

SECTION 5 – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE WATERSHED

Watershed conditions are continuously changing and the Rondout Creek watershed is defined by its diversity, complexity and changes to the landscape and land use.

Economy growth occurs on both a local government and community level. Growth and development that accounts for changes in local economy, population growth and environmental stresses can also provide economic opportunities, incentive and green jobs to the extent that adaptive economic innovations can be implemented to enhance watershed protection. The process of revisions and edits in the local zoning and planning codes and ordinances is one indicator of changes on local land use. This dynamic is important because watershed economy is highly dependent on the local government's decisions and priorities, and political considerations are key determinants to successful watershed management.

Economic initiatives, if designed to consider conservation and environmental pressures, can reduce the chances of having watershed protection potentially hampered by future economic development.

In rapidly growing watershed economies, key determinants to successful management are:

- Effective local government support and,
- Community-initiated change, involving a broad range of local stakeholders and with broader support from all the communities of the watershed.

It is important to recognize existing groups and professional organizations in the watershed that promote sustainable development and economic incentives that protects water resources within the boundaries of the Lower Non-tidal Rondout Creek watershed:

- Ulster County Chambers of Commerce
- Greater Wawarsing Local Development Corporation
- Ellenville - Wawarsing Chamber of Commerce
- Kerhonkson - Accord Chamber of Commerce
- Rosendale Chamber of Commerce
- Marbletown Business Owners Association
- Ulster County Farm Bureau¹ gives farmers and non-farmers alike the opportunity to be part of an organization dedicated to supporting and enriching the rural way of life. It provides an opportunity for individuals involved in agriculture to join together and make their voices heard.
- The Rondout Valley Growers Association is a non-profit community organization comprised of local farmers, residents, and businesses that are committed to strengthening the region's family farms and preserving open space for future generations.
- Ulster County Development Corporation (UCDC), a private not-for-profit organization, is the lead economic development agency for the County with a mission of creating and maintaining jobs through the attraction of new business or the retention and expansion of

¹ <http://www.ucfbny.org/>

existing business. In order to accomplish this objective, UCDC offers and administers financial programs and loan funds, assists with site selection, and provides overall guidance and assistance with general and specific business problems, issues and opportunities.

5.1 Ulster County Economy and Demographics²

As of the census of 2009, there were 181,440 people, 67,499 households, and 43,536 families residing in the county. The population density was 158 people per square mile (61/km²). There were 77,656 housing units at an average density of 69 per square mile (27/km²). The racial makeup of the county, as of 2008, was 83.2% White, 6.50% Black or African American, 0.3% Native American, 1.7% Asian, 0.03% Pacific Islander, 2.15% from other races, and 1.70% from two or more races. 7.6% of the population were Hispanic or Latino of any race. 19.2% were of Italian, 16.8% Irish, 15.5% German, 6.8% English and 4.7% American ancestry according to Census 2000. 90.3% spoke English, 4.5% Spanish, 1.2% Italian and 1.0% German as their first language.

There were 67,499 households out of which 30.70% had children under the age of 18 living with them, 49.20% were married couples living together, 10.90% had a female householder with no husband present, and 35.50% were non-families. 27.90% of all households were made up of individuals and 10.20% had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older. The average household size was 2.47 and the average family size was 3.03.

In the county the population was spread out with 23.50% under the age of 18, 8.70% from 18 to 24, 29.70% from 25 to 44, 24.70% from 45 to 64, and 13.30% who were 65 years of age or older. The median age was 38 years. For every 100 females there were 99.10 males. For every 100 females age 18 and over, there were 96.60 males.

The median income for a household in the county was \$42,551, and the median income for a family was \$51,708. Males had a median income of \$36,808 versus \$27,086 for females. The per capita income for the county was \$20,846. About 7.20% of families and 11.40% of the population were below the poverty line, including 13.00% of those under age 18 and 8.70% of those age 65 or over.

Town of Wawarsing³: Current population of the Town of Wawarsing as of July 2009 was 13,535 and density trends show that since 2000 there has been a population increase of +5.0 %. The estimated median household income in 2008 was \$46,244, a incremental increase from \$35,872 in 2000. The per capita income⁴ of Wawarsing is \$22,484. The average cost of living index⁵ in

² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ulster_County,_New_York#Cities.2C_towns_and_villages

³ <http://www.city-data.com/city/Wawarsing-New-York.html>

⁴ Per capita income is the numerical quotient of national production by population, in monetary terms. It is a measure of the monetized production per person an economic aggregate such as a country, not of the actual distribution of income or current net wealth in that aggregate. This is what each individual *would* receive if the periodic income were divided equally among everyone. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Per_capita_income

⁵ This value doesn't directly represent what it cost to live in any given community but is used to make comparisons between two or more communities.

Wawarsing is 93.2; less than the US average of 100. The racial demographic is not as diverse as the other 3 communities of the Non-Tidal Rondout Creek Watershed (Table X) with only 1,277 residents are foreign born (4.9% Latin America, 3.8% Europe).

*Town of Rosendale*⁶: The current population of the Town of Rosendale was 6,220 as of July 2009 and density trends show that since 2000 there has been decrease of 2.1%. The estimated median household income in 2008 was \$57,085, which was an increase from \$44,282 in 2000. During 2008 the estimated per capita income of Rosendale was \$29,008. The cost of living index in Rosendale is 91.9; less than the U.S. average of 100 The racial demographic in Rosendale is not diverse with only 233 residents are foreign born (3.0% Europe).

*Town of Marbletown*⁷: The current population of Marbletown was 5,986 as of July 2009 and density trends show that since 2000 there has been an increase of 2.3%. The estimated median household income was \$59,623 in 2008, which is an increase from \$46,250 in 2000. The per capita income of Marbletown is \$32,629. The cost of living index in Marbletown is 98.6; near the U.S. average of 100. The racial demographic in Marbletown is less diverse than Wawarsing and Rosendale with only 169 residents are foreign born (2.4% Europe).

*Town of Rochester*⁸: The population of Rochester was 7,018 as of 2000. The median household income in 1999 was \$43,071. In 1999 the per capita income was \$21,065. The racial makeup of the town was 93.42% White, 2.51% African American, 0.54% Native American, 0.51% Asian, 0.04% Pacific Islander, 0.83% from other races, and 2.15% from two or more races. Hispanic or Latino of any race were 4.83% of the population.

5.2 Local and County Economic Development Clusters

The Ulster County Planning Board (UCPB), comprehensive planning efforts have resulted in the creation and adoption of plans that address housing, economic development, agriculture, open space, transportation, etc. The plans contain policies, goals and objectives that the UCPB utilizes in the referral process and to further the development of the five targeted industry clusters.

Ulster County Agriculture

The Municipalities of Wawarsing, Rochester, Marbletown and Rosendale are wholly contained in the Rondout Creek watershed. Rondout Creek watershed 's economy, landscape, and political environment exemplify tensions between rapid population growth, economic changes and environmental concern. Recent growth in agribusiness has spurred changes in land use and economic and social structures. Section 3.5: Agriculture and Forestry focuses on programs for buffer zone management and agriculture best management practices. The following subsections discuss the innovative programs that have been established in the watershed.

⁶ <http://www.city-data.com/city/Rosendale-New-York.html>

⁷ <http://www.city-data.com/city/Marbletown-New-York.html>

⁸ http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFFacts?_event=ChangeGeoContext&geo_id=06000US3611163011&_geoContext=01000US104000US36116000US3663000&_street=&_county=Rochester++town+&_cityTown=Rochester++town+&_state=04000US36&_zip=&_lang=en&_sse=on&ActiveGeoDiv=geoSelect&_useEV=&pctxt=fph&pgsl=010&_submenuId=factsheet_1&ds_name=DEC_2000_SAFF&_ci_nbr=null&q_r_name=null®=null%3Anull&_keyword=&_industry=

Total Agricultural Output Value* for Ulster County is on the rise. Orchard and vineyard crops, vegetables, and nurseries and greenhouses are responsible.

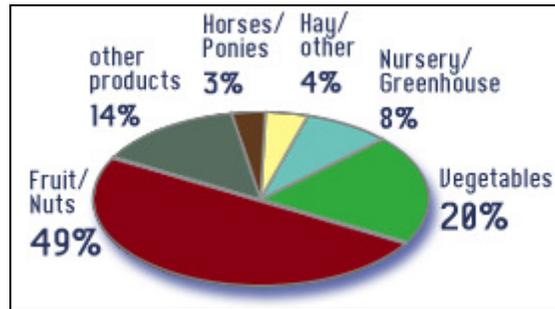


Figure 5.1.1 In 2000, these sectors represented 50% of Ulster's agriculture, rising to 85% 2010. \$3 billion + annually / 64,000 jobs. *American Farmland Trust¹

Abundant farmland: Farming provides Ulster communities with access to fresh local food, add to our economic diversity, protect our heritage and offer their beautiful landscape for the enjoyment of residents and visitors alike. Orchards, vineyards, farm stands, cornfields and pastures of grazing livestock help define Ulster County's unique sense of place.

Creative strategies have helped farmers keep their businesses viable. Its proximity to New York City enables direct delivery to restaurants and gourmet and health food stores. New product innovations like hard fruit ciders and small batch liquors are current entrepreneurial ventures.

Agrotourism: Pick your own fruits and vegetables, farm stands, hayrides, corn mazes, harvest festivals, and wine trails are flourishing a regional family pastime.

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA): Driven by local and regional support CSA farms are proliferating, especially in the organic sector.

Creative Arts

The arts are a potent force in our economic life, and play a key role as a direct and indirect contributor to our economy.

A vibrant arts community is just as important to us as having sound roads. Ulster's not-for-profit and for-profit creative enterprises are in and of themselves thriving businesses. A study issued in 2007 by Americans for the Arts show that the not-for-profit arts sector in Ulster County generated nearly \$4 million in economic activity.

The arts are well integrated with other sectors of our business economy:

- Enabling businesses to thrive by providing a vibrant place for employees after work.
- Attracting tourists who spend significantly on facilities such as restaurants and hotels.
- Enhancing property values and maintaining vitality in downtown areas.



Photo 5.1.1 Ulster County Performing Arts Center

- Creative industries themselves are employers.
- Our local artists often work for clients all over the region, in NYC, and all over the world.

Ulster County's music, theater, dance and visual arts enjoy national reputations. We have the largest concentration of artists per capita in the state outside of New York City. And in 2007, Business Week listed Kingston as one of the Top Ten Best Cities for Artists.

Green Industry

Green technology is growing in Ulster County. Companies are producing products, services and processes that harness renewable materials and energy sources.

Ulster County is home to The Solar Energy Consortium⁹ (TSEC), founded in 2007. The first organization of its kind for the photovoltaic industry, this not-for-profit is attracting companies to the region, and providing technical and business support for the development of solar energy. Prism Solar Technologies and Solar Thin Films are among the County's first major manufacturers to take advantage of TSEC's programs. Together, they expect to create hundreds of jobs over the next few years.

Joining in on building green profits and jobs in the region are the many architects, contractors and builders of the county who are turning to greener processes and technologies, and colleges and universities teaching a new generation the skills of clean technology. The State University of New York at New Paltz, SUNY Ulster and BOCES are among the educational institutions with innovative new programs.

- TSEC was awarded \$8.176 million in grant money in 2009 - including \$5 million from the Empire Development Corporation.
- Projected funding for 2009 includes \$3.5 million Department of Defense
- For 2010, \$4 million alone is estimated from the U.S.

Innovative Technology

Among New York state's investments:

- Since 1995, more than \$1 billion has been committed to high tech research & development projects.
- \$280 million to increase the availability of venture capital for emerging businesses
- \$1.7 million in a program to help employers attract qualified technical workers

Ulster County sits in the center of New York's Tech Valley, which stretches from the Mohawk Valley in the north to Westchester County in the south. Over the last decade, we've grown in recognition as one of the nation's leading regions for technology and innovation. Large established players and entrepreneurial start-ups benefit from the resources provided for technology to thrive. The manufacturing sector uses the combined efforts of government, industry, academia and economic development leaders.

⁹ <http://thesolarec.org/>

Workforce

Given the Rondout Creek Watersheds natural beauty, cultural amenities and outdoor recreation, workers tend to remain in the region, providing employers with stability.

In the Ulster County region, approximately 102,000 people can be categorized as underemployed. Reported findings about this group of underemployed workers reveal:

- About 10% of these individuals would change jobs for under \$10.16 per hour
- 33% would change jobs for less than \$14.72 per hour
- 50% would change for \$17.79 or less¹⁰.

Work development programs and educational institutions help to provide educated, well-trained workers to match the key industries found in the region.

Tourism

Culture, outdoor beauty and history are just a few of the reasons why tourism in Ulster County is a growth industry. From campgrounds to sky diving, and home-spun farm u-picks to nationally-recognized arts fairs, businesses that cater to tourists thrive because of Ulster's diverse range of experiences. There are a multitude of economic development based tourism activities in the Lower nontidal portion of the Rondout Creek Watershed.



Photo 5.1.2 Boaters at Mohawk Mountain Resort.

5.3 Local Development Projects and Initiatives

- Village of Ellenville, Phase II ('07) New York Main Street (NYMS) Programs. RUPCO is working “at large” with the 20 towns, 3 villages, and 1 city, which make up Ulster County. We take an “asset based” community building approach to provide planning, and promote revitalization, sustainability and smart growth

5.4 Recommendations

1. Explore the potential for development of community-endorsed social contract to effectively implement buffer zone management techniques and programs. This can be based on a collaborative approach, which centers on formation of small local groups used to effectively disseminate agroforestry and conservation farming information and technologies. These groups can assist farmers in making effective management decisions and local government in setting priorities, as well as helping to focus research and education related the multiple functions of trees, environmental services, and policy innovations.

¹⁰ <http://www.ucfbny.org/>

2. Office of Employment and Training Summer Youth Employment Program in collaboration with SUNY Ulster has developed a program that engages businesses willing to employ youth for the summer. Local Environmental Conservation Commission or Councils can work with this youth population to further their goals and initiatives for watershed management. The youth wages are paid by American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (stimulus dollars). All that is required is that the business must provide a safe and constructive working environment and adequate supervision.
3. A strong workforce incentive program is the SUNY Workforce Development Grant, provides any company with two or more employees the opportunity to apply for a SUNY Workforce Development Grant. The grant requires a cash match of a minimum of 10% of the total amount of funds. The grant is written and administered by Ulster County Community College on behalf of the applicant company. The once-a-year application deadline is usually in June but is somewhat dependent on the state budget. In terms of watershed management this would require a sponsor business to apply hire employees to work toward implementation of watershed initiatives.
4. The Value-Added Producer Grants (VAPG) should be explored as a agro-forestry incentive. The grant can be used for planning activities and for working capital for marketing value-added (to increase the products price or value) agricultural products and for farm-based renewable energy. Eligible applicants are independent producers, farmer and rancher cooperatives, agricultural producer groups, and majority-controlled producer-based business ventures.