



# Family Stream Monitoring Day Held in High Falls

*Rondout Creek Watershed Council hosts awareness building events*

By Victor-Pierre Melendez, RCWC Coordinator

On a beautiful September Saturday, over fifty people attended a special Family Stream Monitoring Day on the Rondout Creek at Camp Epworth Retreat Center in High Falls, NY. At the camp, participants, ranging in age from babies in slings and strollers, to young children, teens, adults and an experience fly fisherman, learned how to assess the health of the streams in their watershed by collecting live samples of organisms, called benthic macroinvertebrate, which live under rocks and in the sediment the bottom of the Rondout Creek and to understand that these living creatures are important indicators of water quality. The event was led by Martha Cheo of Hudson Basin River Watch, which sponsored the program, along with Clearwater, for the Rondout Creek Watershed Council (RCWC)

Other fall events on the Rondout Creek Watershed Council calendar included a Creek Walk along the Rondout Creek and a "Trees for Tribs" Creek Bank Restoration. A multi-stakeholder Watershed Planning Workshop will be held to gather input to develop a Watershed Management Plan for the Lower Non-tidal Portion of the Rondout Creek Watershed.

The Rondout Creek Watershed Council was formed in 2007 to implement a grant from the NYS DEC Hudson River Estuary program to OSI /Hudson Basin River Watch and Hudson River Sloop Clearwater to incubate a watershed protection group in the Rondout Creek Watershed.

RCWC's accomplishments in 2008-09 include the creation of a multi-stakeholder watershed awareness and protection group, the development of a Watershed Awareness, Planning and Protection PowerPoint, a detailed delineation of the central Rondout Creek watershed (from the Rondout reservoir to the Eddyville dam), hosting a daylong watershed awareness seminar for more than fifty people, as well as stream monitoring training programs, the completion of a municipal questionnaire that was used to draft a State of the Rondout Report, and of the use of an iterative process to craft an Intermunicipal Agreement (IMA) between the towns of Wawarsing, Marletown, Rochester and Rosendale for the development of a Rondout Creek Watershed Management Plan. Three of the four Towns have adopted the IMA; the fourth is underway. The RCWC's water resource protection efforts are being closely coordinated with the NYC Department of Environmental Protection initiative in the upper Rondout. With potential future funding this watershed planning and protection work may be expanded to include the tidal portion of Rondout which runs through the City of Kingston and the Towns of Esopus and Ulster.

*Above: Several families took part in the Rondout Creek clean up.  
Photo by Victor-Pierre Melendez.*