



REDISCOVERING THE FALL KILL

# Major Hudson River Tributary Gets Much Needed Attention

*NYS DEC Estuary Grant helps raise awareness about and clean up of Fall Kill Watershed*

Article & photos by Jennifer Rubbo – Fall Kill Watershed Coordinator



Located approximately 80 miles from New York City and in Dutchess County's population center, the Fall Kill watershed is experiencing intense growth and resultant water quality degradation and flooding issues.

The Fall Kill is a major tributary of the Hudson River and enters it as a third order stream approximately 1.5 miles downstream from the City of Poughkeepsie's drinking water intake. Its watershed encompasses parts of five Dutchess County municipalities: almost 30% of the town of Hyde Park, 35% of the City of Poughkeepsie and parts the towns of Poughkeepsie, Clinton and Pleasant Valley.

Unfortunately, this important tributary and its watershed have been largely ignored for quite some time. In fact, it has even been completely surrounded by concrete walls in some places of the City, turning it into more of a drainage way than the critical natural resource that it is.

For the last six months the Fall Kill Watershed Committee has focused on implementing several of the major conservation goals published in its 2006 management plan including raising awareness, clean ups and restoring its streambanks.

## Local youth get involved

Through cooperation with Catharine Street Community Center, New Hope Community Center, and the NYS DEC Eel Monitoring project, City of Poughkeepsie youth are seeing the creek in a new light. They've conducted research on eel populations with DEC staff, are learning about the importance of macroinvertebrates in the stream's food web and are also learning about how pollution affects not only the creatures that live in the stream but also the humans who live near it and use this important water resource.

Members of the committee and many volunteers worked to plant a riparian (streamside) buffer along the banks of the Fall Kill and the Hudson River at the mouth of creek near the Mid Hudson Children's museum. Staff from the Children's Museum, students from Vassar college and Committee volunteers planted 30 native trees and shrubs thanks to the DEC's "Trees for Tribs" Initiative. These trees will help cool the water, prevent erosion and add beauty to a highly visible stretch of the stream.

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## Fall Kill Watershed Clean Up (continued from page 14)

### Creek Week 2008

The first ever Fall Kill Creek Week was a great success. From August 4-10, 2008, educational activities and creek/watershed clean-ups helped to draw attention to the creek as it flows through Dutchess County and get nearby residents involved in the clean up. Because the watershed includes the land we live on in addition to the creek itself, groups in the City of Poughkeepsie and Town of Hyde Park participated in an "Adopt-a-Spot" program, and helped clean up trash along local streets and in city parks.

Thanks to Catharine Street Community Center, Rapport Meyers Whitbeck Shaw and Rodenhausen, LLP, the South Avenue Neighborhood Association, New Hope Community Center, The Hyde Park Visual Environment Committee, The Hyde Park Conservation Advisory Commission, and the Clearwater Staff for cleaning up their spot in the watershed.

### Rapid Trash Assessment identifies pollution sources

Students and staff from the Dutchess County Cornell Cooperative Extension's No Child Left Inside program helped the Committee perform a Rapid Trash Assessment on four stretches of the Creek

through the city. They cleaned up and inventoried every piece of trash found in over 100 feet at each location. Their results will help the City identify sources of pollution and help to focus outreach efforts.

# thank you!

We owe very special thanks to our Creek Week sponsors: DEC Hudson River Estuary Program, Hudson Valley Federal Credit Union, the Poughkeepsie Journal, Malcarne Contracting Inc., and Rapport Meyers Whitbeck Shaw and Rodenhausen. Creek Week would not have been such a success without their support!

*Fall Kill Watershed  
Committee*



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Also thanks to the Hyde Park Stop and Shop and Home Depot, Lowe's in Poughkeepsie and Target and Adams Fairacre Farms for in-kind donations of snacks and supplies that were used throughout the week. We're all looking forward to Creek Week 2009!



Pictured at left: One of many piles of trash collected from the Fall Kill Watershed... (Photo by Jennifer Rubbo.)