

# Clearwater's Green Cities Initiative

The Clearwater Board of Directors continues developing a Green Cities initiative to weave together the various elements of Clearwater's work to inspire the next generation of environmental leaders and to help create a truly sustainable future for them with green jobs here in the Hudson Valley. Our watershed protection efforts in Kingston, Poughkeepsie and Beacon, and our Environmental Justice work in Peekskill will serve as prototypes for and entrees into our Green Cities initiatives. Research will include what is currently being done, what sustainability measures and scorecards exist, and what Clearwater's distinct role will be, so that we can partner efficiently. One suggestion is to provide an annual Green Cities award for a community that is taking major steps toward sustainability. Another is for Clearwater to ultimately place staff in major cities along the Hudson to help promote sustainability and inspire and guide youth to participate in the newly emerging green economy.

## New Environmental Justice Associate

Clearwater welcomes Karla Raimundi, Esq., recently hired as our new Environmental Justice Associate, to work on a Green Stormwater Infrastructure planning grant in Beacon and Fishkill, to assist with the Community-Based Environmental Justice Inventory already underway in Peekskill, and to help create an ongoing Green Cities program that will weave together Clearwater's watershed protection and environmental justice work, while inspiring the next generation of environmental leaders by preparing them for green jobs in a sustainable economy.

Karla hails from Puerto Rico, where she received a J.D. degree from the University of Puerto Rico School of Law and worked on an innovative environmental justice project in La Perla, a poor and isolated community in Old San Juan. After moving here in 2006, she received an LLM in both Comparative Legal Studies and in Environmental Law from Pace University School of Law. Karla now lives in White Plains with her husband, Luis Chiesa. Because she is fluently bilingual, Karla will be



a valuable asset to Clearwater's environmental justice work in Spanish-speaking communities. Karla loves the outdoors, from the beaches and el Yunque Rainforest in Puerto Rico to skiing and hiking in the Hudson Valley.

## ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION UPDATES:

### Watershed Protection

Victor-Pierre Melendez is currently working with the Rondout Creek Watershed Council to draft a Watershed Management Plan, under an inter-municipal agreement among four municipalities in the non-tidal portion of the Rondout. He will soon expand this work to three tidal Rondout municipalities, with funding from the Hudson Valley Regional Council Green Infrastructure grant and NYS Department of State watershed funding. Karla Raimundi will be working with Victor on green infrastructure, focusing on Beacon and Fishkill. Following her maternity leave (welcome, Anna Elizabeth), Jen Rubbo will join them in Poughkeepsie and Hyde Park, as she continues her work implementing the Fallkill Watershed Plan. Our partners, Liz LoGuidice and Fran Martino, are making excellent progress in the Catskill and Stockport Creek watersheds in Greene and Columbia Counties as well.

### PCB Update

Between 1947 and 1977, it's estimated that General Electric discharged 1.3 million pounds of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) into the Hudson River from two plants at Hudson Falls and Fort Edward. After more than 50 years of contamination, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a Record of Decision in 2002, calling for GE to clean up the highly contaminated hot spots in the upper Hudson, north of Albany. The actual cleanup began in May 2009 and is expected to take 5 or 6 more years. Last summer, during Phase I, GE's contractors dredged almost twice as much PCB-containing sediment and debris than expected from 10 of the

proposed 18 work sites -- but postponed 8 sites to Phase 2. This winter GE and EPA submitted their reports on Phase I to an independent Peer Review Panel. EPA is urging that the performance standards for resuspension, residuals and productivity be maintained, while GE wants them to be considerably relaxed. Clearwater strongly supports EPA's recommendations, specifically to:

- ◆ Initiate additional core sampling to better understanding depth of contamination (DoC) for Phase 2;
- ◆ Utilize deeper dredging passes to get to down to clean sediment more efficiently;
- ◆ Utilize additional control measures to prevent sediment or raw PCB oil that is resuspended from moving downstream and minimize the volatilization of PCBs into the air;
- ◆ Expand unloading capacity to shorten the time work sites are left exposed;
- ◆ Do not allow capping as a shortcut to meet an artificially tight productivity standard;
- ◆ Maintain productivity during each dredging season, but allow another year if needed -- because there is much more contaminated sediment to be removed than originally expected.