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## Indian Point to Close in Face of Growing Risks to Hudson, NY Metro Area



In 2017, Riverkeeper joined New York State and Entergy in a historic agreement to close the aging and increasingly dangerous Indian Point nuclear power plant by 2021. Reactor 2 at the plant ceased operations in April 2020, and Reactor 3 (the last reactor still in use) is slated to shut down in April 2021. Soon, Indian Point will no longer threaten life in the Hudson River and the safety of 20 million nearby residents. We continue to advocate for thorough site decommissioning, clean replacement energy, and a just and equitable transition for workers and local communities.

## New York Follows the Science, Bans Fracking

Despite long odds, we fought the frackers with everything we had. We demanded protection from a dangerous drilling practice that threatened our health and water if allowed in NY. And after six years on the front lines, we cheered in December 2014 as Governor Cuomo's administration followed through on its pledge, heeded the research, and banned fracking. This was the best sort of victory — based on science and fostered by grassroots action. And it was made even sweeter in 2020, when the NY State Legislature made the fracking ban permanent in its Fiscal Year 2021 budget.



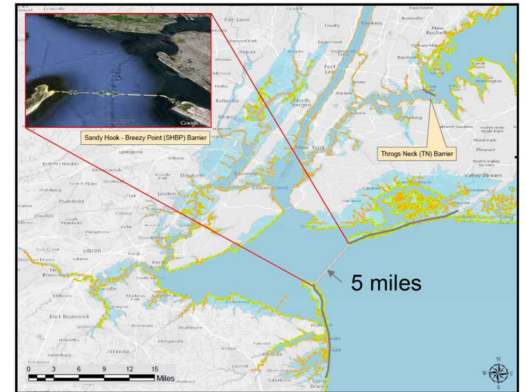
## Riverkeeper Establishes More Than 20 Local Water Quality Testing Programs



Thanks to our dedicated community scientists and partners, our water quality testing capacity has grown by leaps and bounds over the past ten years. From the NYC waterfront to the source of the Hudson at Lake Tear of the Clouds, we collect data that informs policy, spurs investments in water quality infrastructure, and engages local communities. We are also actively sampling across 19 of the Hudson's tributaries, where local groups like the Wallkill River Watershed Alliance, the Rondout Creek Watershed Alliance, and others have benefited from our support and guidance and are rallying, data in hand, to protect and restore their waterways.

## A Ruinous Plan to Block our Waterways with Sea Gates is Scuttled

In February 2020, the US Army Corps of Engineers' plan to erect giant storm barriers across the width of New York Harbor was tabled indefinitely, after a major advocacy, media, and legal campaign coordinated by Riverkeeper. These barriers would have threatened catastrophic harm to the Hudson River while leaving communities vulnerable to flooding. Our attention now turns to mobilizing support for positive, thoughtful coastal resilience measures instead. This includes working to once again fund the Army Corps' study, while changing its scope to focus comprehensively on nature-based solutions and community engagement.



## Dams are Removed on the Wynantskill, Quassaick Creek, and Furnace Brook, Ushering in New Era of Habitat Restoration

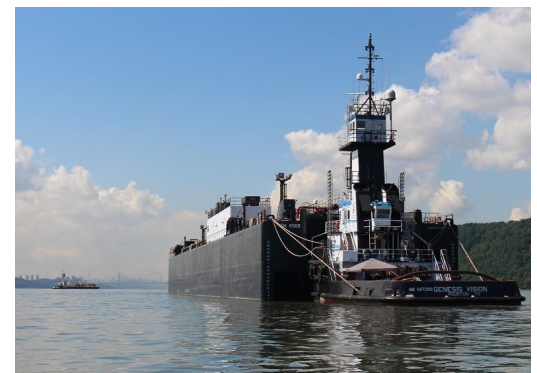


In 2016, Riverkeeper patrols identified a prime opportunity to remove an obsolete dam near the City of Troy and allow herring to return to their historic spawning ground in the Wynantskill, a tributary of the Hudson. We brought state and local partners together and organized a precedent-setting dam removal project, the first of its kind in the Hudson River estuary. Within days, underwater cameras spotted herring swimming up the Wynantskill to spawn for the first time in 85 years. Four years later, in 2020, we teamed up with the DEC and local communities to remove two more dams on the Quassaick Creek and Furnace Brook, opening up even more habitat to river herring,

American eel, and other struggling fish species. Some of this habitat had been inaccessible to fish for nearly 300 years. With over a dozen more dams targeted for, or already in the process of removal, our movement to restore healthy and free-flowing waterways continues to grow.

## Plans to Store Millions of Gallons of Oil on the Hudson, Expand Anchorages, and Ship Tar Sands Crude through the Port of Albany are Rejected

In March 2018, the U.S. Coast Guard pulled the maritime industry's request for more than 40 new long-term anchorages for crude oil barges on the Hudson. Riverkeeper fought hard to stop these anchorages, educating and mobilizing the public to send 10,000 comments calling for the protection of the river. In the process, we also iced a dangerous plan from fossil-fuel company Global Partners to expand its Albany terminal to ship tar sands crude oil down the river by rail and barge. As a further outcome of these battles, we helped launch a new committee aimed at improving navigation safety and environmental protection along the Hudson.





## **New York Passes the Sewage Pollution Right to Know Act; Clean Water Infrastructure gets \$3.9 billion in State Funding; and a \$500 Million Raid on Federal Clean Water Funding is Thwarted**



In 2012, we helped pass what was arguably the most important state-level environmental law that year: the Sewage Pollution Right to Know Act. Using data collected by our staff and community scientist volunteers, a coalition of 25 partner groups and tens of thousands of NY residents built the public case for the law, which requires that the public be notified when sewage discharges could put public health at risk. Three years later, we again won a victory for transparency when we forced the state to back down on using Clean Water Act money to finance construction of the new Tappan Zee bridge. After our intervention, this money was instead used as intended: to fund actual clean water infrastructure projects. Thanks in part to these efforts, over the last five years \$3.9 billion has been budgeted for improving clean water infrastructure in New York State.

## **“Hudson 7” Municipalities Band Together to Protect Drinking Water; NY Establishes Key Drinking Water Source Protection Program**

In 2018, we helped unite seven river communities, which draw their drinking water from the Hudson, into an intermunicipal council representing more than 100,000 New Yorkers. Calling themselves “The Hudson 7,” these communities are making innovative use of Riverkeeper’s new drinking water source protection “Scorecard” — a roadmap for identifying and reducing sources of contamination in communities across the state — and are engaging in local activism to protect their drinking water from threats ranging from coal tar to crude oil. 2019 also saw a major victory for drinking water when New York State created the Drinking Water Source Protection Program, which will help municipalities reduce and eliminate high-priority risks to water quality. Riverkeeper served as a member of the advisory group that helped draft the program, and provided key impetus for the program’s creation.



## **Proposals for Wasteful Desalination and Bottled Water Plants are Stopped Cold**



In 2014, after a seven-year struggle, the people of Rockland and their public officials joined with Riverkeeper, Pace Law School’s Environmental Litigation Clinic, and Scenic Hudson to defeat a wasteful plan to desalinate Hudson water to feed sprawl in Rockland County. Instead, Rocklanders created a new plan, based on conservation and smarter deployment of existing water resources, and commissioned a groundbreaking independent study that found substantial water savings were possible through better management practices. The next year, 2015, saw a repeat victory for community activism: Riverkeeper and Ulster County groups

worked together to force Niagara Bottling LLC to abandon a major water bottling plant project. We reported on the environmental impacts of the proposed plant, and this — plus the work of local advocates in spotlighting inappropriate use of state economic development programs to fund the plant — led to the project’s ultimate abandonment.

## Strides Made toward Ridding the Hudson Valley and NYC of Toxic Pollutants

In recent years, we’ve taken significant steps toward resolving some of the most intractable hazardous waste problems facing our region. After an estimated 1.3 million pounds of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) were dumped in the Hudson by General Electric between 1947 and 1977, the EPA wanted to declare premature victory in cleaning up the mess. We stepped in and applied pressure, and as a result the agency now admits that more investigation into the problem is needed. Meanwhile in Newburgh, a community whose drinking water has been contaminated by toxic chemicals leaking from the Stewart Air National Guard Base, we’ve developed strong relationships with local government and community members, which has helped us foster engagement with remediation efforts and get NY State to set maximum contaminant levels for chemicals including PFOA and PFOS. Finally, in NYC, we’ve successfully opposed various attempts to cut corners and interfere with the cleanup of the Newtown Creek and Gowanus Canal Superfund sites. In all of these cases, the work is far from over, and we’ll keep pushing until full cleanup and remediation is achieved.



## Incinerator Ash, Solid Waste, and Construction & Demolition Debris Disposal Plans are Rejected Up and Down the River



Time and again, we’ve fought hard to keep communities safe from waste disposal operations that would harm them and the Hudson. For example, in Greene County we worked with local advocates to stop two dangerous proposals for the Peckham Quarry site near Catskill. In 2019, we stopped the quarry — which sits just 2,500 feet from the Hudson — from being converted into a dump for toxic incinerator ash. Then in 2020, we prevented a construction and demolition waste processing facility from being built on the site, which would have handled debris barged in from down the river. We also stopped a similar C&D facility in Athens, NY, as well as a solid waste disposal facility in Rensselaer that would have leached

‘garbage juice’ into the river, and a proposal to fill the Tilcon quarry in Rockland County with debris and dredge material that would have polluted surrounding waterways. In each of these cases, community members turned out with our support to push local government into rejecting these plans.



## Riverkeeper Sweep Removes Hundreds of Tons of Shoreline Trash



Every year since 2012, we've organized an annual day of service to remove trash and invasive plants from Hudson Valley and New York City shorelines, and to plant and maintain hundreds of shoreline trees. Over the last eight years, Sweep has brought together thousands of volunteers at a total of 737 service projects. Their combined efforts have removed 259 tons of debris from the Hudson River and its tributaries, planted 2,372 trees, and inspired numerous ongoing local cleanup efforts. Several long-time project locations no longer need annual sweeps, and the data we gathered helped drive state and local policies to reduce the use of single-use plastics.

## NY Enacts Nation-Leading Climate Protection Law

In 2019, we worked with climate-protection and environmental justice groups alike to successfully push for the passage of New York's groundbreaking Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, the nation's strongest climate legislation. The CLCPA established aggressive mandates to ensure New York achieves a 40 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and an 85 percent reduction — with 100 percent carbon neutrality — by 2050. While we believe that the CLCPA could have gone even further to guarantee fairness and equity for environmental justice communities, we nonetheless helped ensure that a proportion of its energy and climate investments would be made in these communities.



## No More Single-Use Plastic Bags!



In another policy success from 2019, we successfully lobbied for a statewide ban on single-use plastic bags, which went into effect the following spring. We helped assemble a coalition of environmental groups and clean-water advocates who drove home how essential this ban would be for ensuring safe drinking water, preserving wildlife habitat, and reducing water toxins. New York is now one of three states to refuse to let their rivers and streams be choked by this ubiquitous source of plastic pollution.

## Sewage Overflows to be Cut by Nearly 4 Billion Gallons per Year

Spurred by our advocacy, New York State has strengthened requirements to reduce storm-related sewer overflows in New York City and Albany. In NYC, we've helped finalize nine different Long-Term Control Plans for major waterways — including Newtown Creek, where the city committed to a more than 60% reduction in sewage pollution per year, and the Gowanus Canal, where two new sewage capture tanks will dramatically reduce overflows into the canal. Overall, NYC has committed to cut untreated sewage discharges by more than 3.5 billion gallons per year. Meanwhile in Albany, which has the highest sewage contamination rate of all our water quality sampling areas, we helped develop a landmark \$136 million plan for reducing pollution and making waters swimmable and fishable again, which was unveiled by state officials in 2014. We're continuing to watchdog implementation of all these plans, while pushing both cities to aggressively adopt green infrastructure-based approaches for stormwater pollution control.



## Lower Esopus Creek, Walkill River Get Pollution Reduction Plans



In 2012, with the help of our partners at Pace Environmental Litigation Clinic, we demonstrated to the EPA that the Lower Esopus Creek, near Kingston, was being harmed by discharges of turbid, muddy water from the nearby Ashokan Reservoir. In response, the EPA designated the creek as “impaired,” ensuring that NY State and City officials would have to heed the outcry from local residents, take action to end these discharges, and rectify the damage they’ve caused. More recently, in 2019, we got the State to commit to a similar comprehensive

cleanup plan for the Walkill River and foster \$36 million in investment for clean water projects along this large tributary of the Hudson, in Ulster and Orange counties. Similar pollution-reduction successes are continuing to play out through the estuary.

## Permits Refused for Constitution Fracked Gas Pipeline, Pilgrim Pipelines

2020 marked the end of our long struggle against the Constitution Pipeline, which would have carried fracked gas across 251 different waterways — including 89 trout spawning streams — and through many unique and sensitive habitats. We won numerous legal victories against this pipeline between 2016 and 2020, and its abandonment was a crucial and conclusive victory, not just for the Hudson River, but for all communities seeking to stop major gas infrastructure projects. Another critical victory against a dangerous pipeline came in





2016 when, in partnership with dozens of municipalities, we forced a comprehensive environmental review of the proposed Pilgrim Pipelines, which would have shipped crude oil and refined petroleum along the length of the Hudson Valley. Rather than study the myriad adverse impacts this pipeline would have brought with it, Pilgrim closed its NY offices and abandoned the project.

## Dangerous Dairy Farm Deregulation Plan Overturned in Court



In 2018, after a spate of major pollution incidents, Riverkeeper joined with a host of other environmental and conservation organizations in challenging a deeply flawed state dairy farm permitting plan focusing on self-regulation, not meaningful oversight. We won more public participation and forced the state to review pollution control planning, farm by farm, to prevent disease-causing animal waste from being discharged from New York’s growing dairy industry into our regional waterways.

## 41,000 Miles of Streams, Deregulated By Trump Administration, Poised To Get State Protection

In early 2020, we were told that the streams protection bill we’d worked so hard on had “zero chance” of making it through a NY State Legislature that seemed to have set environmental issues aside in the midst of dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. But the skeptics were wrong. In summer 2020, after a concerted advocacy push by Riverkeeper, the state legislature rallied to protect over 41,000 miles of streams that had just been deregulated by Trump’s EPA.



## New Protections for Menhaden, the “Most Important Fish in the Sea”



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In 2019 and 2020, we scored two big wins for menhaden, a tiny but critical fish species that’s often dubbed “the most important fish in the sea.” First, we mobilized the public against overfishing of menhaden by Omega Protein, a giant multinational that controls menhaden harvests along the East Coast. After this public outcry, the US Department of Commerce took our side, imposing a moratorium on fishing for menhaden in Virginia waters. Our second victory came in 2020, when we successfully petitioned the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission to revamp its approach to managing menhaden stocks. Now, these fish — which

sustain whales, dolphins, striped bass, bluefish, osprey, eagles and many other coastal species — will be managed so that the wildlife that depend on them get first dibs.