
● Audrey Van Genechten, NYS Department of Health
● Peter Weppler, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Funded Projects 2021

In 2021, DEC’s Hudson River Estuary Program awarded 39 Estuary grants, supported 19 research projects, and provided hands-on technical assistance to 62 municipalities and three county agencies in 165 locations throughout the Hudson Valley. More than $3 million in New York State Environmental Protection Funds supported these projects, which included tree plantings, climate-adaptation plans, water quality monitoring, fish habitat restoration, river access improvements, and education programs. This funding leveraged more than $10 million in grants and funding from local governments, state and federal agencies, and environmental organizations.
2021 BY THE NUMBERS

- **65,770 people** subscribe to the e-newsletter **Hudson RiverNet**, and almost **19,000 subscribe** to the **Hudson River Almanac**.

- **2,763 local decision-makers** received training on best management practices for **climate-adaptation, watershed protection, conservation and land use**, and sustainable **shorelines**.

- **3,430 volunteers** helped amphibians cross roads, counted eels, planted trees, and recorded fishing data for **striped bass**.

- **39 estuary grants** totaling **$1,576,180** were awarded, with **77% in environmental justice communities**.

- 2021 marked the **43rd year** of tracking and monitoring the dynamics of migratory fish populations in the **Hudson River Estuary**.

- **36 candidate restoration sites** in the tidal Hudson and its tributaries were assessed to identify project type and potential benefit.

- **18,961 visits** were made to **HRECS.ORG**, the Hudson River Environmental Conditions Observing System website, from universities, nonprofit organizations, boaters, and state and federal agencies interested in **environmental monitoring data**.

- **3,430 volunteers** helped amphibians cross roads, counted eels, planted trees, and recorded fishing data for **striped bass**.

- **23 watershed groups** worked with us to achieve regional **stream-conservation goals**.

- **47% of communities** in the Hudson Valley have taken the **Climate Smart Communities Pledge**, and **14% are certified Climate Smart**.

- **12 municipalities** have created new or updated **conservation practices, plans, and policies**, including **5 in priority conservation areas**; **32.3% of municipalities have used natural resource inventories** in their planning.

- **10,264 students, educators, volunteers, and members of the public** participated in remote and in-person **Hudson River environmental education programs**.

- **24 new Hudson River curriculum modules** will help schools teach about the Hudson.

- **6 estuary grants** totaling **$269,716** were awarded to local governments and nonprofit organizations to **enhance river access** in their communities and **improve accessibility** for everyone, including people with disabilities.
ESTUARINE FISH

DEC’s Hudson River Fisheries staff have been managing the migratory and resident fishes of the estuary since the 1980s through numerous long-term monitoring surveys.

**Shortnose Sturgeon**

In the spring of 2021, academic, federal, and state research scientists embarked on a large-scale project to provide an updated estimate for the Hudson River’s endangered shortnose sturgeon population using acoustic telemetry and side-scan sonar. Acoustic telemetry uses stationary receivers to detect signals emitted from tagged marine species like sturgeon. Side-scan sonar uses sound to create an image of the river floor and objects in the water column and is one method for counting fish.

Fifty adult shortnose sturgeon were caught and fitted with transmitters in April and May, which are detected on a river-wide array of acoustic receivers as the fish move throughout the estuary. The receivers store the unique tag number, and the date and time that a fish swims past a receiver (like E-Z Pass for sturgeon). The researchers can follow them using acoustic telemetry in tandem with side-scan sonar to locate and count overwintering shortnose. The scientists then use the data to mathematically estimate population numbers in overwintering areas and in the overall Hudson River. The fisheries team expects to complete the current survey in July 2023.

Last summer and fall, DEC collected blue crabs from sites between Kingston and Nyack and in three Long Island bays for studies to assess concentrations of contaminants in blue crab. The study results will be used for health advisories to inform the public about the risks of consumption.

**Invasive Round Goby Arrives in the Hudson River**

The invasive round goby, native to Europe’s Black and Caspian seas, was first detected in the Great Lakes in 1990, and has spread to other New York watersheds through canals and adjacent waterbodies. Beginning in 2016, the U.S. Geological Survey has tracked the eastward progression of round goby along the Erie Canal and Mohawk River, with the most recent collection occurring in June 2021 in Crescent, NY, five miles upstream of the Hudson River.

In July, while conducting routine fish monitoring, DEC staff captured four round gobies at two locations in the Hudson River downstream of the Troy Federal Dam. This marked the first occurrence of this invasive fish in the Hudson River. By the end of the sampling season, a total of 112 round goby were collected in Albany, Coxsackie, and as far south as Poughkeepsie. The round goby has the potential to cause ecological, recreational, and economic impacts throughout the Hudson River and its tributaries. DEC will continue to monitor the occurrence and the potential spread of round goby, while also documenting population trends in other Hudson River species.
RIVER HABITATS

In 2021, DEC and Hudson River National Estuarine Research Reserve launched the Hudson River Aquatic Invasive Species Task Force. The task force will facilitate communication about the invasive species work coordinated by DEC, State Parks, Partnerships for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISMs), and other entities. With a collaborative vision for invasive species control on the Hudson River, the task force will develop priorities for monitoring, management, early detection, and rapid response.

Research Supports Resilience of the Estuary’s Natural Resources

The Hudson River Estuary is changing. In tributaries, down the main stem, and along tidal wetlands that stretch to the Atlantic, climate change and other drivers are reshaping the region’s intertidal areas. With scientific partners, HRNERR identified research focus areas that will support the resilience of the Estuary’s natural resources and communities.

These focus areas are intended to inspire collaborative projects that address critical scientific questions and deliver the innovative technical assistance that resource managers and communities need to meet the demands of a changing estuary over the next five years. Collectively, they embrace the topics of species, restoration, and habitat. The digital Research Focus Area Library identifies existing resources, partners, and current or past research projects supported by HRNERR for each of the research areas.
CLEAN HUDSON RIVER WATER

Water quality in the Hudson River Estuary dramatically improved over the last 50 years, benefitting drinking water supplies, recreation, and aquatic habitat. Today, remaining challenges include the impacts of rising sea levels on aging wastewater infrastructure, nonpoint source pollution, and harmful algal blooms. In collaboration with DEC’s Division of Water, DEC’s Estuary Program works to update the State’s understanding of water quality on the tidal Hudson to inform key management decisions.

Collecting Real-Time Environmental Data
Hudson River Environmental Conditions Observing System is a network of environmental monitoring stations along the Hudson and Mohawk rivers. The stations are equipped with sensors that continuously record water quality and weather data every 15 minutes. Most stations operate year-round, providing seasonal records across the watershed. This helps researchers understand long-term trends and short-term events, such as intense storms, and manage water resources. The network also provides policy makers and emergency managers with data to guide decision-making and is a resource for educators. HRECOS is a partnership between state, federal, academic, and nonprofit institutions.
HEALTHY TRIBUTARIES

Removing Barriers to Free-Flowing Streams
Each year, migratory fish navigate from the tidal Hudson into stream habitats, moving between feeding, nursery, and spawning grounds. Many culverts and dams are blocking fish movement, dramatically shrinking the habitat available.

DEC’s grant funding helps communities assess and replace these barriers. In the fall of 2020, Riverkeeper, in partnership with DEC, removed two obsolete dams on tributaries to the Hudson: the Strooks Felt Dam on the Quassaick Creek in Newburgh, and a dam on Furnace Brook in Oscawana Park in Cortlandt. These dams were the first barriers for fish movement upstream from the Hudson River. Free-flowing natural conditions now extend upstream at both locations. DEC and partners are monitoring the streams to see how the dam removals may have benefited water quality and habitat.

Reconnecting Watersheds and Improving Road Infrastructure
In 2021, NEIWPCC, in partnership with the Estuary Program, awarded a contract to the engineering firm Tighe & Bond to work with the communities of Red Hook and Milan, both within the Saw Kill watershed, to create municipal management plans for road-stream crossings. The project will produce preliminary designs for the highest priority sites in need of mitigation. In addition to fragmenting stream habitat for migratory fishes, crossings such as culverts and bridges may also contribute to localized flooding and become a costly maintenance burden for municipalities. Right-sizing culverts also improves water quality and community resilience to climate change.

Planting Along Streams to Create Healthy Buffers
In 2021, the Hudson Estuary Trees for Tributaries Program planted more than 4,800 native trees, shrubs, and grasses along 1.5 miles of stream with the help of more than 600 volunteers—its largest streamside planting season in seven years. In this banner year, we finished up a 10-year project to replant two acres of floodplain along the Wallkill River in Benedict Farm Park with the Town of Montgomery Conservation Advisory Committee. This decade-long project was completed in 2021 with eight planting events, 835 plants, and volunteers contributing more than 325 hours of time. Trees planted along streams help protect water quality, fish, and wildlife, and reduce erosion and flooding.
CLIMATE-ADAPTIVE COMMUNITIES

Building Adaptive Capacity Across Communities

DEC’s Estuary Program supports climate resilience and equity action through the New York State Climate Smart Communities (CSC) certification program. In the Hudson Valley region, 15 local governments became newly certified Climate Smart Communities in 2021. Our Climate Resilience Partnership supported Cornell Cooperative Extension across six counties to complete 21 resilience actions in 15 local governments, and CSC certification in 12 communities. In 2021, more than 4,000 municipal officials, residents, consultants, students, and other stakeholders attended our climate outreach and training programs.

Resilience is deepened when communities come together to tackle climate adaptation. Fourteen local governments are receiving technical assistance and other resources by participating in DEC’s Estuary Program’s Flood Resilience Network, led in partnership with the Consensus Building Institute, Hudson River Watershed Alliance, NY Sea Grant, and Scenic Hudson.

Helping Communities Envision a Resilient Future

The Climate-Adaptive Design (CaD) Studio links Cornell University students in landscape architecture with high-flood-risk Hudson riverfront communities to explore design alternatives for a climate-resilient and connected waterfront. The design program has taken place in Kingston, Hudson, Catskill, Piermont, and Ossining. Through an open application process, the City of Poughkeepsie was selected to host the 2021 studio.

Along with the local effects of climate change, students in the program took into consideration Poughkeepsie’s history, ecology, economy, and community needs in creating their designs. Community stakeholders are engaged throughout the semester-long studio to inform the student design process. Residents’ interests included enhancing public waterfront access, increasing connectivity along the waterfront, and creating clear paths for pedestrians and bikers to reach the waterfront from Marist and downtown Poughkeepsie.

The CaD Studio was led by Associate Professor Joshua F. Cerra at the Cornell Department of Landscape Architecture, in partnership with DEC’s Estuary Program, Resilience Communications and Consulting, Scenic Hudson, and Dutchess County Cornell Cooperative Extension.
CONSERVED NATURAL AREAS

The varied geology of the Hudson River Estuary watershed creates a tapestry of habitats, including streams, wetlands, grasslands, pine barrens, and mountain ranges. This mix of habitats gives the region exceptional ecological importance, supporting a high diversity of species of global and national significance.

Helping Local Communities Conserve Critical Lands

Through science, educational programs, funding, and in-depth assistance, we help municipalities, land trusts, and conservation groups develop natural resources inventories, open space plans, habitat connectivity studies, and other strategies that support clean water, wildlife, scenery, recreation, and climate adaptation. For two decades, DEC’s Hudson River Estuary Program has collaborated with Cornell University’s Department of Natural Resources and the Environment to help achieve these conservation outcomes.

In 2021, hundreds of municipal officials and conservation professionals attended our monthly educational webinars and a small group attended our first in-person workshop since COVID-19. NRIs were completed in Beekman, Gardiner, Montgomery, New Paltz, Olive, Philipstown, Rensselaer, and Union Vale, and a growing number of communities used their NRIs to take further steps in conservation planning. In 2021, DEC awarded $486,474 in Estuary grants to continue this important work.

Connecting the Ecological Landscape

Preserving natural connections between habitats is critical for wildlife movement and climate adaptation. This year, with Estuary grant funding, the Hudson Highlands Land Trust developed an intermunicipal plan for protecting important lands and waters across the eastern Hudson Highlands landscape, a significant biodiversity area identified in our Wildlife and Habitat Conservation Framework. The Green Corridors Plan combines scientific study and habitat surveys, municipal input from NRIs and open space index priorities, and regional input from partners like the New York Highlands Network and Hudson-to-Housatonic. The plan is a resource for decision-makers, landowners, and conservation groups working in the region to preserve existing and future landscape connections that wildlife and people need to thrive in the Hudson Highlands.
Hundreds of Volunteers Help Thousands of Amphibians

In mid-March, with temperatures on the rise and rain in the forecast, Amphibian Migrations and Road Crossings Project volunteers donned their raincoats, safety vests, and headlamps. They looked for wood frogs, spotted salamanders, and other amphibians that encounter roads on their nighttime journey from winter shelters in the forest to the vernal pools where they congregate for breeding each spring. This year, 404 volunteers—the highest participation since the project started in 2009—assisted more than 11,000 salamanders, frogs, and toads safely across roads. They counted 12,143 live amphibians and 4,599 dead amphibians on roads, and recorded weather and traffic conditions at all sites. Their dedicated efforts add to our understanding of migrations and habitat conservation needs and help to reduce amphibian mortality throughout the watershed. For more information, visit Amphibian Migrations and Road Crossings (www.dec.ny.gov/lands/51925.html).

Taking the Long View by Protecting Scenery

Recognizing the connection between a thriving watershed ecosystem and beautiful scenery, DEC’s Estuary Program engages communities and partners to help them identify and protect beautiful natural areas. The new Scenery Mapping and Planning webpage (https://hudson.dnr.cals.cornell.edu/conservation-planning/inventory-and-planning/scenery-mapping-and-planning) highlights successful examples of scenery conservation by municipalities and provides a roadmap for anyone interested in protecting the region’s most visually stunning places. References like the newly published Scenic Resource Protection Guide (www.dec.ny.gov/docs/remediation_hudson_pdf/hrvscenicprotg.pdf) for the Hudson Valley, made possible through a partnership with Cornell University’s Department of City and Regional Planning, provide a clear summary of methods for creating scenic resources inventories and effective tools for local scenery protection. In addition to this year’s virtual outreach on scenic view management, we completed two demonstration sites along the banks of the Estuary. These sites provide dramatic Hudson River views while showcasing best practices for maintaining and enhancing the local ecology. For more information, refer to our handbook for landowners, Creating and Maintaining Hudson River Views (www.dec.ny.gov/docs/remediation_hudson_pdf/hrviewshbk.pdf).
AN INFORMED AND ENGAGED PUBLIC

The Institute Discovering Environmental Scientists

The Institute Discovering Environmental Scientists (TIDES) is a summer field research and laboratory science experience with HRNERR, DEC’s Estuary Program, the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies, and the Margaret A. Davidson Graduate Fellowship. In 2021, 15 high school and college students from communities across the Hudson Valley completed an innovative two-week research program with education staff and scientists at the Norrie Point Environmental Center in Staatsburg.

The students conducted environmental research projects along the banks of the Hudson River and in freshwater tidal wetlands examining the water quality, plant life, fish, and biological diversity of the estuary. Guest scientists led research seminars for the students throughout the program, introducing them to a wider world of environmental science monitoring and communication. The students worked together to formulate scientific questions, gather field data, conduct scientific analysis, and present their final research.

Eels Project Connects People to the River

From late March to early May, teachers, students, and partner environmental organizations participate in DEC’s Hudson River Eel Project to monitor migrating juvenile American eels. American eels hatch in the Sargasso Sea north of Puerto Rico, and every spring, they arrive in estuaries like the Hudson River as translucent, two-inch-long “glass eels.” In 2021, 400 volunteers helped count 80,764 eels at 12 streams that flow into the tidal Hudson from Staten Island to Troy, contributing data for multistate management plans for eel conservation.

In the summer and fall, volunteers also check eel ladders or “eel-evators” at the base of dams that act as barriers to upstream eel migration. Twenty-nine volunteers counted, measured, and released 247 eels to upstream habitats at three sites. Students and volunteers also assisted with electrofishing surveys and a mark-recapture study to investigate eel growth, movement, and maturity, including a fall survey on adult migrations out from the freshwater stream toward their oceanic spawning grounds.

The Hudson River Unit of Study for K–12 classrooms is a new, inquiry-based science guide designed to enhance Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) learning for students, as well as deepen their engagement and understanding of the Hudson River and its watershed.
AN ACCESSIBLE HUDSON RIVER

Milton Landing Pier and Park Opens
In early September 2021, the Town of Marlborough opened the Milton Landing Pier and Park, the first public access to the river in many years. The pier formerly served as a deep-water petroleum transfer and storage facility. In 2017, the Town began a two-phase project to restore a 300-foot-long pier that had accommodated large cargo ships until 1999. It had since sustained damage from storms and ice and fallen into disrepair.

With DEC grant funding, the town hired consultants to assess the structure, develop construction plans and cost estimates, and secure the necessary state and federal permits needed to undertake repairs. The town secured an Empire State Development grant to complete the pier’s restoration.

The Clearwater and other large vessels can now safely dock in Milton. The Milton Landing Pier and Park, a designated Hudson River Greenway Water Trail site, also includes a restored historic railroad station and areas for kayaking, fishing, picnicking, and river viewing. An Estuary Program access grant awarded in 2021 will help the town of Marlborough further improve the site with an accessible dock and kayak launch.

Arm-of-the-Sea Theater Makes Progress at the Tidewater Center
At a long-abandoned industrial site in Saugerties on the tidal Esopus Creek, the Arm-of-the-Sea Theater is slowly transforming the ruins of a nineteenth-century paper mill into a performance venue called the Tidewater Center.

Last summer, with DEC’s access grant funding, the Arm-of-the-Sea took an important step toward restoration of the site by capping the publicly accessible grounds with two feet of clean fill. This work allowed the Tidewater Center to open to the public for four outdoor performances of the Esopus Creek Puppet Suite in August. Nearly 1,250 people attended the performances, which featured live music and large-scale mask and puppet characters.

Future plans for the Center include an open-air performance venue in the site’s historic coal bin structure, additional access along the creek’s edge, and an educational waterworks playground for children.

DEC’s Estuary Program, with state and local partners, is working to improve the accessibility of Hudson River sites and help communities improve the resiliency of their docks, boat launches, and facilities to address flooding and sea-level rise now and into the future.
Help us protect the Hudson and learn more about DEC's Hudson River Estuary Program. Find out how you can become a partner in conservation.

Phone: (845) 256-3016 | Email: hrep@dec.ny.gov | Web: www.dec.ny.gov/lands/4920.html