

FEDERATED CONSERVATIONISTS OF WESTCHESTER

POSITION PAPER ON WATER QUALITY

INTRODUCTION

FCWC goals include the protection of the quality of Westchester County's water, preservation of its flora and fauna and support for pollution control programs.

Waters should be safe for fishing, recreation, and drinking. Pollution sources include stormwater runoff, nitrogen and raw sewage discharges from sewage treatment plants, trash, pcb's, water outflow from power plants, failing septic systems or anything that degrades the quality of waterbodies.

GENERAL STATEMENT

When sewer systems receive too much storm water, this causes overflows at sewage treatment plants. Consequently, there are frequent beach closings and fish advisories on those fish that are not safe to eat. There is trash in our water bodies throughout the county. Drinking water wells have been contaminated from failing septic systems.

The County of Westchester operates seven large sewage treatment plants: three on the Hudson River and four on Long Island Sound. The LIS plants are required to reduce nitrogen discharges; nitrogen causes depletion of oxygen and this severely impacts marine life. Without sewage plant modifications to remove nitrogen from treated sewage discharges, oxygen will continue to be a problem for fish survival in eastern LIS. FCWC supports nitrogen removal to maintain the viability of marine life in LIS.

The County is responsible to maintain and operate the seven treatment plants and pump stations within the available capacity of the facility. Sewage plant capacity should be reviewed thoroughly when considering new projects for construction. Without the capacity of the plant to handle new sewage flow, there is real potential for an overloaded treatment plant to discharge unacceptable effluent, creating public health and environmental threats.

Raw Sewage discharges from wwtp's contain pathogens that preclude the ability to swim in the water and nitrogen that diminishes the ability of fish to survive. Septic failures pollute drinking water wells, groundwater and waterbodies, threatening the environment and public health with pathogens and excess phosphorus.

FCWC supports stormwater regulations that require all municipalities in Westchester and throughout the State to develop Storm Water Management plans that address both water quantity and quality, FCWC supports implementation of these plans on or before the mandated deadlines from the State. Implementing these plans should greatly reduce the pollution that enters the water bodies and should address the excess water that enters sewage systems that subsequently overflow, diminishing water quality.

FCWC should monitor local municipalities implementation of their Storm Water Plans. The quality and quantify of storm water resides with these plans and how they're implemented. All new projects must address the quantity and quality of storm water runoff by reviewing the plan of each municipality,

FCWC RECORD

Long Island Sound Takes Another Step Forward; Warren Ross, Westchester Environment, Nov-Dec 2004

Long Island Sound: What's going In It?; FCWC Staff Report, Westchester Environment, Nov-Dec 2004

How to Survive and Thrive: Stormwater Phase II Conference; April 2003

Low Impact Development: Stormwater Management Conference; Oct 2003

Outline of Background for Croton Watershed Water Quality Improvements; Statement by Edna Sussman, Executive Director, FCWC, February 2002

Clean Water: Sewer Initiatives; Robert Funicello, Westchester environment, Special Issue 2001

EPA Letter Re PCB's in the Hudson River; Edna Sussman, FCWC Executive Director, April 10, 2001

Comments on the Catskill/Delaware Filtration Avoidance Determination; Edna Sussman, FCWC Executive Director, July 31, 2001

Comments on SPEDES Permits; Edna Sussman, FCWC Executive Director, September 14, 2001

Comments on French Hills Golf Course FEIS; Edna Sussman, FCWC Executive Director, October 16, 2001

POSITION

FCWC strongly supports measures that insure the highest level of water quality in order of provide clean, safe drinking water, a viable fishery, and safe recreational pursuits.

Approved: 12/05