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DEC: CITIZEN SCIENTISTS NEEDED TO COLLECT WATER QUALITY DATA IN HUDSON RIVER WATERSHED

As part of the new Wadeable Assessments by Volunteer Evaluators (WAVE) Program, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's (DEC) Hudson River Estuary Program is educating citizen scientists to collect water quality data from streams and rivers in the Hudson River watershed, DEC announced today.

While DEC regularly receives data and information from the public to consider in its assessment of water quality, the WAVE Program provides information about how to collect data most useful to the agency. WAVE data will be used to augment the work of the DEC Stream Biomonitoring program, which samples streams and rivers across the state to create an inventory of stream water quality. Based on the diverse waterways within the state, New York is divided into 17 watersheds and each is sampled on a five-year rotating schedule. The lower Hudson, Upper Hudson and Mohawk River watersheds are included in the WAVE program.

Citizen monitors can be most valuable in identifying healthy stream sites and flagging sites that potentially have water quality concerns. Data collected using WAVE protocols will be included in federal and state water quality reports and will help to target professional assessments and local restoration efforts to where they are most needed.

Citizen monitors who visit streams July through September will collect and identify insects and other small organisms, or macroinvertebrates, from the rocks and rubble on the stream bottom, and preserve one example for each organism for identification by the WAVE Coordinator. If four or more of the "Most Wanted" organisms are found, then the stream segment is unimpaired and fully supports aquatic life. If mostly "Least Wanted" organisms are found, then the stream segment will be flagged for possible investigation by DEC.

Information sessions are scheduled in June through August at locations in Albany on June 23 and July 21, in Millbrook on June 9 and August 18, in Utica on June 10 and in Cornwall on July 7 and August 4. To register for a session, visit <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Project-WAVE>. For more information on the WAVE program, contact the WAVE Coordinator, Alene Onion at 518-402-8166 or amonion@gw.dec.state.ny.us.

The Hudson River Estuary Program is a project of the NYS Environmental Protection Fund. For more information, visit www.dec.ny.gov/lands/4920.html.

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