

Capital Region

Environmental Overview

- The region boasts a number of unique resources, including the Albany Pine Bush Preserve, DEC's Five Rivers Environmental Education Center, Rensselaer Plateau, and a significant portion of the New York City Watershed. Region 4 contains portions of four major river basins: the Hudson, Mohawk, Delaware and Susquehanna River Basins.
- The New York City Watershed, supplying unfiltered drinking water for some 9 million downstate residents, is perhaps the defining natural/man-made feature of the western and southern Catskills. The City's investment in upstate communities (\$250 million to date with \$241 million projected to buy watershed protection lands and \$100 million in watershed communities infrastructure investment), and the City's reservoir/dam system rebuild investments will likely be one of the largest public works projects in the State for the next several years.

Environmental Issues

- Open space and the rural character of much of the region also support tourism and is a factor in the burgeoning second home market. Much of the region remains largely undeveloped (~2/3 in forests and significant remaining lands in agriculture). Large expanses of grasslands are increasingly uncommon due to vegetative succession and the spread of new development. Those that remain support many northeastern bird species of special concern. The Region is also the winter range for bird species that are either rare, threatened, or of special concern, such as short eared owls, harriers, and bald eagles. The Region supports excellent cold water fisheries.
- **Global Foundries and Albany Nano and SemaTech** \$1.5 billion Global Foundries facility adds to the existing Capital District resources of the \$7 billion dollar expanding University at Albany semi-conductor (e.g. Sematech *et. al*) and nanotech research and development centers, the Hudson Valley Community College semi-conductor technical training programs. RPI, in partnership with UAlbany at the semi-conductor/nanotech centers, is creating substantial growth and synergy in developing high tech manufacturing and support industries.
- **Lafarge Ravena Modernization Project** – Replacement of existing, nearly 50 year old cement plant with a significantly expanded capacity, state-of-the-art dry manufacturing process cement plant, representing an investment of approximately \$500 million. This project will result in the retention of nearly 200 manufacturing jobs at the facility and is projected to create over 800 jobs during construction, which is projected to last 42 months.
- **GE Hybrid Battery Project** - Rehabilitation of existing building to accommodate a state-of-the-art sodium battery manufacturing facility representing \$100 million investment & 350 new blue collar/50 white collar jobs.
- **Stiefel Labs/Glaxo Smith Kline** – DEC cooperative technical assistance provided to prevent expected facility closure and resulting loss of over 200 jobs. As a result of DEC support, facility is to remain viable and will actually expand, creating dozens of new jobs.
- **Greene County Development Projects** - Several significant development projects in Greene County have resulted in bird habitat conservation projects, protecting the Northern Harrier and Short-Eared Owl, among other species. The projects include: Greene Business & Technology Park; Save-A-Lot

Distribution Center; Kalkberg Commerce Park; Serta mattress manufacturing plant; and a future Retail Destination Park.

- **Luther Forest Technology Park with Global Foundries and associated spinoff development and permitting activity-** \$4.6 billion microchip fabrication project being constructed on 222 acres within the 1,414 acre Luther Forest Technology Campus in the Town of Malta, is under construction. When complete, it will stand as the most technologically advanced semiconductor manufacturing facility in the world and the largest such facility in the United States. The plant will create approximately 1,450 direct semiconductor manufacturing jobs and approximately 5,000 indirect jobs, offering a sustained estimated total annual payroll of \$290 million. Department program and regulatory staff have worked closely with project sponsors on required environmental permits
- **New York City Watershed** – This region implements the Watershed MOU in three of the counties that form the largest portion of the City’s West of Hudson system. A landmark filtration avoidance land acquisition program resulting from a DEC-led collaborative negotiation process was finalized in late 2010.
- **MPM** - This Waterford facility is the largest silicone manufacturing facility of its type in the country and an important employer and economic driver for the region. DEC regulates a variety of environmental permits and compliance issues at the facility, and has a full time environmental monitor assigned to the site for coordination and oversight.
- **Albany Landfill** – June 2009 expansion permit granted the city of Albany permission to expand the current landfill sufficient to add an additional six years of disposal capacity. DEC negotiated a permit that requires aggressive improvements in the City’s recycling and waste reduction efforts. Includes stringent conditions to address the potential for odor impacts to nearby communities as well as a surcharge to fund an innovative habitat restoration plan for the post-closure of entire landfill footprint. The restoration plan will essentially restore the closed landfill to a habitat compatible with the existing Pine Bush.
- **New Solid Waste Management Plan needed for Saratoga County:** The previously approved solid waste management plan (SWMP) for Saratoga County expired at the end of 2010. DEC has informed the County that a new plan should be prepared. The County is in the process of hiring a consultant to prepare the plan, which would cover a minimum of 10 years.
- **Champlain-Hudson Power Express** - Proposed energy line project would bring up to 1,000 MW of power to the New York City area. The proposed energy line would utilize buried/submerged High Voltage direct current (HVdc) cables to transmit energy derived from renewable sources in Canada to New York City. The proposed line would be placed in waterways or buried along railway routes. The underwater portions of the preferred route include Lake Champlain and the Hudson River between Albany and Manhattan. To avoid environmentally sensitive areas, such as the PCB clean-up site in the Hudson River, the line would be taken out of the Champlain Canal north of Fort Edward and buried along Canadian Pacific and CSX rail rights of way for 73 miles, re-entering the Hudson River south of Albany below Selkirk.
- **Cleanup Activities for GE Hudson River PCB Sediments (Washington County to NYC), G.E. Hudson Falls Plant Site (Kingsbury, Washington County) & GE Ft. Edward Plant Site (Fort Edward, Washington County)** - Work continues on all three projects with Department oversight to remediate the affected areas/facilities.

- **Capital District Intermodal Facility-Halfmoon/Stillwater** - The Department recently issued permits for the construction of an intermodal and automotive handling facility on a 140 acre portion of an existing rail yard to improve and optimize rail freight transportation. Secondary benefits include decreased long-distance truck trips, reducing greenhouse gas emissions.