



**Federated Conservationists  
of Westchester County, Inc.**  
*2015 Annual Report*  
***FCWC's 50th Anniversary Year***

*This report highlights a few of our new and continuing efforts of the past year towards a greener and more sustainable Westchester during 2015.*

In 2015, FCWC was privileged to celebrate five decades of protecting and preserving Westchester's Environment. Throughout the year, we took this opportunity to celebrate our 50-year history while keeping our eyes on the present and the future.

To highlight the history of our 50 years, we launched a newly designed website that includes a timeline of achievements. In each edition of the E-newsletter, we obtained quotes from past presidents reflecting on their time as the head of FCWC, and included articles from past Westchester Environments to show what was occurring in the environmental arena at that time. At our Annual Meeting last June, we brought back 15 past presidents and executive directors to honor them and the work they did for FCWC during their tenure. We were joined by many additional individuals who served on FCWC's Board over the past 50 years.

The culmination of our celebration took place at our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala on September 26 at the gorgeous home of Mr. and Mrs. Philip Zegarelli. FCWC presented three outstanding, local environmental leaders and organizations with our Green Legacy Award, honoring the influence they have had on the environmental well being of Westchester County. These three were Dr. Cynthia Rosenzweig of NASA's Goddard Institute of Space Studies, Pace Law School, and Bedford 2020.

### **Education:**

We started off the year by co-sponsoring a well attended event with Greenburgh Nature Center 'Future of Westchester County's Parks, Sanctuaries, and Open Spaces' under the veil of climate change. This meeting spurred two initiatives, including the creation of a Google Group that facilitates conversation and collaboration on the 'Open spaces in Westchester', and a program that focused on Planning with Land Management. At this program, Westchester Land Trust provided information on how to create a land management plan and how to ensure that land management is fiscally feasible into perpetuity.

FCWC once again participated in the EagleFest as a collaborator, and enjoyed a beautiful day, providing information about Westchester's environment to attendees of this event. We co-sponsored a program entitled 'Coping With Deer' with member

organizations, League of Women Voters of the Rivertowns, Teatown, and Hudson River Audubon, which provided information about the challenges Westchester faces with deer and various solutions that have been used to reduce the population.

As mentioned, the main theme of the year was climate change, and we offered a variety of ways for Westchester residents to become educated on climate change, what it means for Westchester County, and how they help mitigate the impacts of climate change. We gave invited talks at meetings of several outside organizations on this topic. We also co-sponsored Climate Change Solutions Tour with Zephyr Teachout and the "Peekskill to Paris" Global Climate Rally.

We wrote a Community View piece for the Journal News that outlined our concerns about the expansion of the Algonquin Pipeline passing through county-owned Blue Mountain Reservation. In addition, we continued to co-sponsor the popular Conversations on Conservation programs, which included topics on greening our parks and plastic bag bans.

### **Meetings:**

Our Annual Meeting was held in June this year at the Edith G Read Wildlife Sanctuary, the park that is the namesake of one of FCWC's founding members. As mentioned earlier, this year, FCWC honored the individuals who gave countless hours of their time, energy, and experience to leading FCWC. We reached out to all surviving past Board members that we could track down and invited them to celebrate the achievement of serving Westchester's environment for fifty year. Katie Yacoub, an eighth-grader from Eastchester, was awarded the Edith G. Read award for the work she completed for her Girl Scout Silver award that would reduce the number of plastic bags used in her community.

We also held a Federation Meeting in May, which brought together our member organizations to network and share resources. Again, we focused on how to help our member organizations prepare for climate change. Dr. Mike Rubbo, Director of Conservation Science at Teatown Lake Reservation spoke about the what some mature centers and preserves are doing about climate change and about the challenge we will be facing, while Lori Ensinger, Executive Director of Westchester Land Trust gave a very compelling presentation on the best way to talk to/work with your Board of Directors about the assets you are trying to protect. About 15 of our member organizations were represented at this Federation Meeting.

We continued our work with the Trails Advocacy Forum to improve, connect, support and expand Westchester's network of regional and local trails and pathways. We have been working closely with Friends of Westchester County Parks and Westchester County GIS to bring this initiative to life. This year we held a meeting in June to communicate the work we have done on creating a comprehensive trail map of Westchester County, and have been discussing ideas on how to engage the wider community to populate an app that would include Westchester's trail system in one, portable area.

### ***Strengthening the Federation:***

The strength of FCWC comes from our members and member organizations. This year, a priority for FCWC was to grow the Federation, to strengthen our voice in the environmental community. We are happy to say that four new or lapsed member organizations joined FCWC in 2015. In addition, at each Federation Meeting, a central question we ask is how FCWC can be useful to its members. This year, there was a lively discussion on items and or skills that each of us has, and would be willing to share. On that front, we created a Shared Resources program, which will enable all current member organizations to borrow and share resources with other organizations. This initiative is important due to the tight resources all of non-profits have. We hope this new program will enable many of Westchester's nonprofits to use resources wisely and effectively, and to call upon colleagues when needed.

Another service FCWC provides is to write letters in support of our member organizations whenever they ask us. This year we wrote a letter to the Board of Legislators to encourage them to keep Friends of Edith Read Sanctuary in all discussions when it comes to the future of Playland. We also wrote a letter of support for the Center for Urban River at Beczak for grant funding, which they received.

### ***In the Community:***

Our involvement in the wider environmental community in Westchester continued. We hosted an Earth Day hike with Friends of Trailside Nature Museum to get friends outside and celebrate the wonderful planet that we work so hard to protect. We attended several Board of Legislator meetings to monitor the progress of a County-wide plastic bag ban and to keep up to date on the administration's proposed changes to the commercial passenger limits at the Westchester County Airport. We also continued our participation with Long Island Sound Citizens Advisory Council.

### ***Communications:***

During the past year, we have increased our reach with a variety of different communications. We've used our website to provide additional space for information 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 on our website- [www.fcwc.org](http://www.fcwc.org). In addition, our Federation Calendar has provided a venue where we advertise environmental events happening all over the county.

### ***Advocacy:***

Advocacy remained a main component of FCWC's work during 2015. Examples of our advocacy work include:

Reading comments at a DEC hearing on air permits for Algonquin Pipeline Expansion Project;

Writing multiple letters to elected officials at the County, State, and Federal levels about the Algonquin Pipeline Expansion Project;

Submitting a letter of support on Toxic Free Toys Act legislation to the Board of Legislators; legislation which was passed unanimously;

Submitting a letter of support for Solar Rights for Homeowners Legislation, a measure that is a strong step towards increasing opportunities for homeowners to install solar systems;

Speaking at a Board of Legislators Environmental and Energy Committee meeting about the potential effects of airport expansion on the environment and the risk of changing the passenger limits;

Sending out Action Alerts to our members on issues ranging from the Algonquin Pipeline, to the plastic bag ban, to the protect of habitat for migratory birds;

Fighting for the reinstatement of Parks and Planning positions that were slated to be cut in the 2016 County Proposed Budget;

And advocating for Westchester County to sign on to the Climate Smart Communities Pledge.

### *Looking Ahead in 2016:*

The Federated Conservationists have been working for over 50 years to preserve and protect Westchester's Environment. It is impressive what can be accomplished when the many diverse voices in Westchester's environmental community come together, and move the County's environmental agenda forward.

In 2016, our main topics of work will be to continue to focus on climate change, promoting the restoration and protection of water quality in Long Island Sound, and diversifying and expanding the environmental movement in Westchester. Internally, we are embarking on a new strategic plan for our organization that will help guide our path for the next 3-5 years.

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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Carole Griffiths

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Chuck Lesnick  
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Christopher Reilly  
Anthony Sorrell  
Nortrud Spero  
Rick Turner  
Colleen Ward

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Alicia Molloy  
Katharine Munz



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

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*\$250-500*

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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  
 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  
 Friends of Westchester County Parks  
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 Grassroots Environmental Education  
 Green Acres Garden Club  
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 Groundwork Hudson Valley  
 Hands Across the Border  
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 Hudson River Audubon Society  
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 Louis Calder Center of Fordham University  
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 Rye Garden Club  
 Saw Mill River Audubon  
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 Stewards of Cranberry Lake  
 Tarrytown Environmental Advisory Council  
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 Watershed Agricultural Council  
 Westchester Land Trust  
 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 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Please make your tax deductible checks payable to FCWC and mail to:

**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](http://www.FCWC.org).

## Message from the Presidents

It is our pleasure to report the actions and successes that Federated Conservationists of Westchester County accomplished in 2015, the year of our Golden Anniversary. This was a very busy year, and none of these successes would have been possible without the hard work of our staff and the involvement of our members, both individuals and organizations.

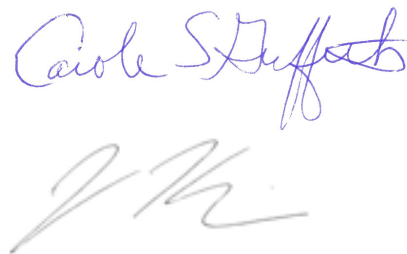
To many of us, the highlight of the year was the Gala in September at the lovely home of Philip and Barbara Zegarelli in Sleepy Hollow. The Zegarelli's couldn't have been more hospitable, and their welcome, the delicious food, the music provided by a classical and jazz duo from SUNY-Purchase made the evening memorable. Due to the significance of our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, we honored an individual, a nonprofit, and an institution whom filled three tenets important to FCWC; science; advocacy; and education. We chose three of Westchester's most influential environmental leaders to receive our Green Legacy Award: Dr. Cynthia Rosenzweig, Bedford 2020; and Pace Law School.

The Federation meeting in May continued the increase in involvement of our member organizations. The meeting was highlighted by two presentations, Dr. Mike Rubbo discussed the conservation projects preparing for climate change at Teatown, and Ms. Lori Ensinger, Executive Director of Westchester Land Trust give us pointers on 'How to Talk with your Board', valuable advice for our member organizations.

Only through the hard work and commitment of individuals can FCWC succeed. FCWC's Program Director, Alicia Molloy, and Member Relations Coordinator Kate Munz worked very hard over the past year to help us achieve our goals. The board of directors also contributed to this year's success by helping co-ordinate and volunteering at our events. This organization is very lucky to have such a dedicated group of directors.

Looking forward to 2016, we plan to continue our advocacy and education efforts. We will continue our focus on climate change and its effects on our county by providing targeted workshops. We will continue to advocate to the Westchester County Board of Legislators and County Executive to preserve our parks and open space. And by partnering with different organization, we will continue to disseminate ideas and information to a wider audience in Westchester County. There are many challenges and issues facing Westchester County and with your support, we will provide a unified voice for environmentalism in Westchester County.

Sincerely,



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.