

Schenectady County Water Quality Coordinating Committee Strategy

(January 2000)
(Amended January 2004)
(Amended May 2015)
(Amended June 2022)

Introduction

Water Resources in Schenectady County

Schenectady County is located in the Capital District Region of upstate New York. The County is the second smallest county in New York State encompassing approximately 208 square miles. Located within the County is the largest aquifer in upstate New York. This aquifer is an Environmental Protection Agency Designated Sole Source Aquifer referred to as the Great Flats Aquifer and is the potable water supply for approximately 150,000 residents of Schenectady County and Saratoga County. Although the most notable surface water body is the Mohawk River, the County contains over 40 other important bodies of water. The two primary watersheds in Schenectady County are the Mohawk River watershed, which encompasses 75% of the County, and the Lower Hudson River watershed draining the remaining 25% of the County.

Schenectady County has an abundance of clean water for drinking, recreation, agriculture and industrial uses. Land uses in the County are a mix of rural residential and agricultural land with a core urban center and satellite suburban communities surrounding it. This mix of diverse land uses creates a variety of potentially adverse impacts to receiving water bodies. In Schenectady County, it is even more important to understand potential impacts to surface water bodies due to the known interaction with the underlying aquifer system. Specific concerns with water quality do exist in various water bodies, primarily resulting from non-point source pollution (NPS). Non-point source pollution can be defined as any pollutant entering a water body, which does not come from one distinct source such as a pipe. Community developments have fostered concern due to impacts from stormwater runoff, erosion and sedimentation, and septic loading. Various maintenance operations and agricultural practices have also contributed to sediment, pollutant, and nutrient loading to receiving water bodies. The Schenectady County Water Quality Coordinating Committee Strategy will address the issues concerning non-point source pollution and other potentially adverse impacts to our County's water resources.

The Committee

The Schenectady County Water Quality Coordinating Committee Strategy is the document, which establishes policy for water quality protection, improvement, public participation/input and education efforts in Schenectady County. An active committee has been formed including municipal and state agency personnel, conservation association members, and concerned citizens. This Committee is named the Schenectady County Water Quality Coordinating Committee (hereafter referred to as the "*Committee*"). Through the voluntary and cooperative efforts of these people, numerous projects and programs will be initiated to carry out the objectives set forth in this strategy. Committee entities include local governmental and regulatory representatives, County, City, Municipal, Village and DEC representatives.

The Committee acts as an independent group. This structure allows the Committee to work independent of political ties or agendas, which may not be of common interest with the Committee's goals. The Schenectady County Soil and Water Conservation District has been designated to lead this Committee. The District also handles financial matters including bookkeeping.

This strategy is intended to be a working document, with the ability to be updated as new projects and priorities arise.

History of the Schenectady County Water Quality Coordinating Committee Strategy

The Federal Water Quality Act of 1987, Section 319, required states to prepare a non-point source pollution assessment report and management program. The goal of this Act was to determine the extent of non-point source problems in each state and to develop mechanisms to deal with the problem. Funding has been provided through Section 319 to implement this management program.

In New York, the State Soil and Water Conservation Committee developed the concept whereby local people, working with their county's Soil and Water Conservation District (hereafter referred to as the "District") and other involved agencies could identify and determine practical solutions for water quality problems in their county. Working with the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), the District in each county in New York State held assessment meetings to update DEC's "stressed stream segment analysis" in order to verify where areas of water quality impairment occur. Upon completion of the stream segment assessment, DEC created the "priority waterbody list" in 1991 which lists the water bodies in each county which have a water quality impairment. From 1991-1992, the NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee facilitated the formation of 57 County Water Quality Coordinating Committees across the state to develop and implement local

strategies to address non-point source issues. By 1993, all 57 counties (including Schenectady) had completed a County Water Quality Strategy, which was to serve as a guideline for local efforts to protect and improve water quality in their county. This document is a revision to the 1993 Strategy and is intended to be a new guiding strategy for water quality efforts in Schenectady County.

The SCWQCC has been involved with the 2003 Phase II Clean Water Act requirements. The CWA requires urbanized areas with Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) to develop a Stormwater Management Program. In Schenectady County there are six traditional MS4's. These include The City of Schenectady, Village of Scotia, and the Towns of Glenville, Princetown, Rotterdam, and Niskayuna. The objective of the Phase II program is to reduce non-point sources of pollution (sedimentation/erosion, litter, chemical) to water bodies. The Program must include six minimum control measures; two of which the SCWQCC can assist the above mentioned MS4's in the development, design and implementation. Specifically, the SCWQCC can assist with Public Education and Outreach, and Public Involvement/Participation.

The Committee is fortunate enough to have a broad range of members, including state and local government employees, conservation groups, and private citizens. The technical expertise of the committee members in the arena of water quality has led to numerous projects and programs being undertaken to protect and improve our water quality. The Committee meets every first Thursday of the month (excluding July and August) and will continue working to achieve an ongoing assessment and improvement program for surface water bodies and groundwater supplies.

Goal of the Schenectady County Water Quality Coordinating Committee Strategy

The goal of this Committee is to **assess** the quality of water resources, solicit and receive public input to **identify** specific problems and their causes, **address** any problems through the application of Best Management Practices and projects, and **educate** the public on water quality issues in an effort to prevent pollution of surface and groundwater resources. To achieve this goal, the committee has established the following five objectives:

Objectives of the Committee

Objective #1

Recruit as necessary to maintain a committee membership that includes a balance of representatives from federal, state, county and municipal government agencies, educational institutions, private groups such as lake

associations and conservation clubs, and non-affiliated individuals with knowledge and concern for water quality issues.

Objective #2

Promote public awareness and understanding of non-point source pollution through the use of educational tools such as brochures, workshops, videos, seminars, presentations, and displays. Target both young and adult audiences, developers, builders, and industrial businesses that may be impacting water quality. Promote public involvement by providing public forums to allow input, feedback on the identification of stormwater pollution issues and comment on possible approaches to reduce adverse impacts to Schenectady's water resources.

Objective #3

Maintain a prioritized, dynamic list of water resources in the County which have water quality problems. The list should include, to the fullest extent possible, supporting documentation identifying the nature and history of each problem, its cause, potential solutions, and corrective measures implemented.

Objective #4

Utilize all potential funding sources from both the public and private sector as a means of financing beneficial watershed plans, educational efforts, and implementation projects.

Objective #5

Promote and foster the remediation of identified non-point source water quality problems through the use of accepted Best Management Practices (BMP's) and water quality improvement projects.

Tasks to Undertake, Based on Objectives

Objective #1: Recruit as necessary to maintain a committee membership that includes a balance of representatives from federal, state, county, and municipal government agencies, private groups such as lake associations and conservation clubs, and non-affiliated individuals with knowledge and concern for water quality issues.

Tasks:

1. Send minutes of committee meetings to all committee members and interested parties regardless of meeting attendance.
2. Maintain a mailing list of members and interested parties including town supervisors, lake association residents, state and county government contacts.

3. Contact interested parties to encourage their participation at committee meetings when an issue arises that affects them.
4. Act as a clearinghouse for information on NPS pollution, particularly ongoing programs within the county.
5. Provide a forum for the general public to provide input and discussion of county NPS pollution problems and potential solutions.
6. Update the Schenectady County Water Quality Strategy Procedures/By-Laws.
7. Invite speakers to present water quality related topics to the SCWQCC members during monthly meetings.

Objective #2: Promote public awareness of non-point source pollution through the use of educational tools such as brochures, workshops, videos, seminars, presentations, and displays. Target both youth and adult audiences.

Tasks:

1. Set up Schenectady County Water Quality Committee displays at public events in Schenectady County. Have a representative at this display when possible.
2. Apply for educational grant funds to produce education tools (brochures, videos, etc) which teach subjects such as on site septic system maintenance, pesticide management, erosion control techniques, etc.
3. Upon receiving grant funds or working on a project, contact the media to publicize information on the committee and the water quality projects being worked on.
4. Utilize the committee's surface and ground water models to give presentations to both young and adult audiences.
5. Develop a brochure describing the Committee and its function.
6. Disseminate information from the DEC Best Management Practices Catalog to promote the wider application of BMP's throughout the County.

Objective#3: Maintain a prioritized dynamic list of water resources in the County, which have problems with water quality. The list should include, to the fullest extent possible, supporting documentation identifying the nature and history of each problem, its cause, potential solutions, and corrective measures implemented.

Tasks:

1. Update the County's priority water list (PWL) when necessary, and work with DEC to keep this list dynamic and up to date.
2. Maintain a database of specific studies, both historical and current, on water resources in the county. The information from these studies would be used to revise and update the PWL.
3. Host a symposium on research and projects within the county regarding water resources and water quality.
4. Develop and implement procedures to identify non-point source pollution problems, their causes, and potential solutions. These could be similar to the water quality assessment meetings of the past.

Objective#4: Utilize all potential funding sources which are available from both the public and private sector as a means of financing beneficial watershed plans, educational efforts, and implementation projects.

Tasks:

1. Create and update regularly a list of various funding sources for water quality improvement and protection, and include the various components of the funding programs such as local match required, eligibility, etc.
2. Maintain a list of potential projects including a brief proposed scope of work and estimated cost so that when funds become available, proposals can be submitted quickly.
3. Provide support for research programs dealing with water quality issues in Schenectady County.
4. Review stream bank/shoreline alteration projects and encourage the use of Best Management Practices on those projects.
5. Make applications for funding, or assist in document preparation for applications.

Objective #5: Promote and foster the remediation of identified non-point source water quality problems through the use of accepted Best Management Practices (BMPS) and water quality improvement projects. Organize and implement these various projects.

Projects:

Access Control System
Agrichemical Handling and Storage Facility
Composting System – Animal
Erosion Control System – Structural
Feed Management System
Integrated Pest Management System
Irrigation Water Management System
Livestock Heavy Use Area Runoff Management System
Manure and Agricultural Waste Treatment System
Nutrient Management System – Cultural
Pathogen Management System
Petroleum and Oil Products Storage System
Prescribed Rotational Grazing System
Process Wash Water Management System
Riparian Buffer System
Silage Leachate Control and Treatment System
Soil Health System
Stream Corridor and Shoreline Management System
Waste Storage and Transfer System

Schenectady County Water Quality Coordinating Committee By-Laws

Article I - Name

Section 1. This organization shall be known as the Schenectady County Water Quality Coordinating Committee (S.C.W.Q.C.C.).

Article II - Goal

Section 1. The goal of this Committee is to assess the quality of water resources, receive public input to identify specific problems and their causes, address any problems through the application of Best Management Practices and projects, and educate the public on water quality issues in an effort to prevent pollution of surface and groundwater resources.

Article III - Membership

Section 1. All interested people are invited to attend the meetings. To be a voting member, however, a person or an organization must have attended at least half of the meetings scheduled within the previous twelve months. Exceptions can be made at the discretion of the other voting members. Organizations shall be limited to one vote

Article IV - Officers

Section 1. Officers of the Committee will be Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer.

Article V - Rules of Order

Section 1. Robert's Rules of Order shall be used in absence of specific article or section listed here.

Article VI - Expenditures

Section 1. Decisions on expenditures shall be by the voting members. The Chairman and the Treasurer shall approve cash expenditures under \$100.00. The voting members shall approve expenditures in excess of \$100.00.

Article VII - Meetings

Section 1. The last meeting of the calendar year shall be the annual organizational meeting. Meeting dates and times for the following year shall be

2014 Section 303(d) List of Impaired Waters Requiring a TMDL/Other Strategy

Index Number	Waterbody Name (WI/PWLID)	Drainage Basin	County	Type	Class	Cause/Pollutant	Source	Year
240-22-P159	Collins Lake (1201-0077)	Mohawk River	Schenectady	Lake	B	Phosphorus	Urban Runoff	2004
240-22-P519	Mariavill Lake (1201-0113)	Mohawk River	Schenectady	Lake	B	Phosphorus	Agriculture, Urb Runoff	2012
4-P270-1-9-P276a	Duane Lake (1311-0006)	Lower Hudson River	Schenectady	Lake	B	Phosphorus	Onsite WTS, Urban	2010

Impaired/Delisted Waters NOT Included on the 2014 Section 303(d) List

Index Number	Waterbody Name (WI/PWLID)	Drainage Basin	County	Type	Class	Cause/Pollutant	Source	Justification
240-22-P519	Collins Lake (1201-0077)	Mohawk River	Schenectady	Lake	B	Algal/Weed Growth	Hab/Hyd Mod	4c
4-P270-1-9-P276a	Duane Lake (1311-0006)	Lower Hudson River	Schenectady	Lake	B	Algal/Weed Growth	Hab/Hyd Mod	4c
240-21 thru 28	Minor Tribs to Mohawk River (1201-0040)	Mohawk River	Schenectady	Stream	C	Unknown Toxin	Industrial, Urban Runoff	3b

selected at the annual organizational meeting.

Article VIII - Elections

Election of officers will be held at the Annual Meeting using a written ballot by voting members present.

Article IX - Dissolution

In the event of the dissolution of the S.C.W.Q.C.C., the residual assets will be turned over to the originating source. None of the assets shall be distributed to the benefit of any individual or organization.

Table 1. List of all impaired waters of Schenectady County to meet 'Objective 3' identified above. This list should be checked/updated annually. Last updated on May 2015.

Link to NYSDEC website for latest list:

<https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/31290.html>