

Ulster County Water Quality Coordinating Committee 2019 Annual Report

I. Introduction

The Ulster County Water Quality Coordinating Committee (UCWQCC) was reinstated in 2019, under the auspices of the Ulster County Department of the Environment for the purpose of coordinating and collaborating with other agencies and organizations to ensure resilience in our watershed systems. The Department of the Environment was appointed the County's Water Quality Management Agency in 2017 by the Ulster County Legislature, pursuant to New York State County Law Article 5 § 220-A. In 2019 the Department of the Environment partnered with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County to assist with coordination of the Committee, and to provide both a summary of Water Quality Coordinating Committees in New York State, highlighting some of the more robust committees' work, as well as an Annual Report of the accomplishments, goals and identified needs of the 2019 Ulster County Water Quality Committee.

This report is organized into four sections:

1. Introduction
2. Water Quality Coordinating Committees Overview
3. Local History: Ulster County
4. 2019 Ulster County WQCC

The Water Quality Coordinating Committees Overview section provides a broad outline of why Water Quality Coordinating Committees (WQCCs) were formed, and their typical membership. This section also provides more detailed examples of four different Water Quality Coordinating Committees in New York State, as well as a table of Websites for Water Quality Coordinating Committees in New York State by County. While links were provided where webpages or sites were found for WQCC's around the state, the search made it apparent that there are other active county WQCCs that do not have a webpage or site.

The Local History: Ulster County section provides a history of the Ulster County Water Quality Coordinating Committee (UCWQCC) from its roots in the Environmental Management Council to the newly initiated UCWQCC under the auspices of the Ulster County Department of Environment.

The 2019 Ulster County WQCC section provides a summary of the activities of the UCWQCC for the year, and includes the new mission and vision statements for the Committee as well as a link to their newly launched webpage, hosted by the Ulster County Department of the Environment.

II. Water Quality Coordinating Committees Overview

- Formed to develop and implement County Water Quality Strategies
- Initial focus on non-point source (NPS) issues; led by SWCD as part of NPS mandate
- Coordination is key - it takes partners working together at federal, state and local levels, including the private and public sectors

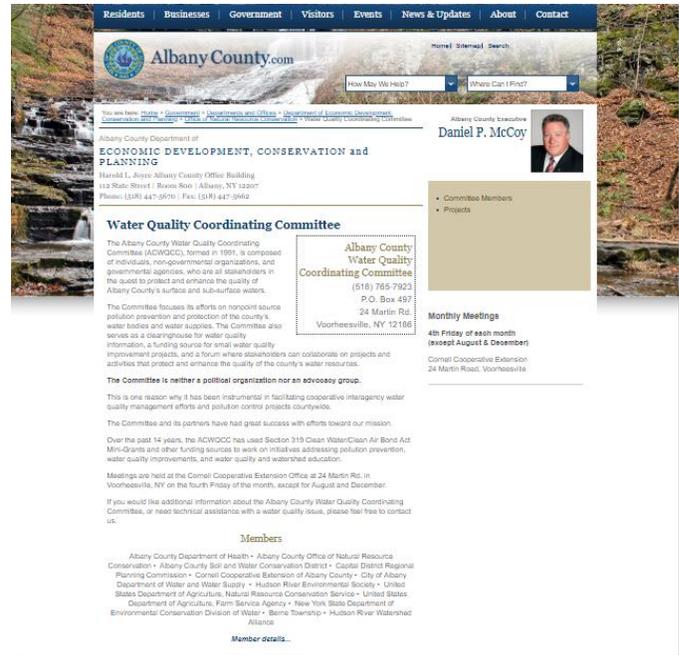
Typical Membership

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| • Soil & Water | • Regional Planning Commissions | Waterfront Revitalization |
| • Cornell Cooperative Extension | • Lake & Watershed Associations | • NYS DOT |
| • County Planning | • Farm Bureau | • League of Women Voters |
| • County Health | • Water Authorities | • Sportsman Federations |
| • County Highway | • NRCS | • Environmental Groups such as: Trout Unlimited, Audubon Society, Sierra Club, Nature Conservancy |
| • County Environmental Management Council | • FSA | |
| • Parks & Recreation | • Fish & Wildlife, USGS | |
| • County Board of Realtors | • DEC | |
| | • Department of State Coastal Resources & | |

Examples from NYS

Albany County

- Formed in 1991
- Membership: individuals, non-governmental organizations, and governmental agencies
- Focus on NPS pollution prevention and protection of water bodies and water supplies
- Clearinghouse for water quality information
- Funding small water quality improvement projects and watershed education
- Forum for stakeholder collaboration
- Section 319 Mini-Grants and other sources
- Meetings at CCE monthly except Dec, Aug
- Membership
 - County Health
 - County Natural Resource Conservation
 - Soil and Water, CCE Albany
 - Capital District Regional Planning Commission
 - City of Albany Dept of Water and Water Supply
 - Hudson River Environmental Society
 - USDA, NRCS, FSA, DEC
 - Berne Township
 - Hudson River Watershed Alliance



Wayne County

- **Wayne County Mission:** Provide forum for coordination in water resources management and planning to protect and improve the water quality and quantity of water resources. Provide multidisciplinary approach to planning and management. More efficient use of limited resources. Cooperate with other regional committees on water resource issues which cross county municipal boundaries.
 - Make recommendations on new water quality policies, strategies, and structure
 - Make decisions on Finger Lakes – Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance (FL-LOWPA) project priorities
 - Make decisions on grant proposal priorities
 - Review and approve WQCC mission and vision, work plan
 - Public education about water quality initiatives

- Special interest: watershed orgs, lake associations, sportsmen and advocacy groups
- Membership categories: 1) member agencies, 2) interactive orgs, 3) special interest groups
- Member agencies: Soil and Water, County, Board of Supervisors, CCE
- Interactive groups: DEC, FSA, NRCS, Sea Grant, PRISM

Hamilton County

- Mission: maintain and restore the quality and quantity of water resources using a coordinated, comprehensive, and educational interagency approach
- Water Quality Strategy:
 - As determined by the Committee members
 - Protecting waters
 - Education, monitoring and management of invasive species
 - Sediment and erosion control
 - Other programs and projects by partners

Monroe County

- Broad membership: broken into categories (1) monitoring, regulatory, administrative or oversight; (2) Operations; (3) Planning and Education; and (4) Ex-officio voting (for coordination and liaison purposes).
- Voting and decision making defined, consensus approach
- Staffing by County Health
- Chairmanship rotating between categories, annual voting
- Executive committee makes recommendations
- Meetings monthly

Table 1: Websites for WQCCs in NYS by County

WQCC	LINK
Albany County	http://www.albanycounty.com/Government/Departments/Dept-EconomicDevelopmentConservationandPlaning/OfficeofNaturalResourceConservation/WaterQualityCoordinatingCommittee.aspx
Alleghany County	https://www.alleganyco.com/departments/planning/associate-agencies/
Bronx County	No Website Found
Broome County	No Website Found
Cattaraugus County	No Website Found
Cayuga County	https://www.cayugacounty.us/540/Water-Quality-Management-Agency-WQMA
Chautauqua County	No Website Found
Chemung County	http://www.stcplanning.org/index.asp?pageId=40
Chenango County	No Website Found
Clinton County	http://www.clintonhealth.org/pdf%20files/ClintonCountyWaterQualityStrategyDec2015.pdf
Columbia County	No Website Found
Cortland County	No Website Found
Delaware County	No Website Found
Dutchess County	No Website Found

Erie County	http://www.ecswcd.org/html/Strategy2002.htm
Essex County	No Website Found
Franklin County	https://fcsxcd.org/franklin-county-water-quality-coordinating-committe/
Fulton County	No Website Found
Genesee County	https://www.co.genesee.ny.us/departments/soilandwater/index.php
Greene County	No Website Found
Hamilton County	https://www.hamiltoncountysxcd.com/index.php/water/water-quality-coordinating-committee
Herkimer County	https://www.ocgov.net//planning/environmentwater/advisoryboards
Jefferson County	No Website Found
Kings County	Water Commission: https://www.countyofkings.com/departments/community-development-agency/information/water-commission
Lewis County	https://lewiscountysolandwater.com/pdf/Septic_system_survey.pdf
Livingston County	No Website Found
Madison County	https://www.madisoncounty.ny.gov/371/Water-Quality
Monroe County	https://www2.monroecounty.gov/eh-environmentalquality.php#WQCC
Montgomery County	https://www.facebook.com/Montgomery-County-Water-Quality-Coordinating-Committee-250975536181/
Nassau County	No Website Found
New York County	No Website Found

Niagra County	No Website Found
Oneida County	https://www.ocgov.net//planning/environmentwater/advisoryboards
Onondaga County	PDF Report: http://www.ongov.net/health/env/documents/2012WATERQUALITYSTRATEGY.pdf
Ontario County	No Website Found
Orange County	No Website Found
Orleans County	No Website Found
Oswego County	http://www.co.oswego.ny.us/pdf/WQCC.pdf (Link to PDF and Contact for Oswego County Water Quality Coordinating Committee; Contact: John DeHollander, Oswego County S&W)
Otsego County	https://sourcewatercollaborative.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Otsego-CountyWaterQualityCoordinatingCommittee.pdf http://www.otsegolakeassociation.org/documents/wqcc/2010-2011-WQCC-Annual-Report.pdf
Putnam County	No Website Found
Queens County	No Website Found
Rensselaer County	No Website Found
Richmond County	No Website Found
Rockland County	http://rocklandgov.com/departments/environmental-resources/boards-and-committees/water-quality-coordinating-committee/
Schenectady County	https://www.schenectadycounty.com/node/190 (County website references Schenectady County WQCC but is not a dedicated webpage)
Schoharie County	No Website Found
St. Lawrence County	No Website Found

Saratoga County	https://www.saratogacountyny.gov/wp/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/July-2019-Agenda.pdf
Schuyler County	http://www.stcplanning.org/index.asp?pageId=41
Seneca County	No Website Found
Steuben County	http://www.stcplanning.org/index.asp?pageId=42 https://steubencony.org/Files/documents/Draft_2011_Steuben_Water_Quality_Annual_Report.pdf
Suffolk County	https://www.suffolkcountyny.gov/Departments/Economic-Development-and-Planning/Planning-and-Environment/Water-Quality-Improvement
Sullivan County	No Website Found
Tioga County	PDF Report: https://www.tiogacountyny.com/media/1683/wqstrategy2009.pdf
Tompkins County	http://tomkinscountyny.gov/files2/planning/water-resources/WQS%202019-2021%20Final%20_11-20-18.pdf
Ulster County	https://ulstercountyny.gov/environment/ulster-county-water-quality-coordinating-committee
Warren County	https://www.warrencountyny.gov/water/
Washington County	http://washington.cce.cornell.edu/events/2019/03/26/water-quality-coordinating-committee-meeting
Wayne County	https://waynecountynysoilandwater.org/wqcc/
Westchester County	Watershed Committee Found https://planning.westchestergov.com/initiatives/croton/watershed-committee
Wyoming County	https://www.wcsxcd.org/programs/detail/water-quality-programs
Yates County	https://www.hws.edu/fli/explore_keuka.aspx (Site references Yates County WQCC but is not a dedicated webpage)

III. Local History: Ulster County

An Ulster County Water Supply Advisory Board, comprised of members from the Ulster County Environmental Management Council, the Ulster County Department of Health, the Ulster County Planning Board, the Ulster County Attorney's Office, the Ulster County Administrator's Office, the Ulster County Soil and Water Conservation District, Ulster County Community College and Cornell Cooperative Extension, were appointed by the Ulster County Legislature in 1988 to oversee an update of the 1968 (Revised in 1970) Ulster County Comprehensive Water Supply Study. In 1998, the Advisory Board developed a Water Quality Strategy which focused heavily on addressing nonpoint source pollution. In 2004, the Ulster County Environmental Management Council (EMC) was designated as the Water Quality Management Agency, by the Ulster County Legislature, pursuant to New York State County Law, article 5 section 220-A. At the time the EMC was recognized for its demonstrated expertise in water quality management and protection. The responsibilities of the Water Quality Management Agency included interagency and intergovernmental coordination for the purposes of stormwater management and the identification of funding for projects. The core committee was comprised of the Environmental Management Council, the Ulster County Soil and Water Conservation District and the Ulster County Planning Department and Cornell Cooperative Extension. The full Committee included any agency or organization working on water quality in Ulster County. This included county representatives from the Environmental Management Council, Planning Department, Buildings and Grounds, Highways and Bridges and the Soil and Water Conservation District and Cornell Cooperative Extension. It also included federal and state representatives from the United States Department of Agriculture, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, and the New York City Department of Environmental Protection. The Hudson Valley Regional Council, municipal representatives and non-profits including the Lower Esopus Riverwatch were also part of the full committee. In 2005, the EMC developed a new Water Quality Management Strategy focused on a coordinated, interagency approach to non-point source pollution.

In 2005, the designation of the EMC as the Water Quality Management Agency was rescinded by the Ulster County Legislature in 2007 with respect for the fact that the EMC was comprised of volunteer directors and advisory personnel, and did not have the professional staff or funding to succeed as the Water Quality Management Agency.

In 2017, The Ulster County Department of the Environment was designated by the Ulster County Legislature as the County's Water Quality Management Agency. As such, the Department of the Environment has the responsibility of meeting the requirements of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Phase II Stormwater Program (MS4 program) which requires coordination regarding stormwater management. They must also respond to an ongoing need and responsibility to drinking water protection and watershed management planning, as well as identifying and addressing significant changes due to climate change. As the Water Quality Management Agency, the Department of Environment is responsible for coordinating an Ulster County Water Quality Coordinating Committee.

IV. 2019 Ulster County WQCC

The Ulster County Department of Environment partnered with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County in 2019 to assist with establishing and coordinating a new Ulster County Water Quality Committee (UCWQCC). A Committee was established in January of 2019 and includes the following organizations:

1. Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County
2. Ulster County Department of the Environment
3. Ulster County Department of Health
4. Ulster County Department of Planning, Economic Development and Transportation
5. Ulster County Department of Public Works
6. Ulster County Environmental Management Council
7. Ulster County Soil and Water Conservation District

Mission and Vision

The UCWQCC, which met 5 times in 2019, established a mission and vision for the Committee. The Mission of the Ulster County Water Quality Coordinating Committee is to provide a coordinated and collaborative approach to protect and improve the waters of Ulster County and ensure the resilience of our watershed systems. The Ulster County Water Quality Coordinating Committee envisions a resilient watershed system serving the health and welfare of the community and ecosystem within the County and the region.

With funding from the New York State Department of Conservations' Hudson River Estuary Program and the New York State Water Resources Institute, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County produced an Ulster County Water Infrastructure Inventory to inform the work of the UCWQCC. The inventory includes links and data on Water Supply Assets, Wastewater Treatment Assets, Wastewater Treatment Flooding Vulnerability, MS4 Reports and Dam Assets.

The Committee developed a web page <https://ulstercountyny.gov/environment/ulster-county-water-quality-coordinating-committee> and initiated an assessment of water quality related projects and priorities participating member agencies are engaged in. The assessment will serve to determine what type of work is being done with regards to water quality, help identify gaps and opportunities that could be advantageous to the improvement of water quality, as well as emerging issues that may affect water quality. The Committee established bi-monthly meeting dates, and identified nonpoint source pollution and the impact of climate change on water resources as issues of importance.

Goals of the UCWQCC include collaborating with other agencies and non-profits to host a Watershed Forum in 2020. The Committee will invite other governmental and non-profit agencies and organizations working on water quality to participate in 3 of the 6 meetings scheduled for 2020 to share projects and initiatives affecting water quality in Ulster County. The Committee will also complete and expand the assessment of water quality projects, gaps, opportunities and emerging issues.