

Advancing Environmental Justice: Clearwater's 2010 Angler Survey



By Karla Raimundi, Esq., Clearwater Environmental Justice Associate

As part of the Peekskill community-based environmental justice project, and under the direction of Dr. Joanna Burger of Rutgers University, Clearwater has revised our 1993 Angler Survey and is interviewing fishermen along the waterfront from Verplanck to Annsville Creek. The goal of this survey is to assess the consumption practices of local fishers, if they or their families are eating fish and crabs from the Hudson River, and if they are aware of the health advisories related to Hudson River fish due to PCBs, mercury, and other contaminants.

Since this past May, our wonderful team of surveyors has been interviewing local anglers – and having a great time doing so! We need to complete 150 interviews to assure that the survey is statistically valid.

After we have completed the surveys, Clearwater will collaborate with local partners and stakeholders, including Citizens for Equal Environmental Protection (CEEP) and the Peekskill Environmental Justice Council,



As part of the Angler Survey project, Clearwater's Karla Raimundi, Esq., is interviewing Ernest "Crab Master" Rodriguez, a subsistence fisherman, on the Jan Peek Bridge in Fishkill.

to undertake a strong educational campaign along this same stretch of waterfront. The intention is to inform the waterfront communities that participated in the survey about limiting fish consumption and utilizing safer practices for cleaning and preparing fish they catch, as indicated in the NY State Department of Health Fish Advisories. The advisories currently recommend an "eat-none" policy for women of childbearing age and children under 15, and consumption limits ranging from one crab per week to one fish per month, depending on species, for adult males and women past childbearing age.

For more information about the NY State Department of Health Fish Advisories, please visit <http://www.nyhealth.gov/environmental/outdoors/fish/fish.htm>.

For more information about Clearwater's Angler Survey, please contact Karla Raimundi, Esq. at karla@clearwater.org or 845-265-8080 ext. 7159.

Stemming the Flow of Stormwater Runoff

By Jen Rubbo, Clearwater Environmental Action Educator

Beacon, Poughkeepsie, and Kingston are three river cities in the process of revitalizing their downtowns and developing their waterfronts. Now, with help from Clearwater, they are also three cities that are on the cutting edge of planning for new sustainable ways to control stormwater and restore the water quality in our watersheds and the Hudson River. Starting this year, Clearwater is working with the Hudson Valley Regional Council to develop conceptual plans for 10 Green Infrastructure (GI) projects in each of these three cities. The project will educate volunteers in GI techniques and facilitate ongoing planning, implementation, and maintenance of green infrastructure practices and programs, as well as provide technical assistance in locating funding and other resources for longer-term project implementation.

Green Infrastructure is the new buzzword in stormwater management, but what exactly does this mean? Simply put, it is a set of approaches and technologies that maintain, restore, or mimic the natural flow of water in the landscape. A range of practices exist, from practical, easy to install techniques such as rain barrels and rain gardens to more complicated, high-tech endeavors,

such as green roofs and permeable pavement. The common thread is that GI practices use natural processes to reduce the amount of runoff that may occur after a rainstorm or snow melt. This means harvesting water, using native vegetation, to soak the water up, and increasing infiltration of water into the ground. All of these processes help reduce and filter the runoff going into our streams, rivers, and sewer systems.

Along with the many other challenges cities face, mandates from the federal government require high population areas to regulate stormwater runoff, and rightfully so. As water flows over the increasing acreages of pavement, sidewalks and other impervious surfaces, it brings with it all the debris, sediment, and pollutants that are on those surfaces and deposits them directly into the nearest waterway or sewer system. GI practices offer economical, aesthetically pleasing and, most importantly, sustainable ways to face these storm water challenges. By helping communities through education and active planning, Clearwater hopes to continue the fight to clean up the Hudson River by protecting our watersheds using innovative tools such as Green Infrastructure.

Examples of Green Infrastructure Practices:

Rain Gardens, Rain Barrels, Cisterns, Vegetated Swales, Green Roofs, Constructed Wetlands, Tree Plantings, Permeable Paving, Sand and Organic Filters, Green Walls, Tree Box Filters, Infiltration Planters, Riparian Buffers

Project Information

<http://www.hudsonvalleyregionalcouncil.com>



Pictured above, participants learn how to make their own rainbarrels at a Rainbarrel Building Workshop, hosted by Clearwater at their Beacon office. The workshop was part of the Green Infrastructure Project and took place during Dutchess County's Watershed Awareness Month (photo by Jen Rubbo).