

## **DEC Region 3 (Hudson Valley Catskills) Snapshot for Regional Council**

### **Introduction**

In the Hudson Valley and the Catskills New York State has in the past had and moving forward has a great opportunity to grow the economy, generate jobs and protect the environment. This is a region with world renowned and economically valuable natural resources, campgrounds, outdoor recreational opportunities and parks that provide drinking water for the majority of New York residents, and support billions of dollars of the state's tourism and outdoor recreation economy. DEC is proactive in partnering in the region with ESDC and the business community, and is engaged in efforts to recalibrate and improve the agencies permitting processes and compliance efforts, to provide better opportunity to grow business in the Region. An example were permits issued for the Taylor Biomass ESDC project.

### **Regional Setting, Background and Development Trends**

DEC's Region 3 includes seven counties (Westchester, Putnam, Dutchess, Rockland, Orange, Ulster and Sullivan) and 2.6 million residents. The region is home to large metropolitan cities such as Yonkers plus other urban, suburban and rural communities. The Hudson River Estuary flows through the region. Region 3 includes the majority of the New York City watershed system, whose reservoirs supply 9 million New Yorkers with their drinking water, a portion of Long Island Sound, the Upper Delaware River and many protected streams and wetlands. Sixty percent of development inquiries screened by Natural Heritage for the region identify likely rare, endangered or threatened species or significant natural communities. This is the highest rate among all regions of the state.

Region 3 shares the Catskill Forest Preserve with DEC's Region 4, has four Catskill campgrounds plus the Belleayre Ski Center, the Stony Kill Farm and Education Center, the DeBruce Education Camp, and the Mongaup Fish Hatchery. DEC manages 250,000 acres of state land in the region. Similar acreage and a network of parks ranging from the new and popular "Walkway over the Hudson" to Bear Mountain State Park are managed by OPRHP or PIPC, and there is the Appalachian Trail. The region also has more than 100,000 acres of non-profit or local government open space or park land, including a network of lands owned and managed by Scenic Hudson and the Mohonk Preserve. DEC also manages public access to 25,000 acres owned by NYC DEP, hundreds of public fishing access locations, multiple boat launches, unique areas, and the 7,000 acre Stewart State Forest.

Advancing and permitting smart sustainable economic growth, and protecting clean water and natural resources from poorly planned or located development and violations of the ECL are top DEC Regional priorities. Region 3 is working to prioritize permit reviews, enhance permit review capacity and efficiencies, expand use of general permits where appropriate, increase field checks of permit compliance, and implement regional recommendations to make SEQR work faster and better. Three of the State's most rapidly growing counties (Orange, Dutchess and Putnam) are in the region and contribute to more than 1,200 permit applications per year. The number of large project applications is increasing. Especially along the Hudson and in the older communities there are multiple abandoned industrial sites that cleaned up of past contamination have great economic redevelopment potential that would also improve public access to the River.

### **Current Major "High Profile" Development Proposals or Related Issues** (a partial list):

1. Taylor Biomass Waste to Energy Facility – Town of Montgomery, Orange County. Approved first week of December. Expected start of operations in two years. Operational and other details to be monitored and managed to ensure stated project goals and public objectives are realized.
2. United Water Hudson River Desalinization Plant – Town of Haverstraw, Rockland County. A proposed 7.5 mgd plant for drinking water, per a PSC order. A draft EIS is being prepared based on a final scope that was completed after extensive and diverse public input.
3. Tappan Zee Bridge Replacement – NYS DOT lead – Regional project. DEC working with DOT to try and avoid or otherwise address direct in river impacts and upland growth inducing impacts while promoting public transit and smart, transit orientated development.

4. Belleayre Ski Center and Crossroads Resort – Adjoining Town of Shandaken, Ulster County and Town of Middletown, Delaware County proposals. 370 hotel rooms, 259 lodging units, plus a proposed state land acquisition. DEISs being prepared and land acquisition being negotiated.
5. Catskill Casino (s) – Governor Paterson proposed settlement rejected by Federal authorities included a proposed casino by the Neversink River in Sullivan County. Other proposals circulating.
6. Two 1,000 MG Natural Gas Power Plant Proposals: One in Town of Dover, Dutchess County, one in Town of Waywayonda, Orange County. Both proposals are under review by DEC and the towns.
7. Doverknolls Residential and Retail Transit Orientated Development – Town of Dover, Dutchess County. 1,376 proposed units, 250,000 sq ft retail including demolition of old state Harlem Valley Psychiatric Center. FEIS completed by Town, DEC finishing permit review.
8. Carvel Development (DURST) – Town of Pine Plains, Dutchess County. Project modified and reduced in response to input from DEC and others. Waiting for revised DEIS.
9. Lost Lake Resort – Town of Forestburgh, Sullivan County. 2,091 acres, 2,620 mixed residential units, 18 hole golf course and resort adjacent to DEC Neversink Unique Area. Waiting for FEIS.
10. Tuxedo Reserve – Town of Tuxedo, Orange County. 2,338 acres, 1,195 mixed residential units plus 30,000 plus sq ft commercial/retail space.
11. Williams Lake / Hudson River Valley Resort: Town of Rosendale, Ulster County. 130 hotel rooms, 160 residential units, 34,480 sq ft commercial on 368 acres with endangered species issues.
12. 7 Peaks Residential Development: 49 homes plus future conference/resort center on Shawungunk Ridge in Town of Mamakating, Sullivan County. DEC and Town waiting for proposed FEIS.
13. NYC Watershed and the Catskill Aqueduct/Alum Permit – DEC is working with NYC's DEP and Ulster County on projects including special conditions for the CAT/ALUM SPDES permit to protect water quality, natural resources, and community interests on the Esopus while avoiding filtration. DEC has initiated enforcement action against DEP. High Esopus turbidity is one of the issues.
14. Cleanups at Priority Inactive Hazardous Waste Potential Redevelopment Sites: DEC, DOH, responsible parties (RPs) and local officials are advancing remediation (and sometimes redevelopment plans) at sites including: BICC Wire in the City of Yonkers (Started removal of PCB contamination in Hudson River); Anaconda Wire in Village of Hastings on Hudson (Developed conceptual proposed Remedial Action Plan, to be designed and released for public comment along with alternatives); Tappan Terminal in Village of Hastings on Hudson (Completed Remedial Action Plan and initiated cleanup in 2010); David's Island in City of New Rochelle (Working to complete the Remedial Investigation and Remedial Design.)
15. Wallkill Watershed Wetland Mapping – In Region 3 there are over 112,000 acres of mapped wetlands and approximately 36,000 additional acres identified as eligible to be mapped. The priority is to update maps for the Wallkill Watershed, including most of Orange County.
16. Marcellus Shale Horizontal Hydrofracking – Potential impacts on the NYC Watershed and proposed drilling in Sullivan County are among the issues stakeholders are raising.
17. Flooding and Flood Mitigation "Stream Restoration" Projects: Various projects across the region.

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