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CROTON WATERSHED CLEAN WATER COALITION

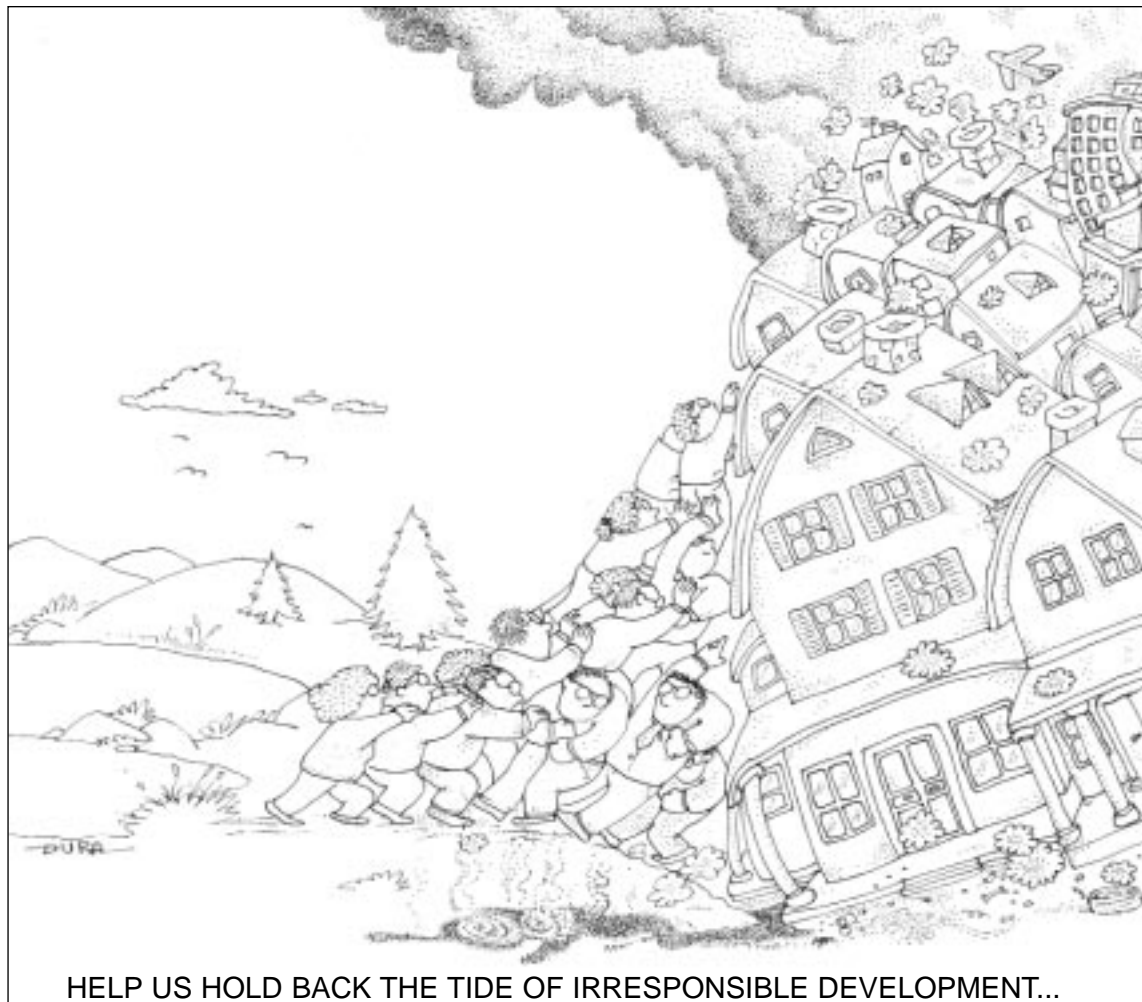


A PLAN TO PROTECT THE CROTON WATERSHED - NOW

Croton water continues to fulfill all state and federal health standards. Despite occasional color violations that are not health-related, Croton water remains high quality. It makes sense to protect the water at its source and prevent its degradation. Indeed, it's the law!

Despite these truths, NYC's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is designing a chemical treatment/filtration plant for the Croton as if it were treating heavily contaminated water taken directly from the East River. DEP is throwing in every conceivable technological device (Dissolved Air Flotation; coagulation; flocculation; UV; and an array of chemicals) beyond the filtration mandated by the federal and NYS governments under the 1998 Consent Decree. At a cost of \$1.5 billion, DEP is relying on this "Taj Mahal" of an industrial facility to take care of all anticipated problems with the water—problems that can be avoided with the implementation of a comprehensive watershed management plan.

Unfortunately, the DEP has in place only a half-hearted program to protect the Croton Watershed. A few months ago, amid great fanfare, the Mayor announced an extra \$25 million to buy land in



HELP US HOLD BACK THE TIDE OF IRRESPONSIBLE DEVELOPMENT...

the watershed. We must compare this with the \$240 million that the Mayor is willing to spend on embellishments of Bronx parks as an "incentive" to Bronx politicians to accept Van Cortlandt Park as the site of the plant. This disparity in funding is yet another indication that the filtration plant, or even its mere prospect, is a disincentive to watershed protection. The filtration plant will simply herald the paving over of the watershed.

DEP is misleading the public by reporting that Croton water will improve and be safer with filtration. The public should be made aware that, as any water quality engineer will confirm, the most modern, most technologically

advanced plant cannot eliminate the toxic stormwater runoff from roads, parking lots and lawns which are the inevitable consequences of development. It is far easier, far more effective, and less costly to prevent contaminants from polluting the water in the first place than it is to attempt to remove them after they have been introduced.

CWCWC has crafted a Management Plan for the Croton Watershed. It is our hope that this plan will be adopted and fully enforced by the regulatory agencies, regardless of whether the plant gets built in its proposed form, in a smaller version, or is replaced by the implementation of an alternative technology.

The following is a bare outline of the Management Plan. The Plan should:

- Include \$200 million for land acquisition in the watershed, or acquisition of conservation easements. This part of the program should focus on Putnam County, since it has most of the remaining open space and land values are lower than in Westchester, although they are rapidly rising.
- Enforce the Phase 2 rules regulating small MS4s (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems) and construction sites.
- Remedy the problems at the 200 sites identified by Trout Unlimited as causing severe stormwater runoff carrying pollution into streams and reservoirs.
- Promote 150-foot buffers for wetlands and streams and disallow the use of buffers to position stormwater devices.
- Enforce the TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) reductions for each municipality as described in the April 2001 DEP/DEC study entitled Nonpoint Source Implementation of the Phase II TMDLs.
- Include the SPPP (Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan) as an integral component of the original site plan for a development. The final plan for any development should not be approved until the DEP has approved the SPPP.
- Help homeowners repair failing septic systems as was done West of Hudson.
- Reduce the excessive quantity of road salts used.
- Map the groundwater resources on which a water budget for each town may be based.
- Keep recharge areas free of impervious surfaces.
- Encourage town planners to adopt strong tree protection laws.
- Disallow wetlands mitigation to compensate for wetlands destruction, until such time that there is a high rate of success.

The Mayor and the Governor must be convinced that the public demands a comprehensive, enforceable watershed protection program. We can accomplish this if a large number of organizations agree to sign onto the plan. We hope yours will.

In order to obtain a copy of the watershed plan and to sign on, please call Wendy at (914)234-6470, or send your request via e-mail to crotonwshed@aol.com.

In conclusion, special thanks are due to Fay Muir, Carolyn Zolas, Matthew Bennett and Ann Fanizzi for their dedicated work and the many hours they spent in shaping the plan. ■

New York City's Watersheds Need Your Help

Please Join Us on Earth Day at our Booths

New York City's remarkable watersheds continue to supply us with the best drinking water of any large city in the world – "the champagne of waters". These invaluable natural resources are being threatened, however—the watersheds' forests and wetlands that protect our reservoirs are under assault from insensitive over-development.

Please help us protect our most vital resource, our drinking water, by lending a hand at our CWCWC booths at one of the following Earth Day events:

Grand Central Terminal's Vanderbilt Hall
April 24th and 25th
From 11am – 5pm

Or

Reis Park, Somers (Westchester County)
April 25th
From 12noon – 5pm

Contact: Please call Wendy at (914)234-6470 if you would like to volunteer a few hours of your time to help at one of CWCWC's booths on Earth Day!

Thank you!

Important Public Hearing on the Eagle River Development in Somers

Please Try and Attend

The Somers Planning Board has formally accepted the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) from the Eagle River developers, and has set a date for the Public Hearing portion of the review process:

Date: Wednesday, May 12
Time: 7:30 pm
Place: Somers Town House

The 628-acre site is situated in Somers. The Angle Fly and Primrose Brooks run through the property. The Angle Fly is a designated trout stream. Extensive wetlands are located throughout the site, as well as steep slopes, abundantly forested areas, and 16 miles of rock walls remaining from the period when the land was extensively farmed. Both the Muscote and Amawalk reservoirs are within the site's watershed and could be impacted. Plans for development go back to 1975 when a proposal for 1,260 units was made and subsequently abandoned. The next proposal for 278 single-family units fell victim to the early 1990s recession.

The present proposal calls for 108 single-family homes - apparently, a cluster development in an area currently upzoned to 3 acres.

The property is located south and southwest of Reis Park, on both sides of SR 139, and adjacent to Rtes. 100 and 35 to the south.

This is the last major undeveloped piece of land in Westchester.

Please attend the hearing and express your view concerning the future of this unique property!



Report on the March 3rd Public Hearing at the Dewitt Clinton High School

Bronx Hearing on the Croton Filtration Plant Is Reduced to a Screaming Match

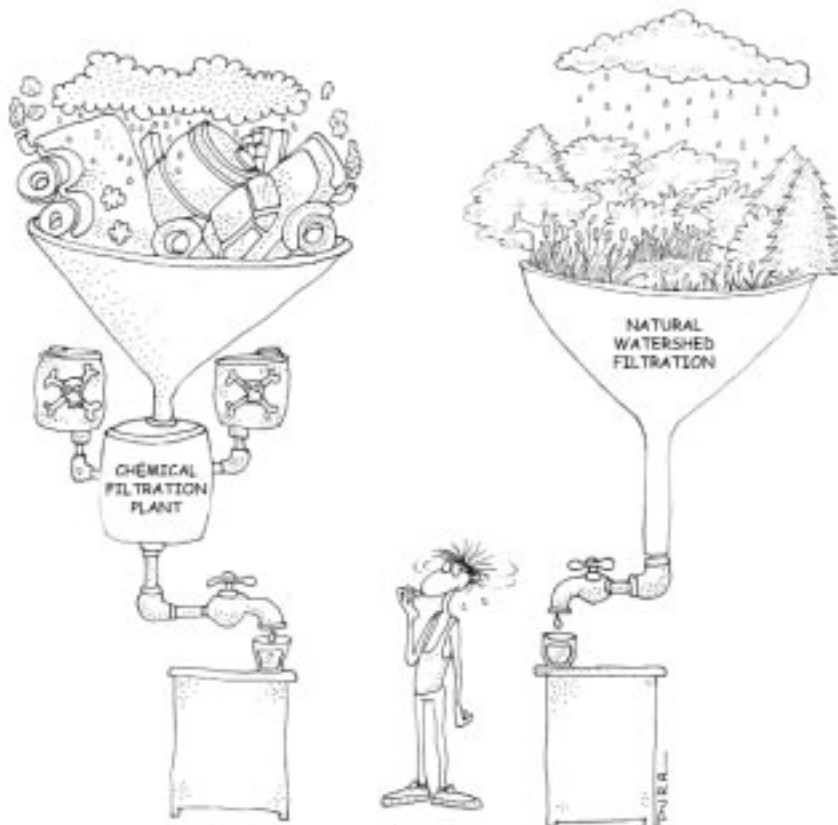
While DEP Commissioner Ward made token attempts to quiet the crowd, a hundred or more construction union members hurled insults at those local politicians who spoke in favor of building the chemical treatment/filtration plant for the Croton in Westchester County. Yelling “we want jobs, we want jobs”, union members also effectively drowned out the couple of hundred local residents who want the plant out of Van Cortlandt Park, out of the Bronx and built on a site in Westchester County.

We must ask ourselves why the Commissioner allowed this to happen. Did the fact that Mayor Bloomberg wants the plant to be sited in Van Cortlandt Park have something to do with his Commissioner’s “inability” to allow opponents of this point of view to be heard?

This so-called public hearing was a farce. Based on similar past incidents, although perhaps less intense, the Commissioner could have foreseen what would

happen and taken appropriate action to forestall it and create a forum in which all could be allowed to speak and be heard. The fact that he did not is a reflection of the same poor planning and fuzzy thinking that has permeated the City’s program to deliver safe, clean, and affordable drinking water to 9 million people.

In the midst of the shouting and screaming, CWCWC delivered its own message, different from that of the local residents or the unions. As we have repeated many times, the plant as presently conceived is unneeded. The proposed plant should not be built anywhere. Our message is that a truly effective watershed management program would not require the massive, costly, environmentally destructive plant that is being proposed by DEP. With the implementation of newer, more effective, and more environmentally-conscious technologies, the future federal regulations could be complied with, and better water guaranteed at a fraction of the cost and disruption to local communities.



Here is CWCWC’s message, squeezed into the scant three minutes allotted to each speaker, as delivered at the March 3rd so-called Public Hearing:

Here is what DEP said about Croton water, back in November 1997: “The Croton System raw water, typical of high quality surface waters, has low particle counts and low concentrations of cysts.” In other words, the water is relatively clear and is free of any threatening levels of much-feared pathogens such as cryptosporidium.

In September, 2002, five years later, Ed Polese, a DEP engineer, wrote as follows to a citizen activist:

“The fact that recent data indicates that water quality is improving in our watershed would indicate that DEP staff is performing their duties very well.”

So, there is nothing much wrong with Croton water—nothing that would justify the huge overkill of the proposed plant that is way beyond anything that is required by future federal regulations. There is nothing to justify the expenditure of \$1.5 billion that will be a burden on the ratepayers. There is nothing to justify the size of the plant in terms of space, in terms of the couple of hundreds of thousands of gallons of hazardous materials it would store, or in terms of its multitude of components that includes coagulation, flocculation, DAF, filtration and UV. Above all, there is nothing to justify its devastating impact on neighboring communities during the 5-year construction period and beyond. There is simply nothing to justify the human and environmental damage that this industrial facility would cause.

Last week, Commissioner Ward told a Westchester County reporter that even when the chemical treatment/filtration plant gets built, “The watershed won’t be abandoned...If you let the water deteriorate...you’d have to build a bigger plant.” God forbid! This plant is already big enough to take care of whatever pollutant it is designed for, even if every square inch of the watershed were developed and paved over—a result, by the way, that will be greatly facilitated by construction of the plant. However, the DEP itself admits that the plant is not designed to eliminate some of the most carcinogenic, the most deadly pollutants, those that are the results of development—those that are carried into our streams and reservoirs from roads and parking lots during storm events. This runoff contains motor oil, grease, lead, nickel, cyanide and PAHs that are classified as carcinogens. The percentage of these toxins present in our drinking

water will become greater as a result of the increase in development brought about by the plant. AND we’ll be paying extra for it!

The Commissioner claims that the watershed will be protected. If the events in the past are any indication of those to come in the future, we have every reason to disbelieve him. Many activists have attended innumerable hearings regarding various major proposed developments in the watershed. DEP has maintained a consistently invisible presence at these hearings. Another example—with much fanfare, the Mayor and the Commissioner recently proclaimed the allocation of an extra \$25 million to buy land in the watershed—about 700 acres. (In addition to \$10 million that the City had previously allocated.) We cannot help but compare this \$25 million with the \$240 million that the Mayor produced in order to gain the acquiescence of Bronx politicians for building the plant at Mosholu.

Croton water does not need this ridiculous plant. Croton water has done very well up till now, thanks to the watershed’s extraordinary, natural immune system comprised by its abundance of wetlands, forests, lakes, ponds, wild trout streams, as well as the glacial till—a reminder of a time when watershed land was covered with a mile-thick layer of ice.

Leave it alone, and don’t allow it to be paved over as will inevitably happen if this plant is built. The watershed, together with far less environmentally damaging, far less costly new technologies can take care of the future stricter federal regulations.

And, Mr. Ward, please bear in mind that professional engineers built the Titanic, but that the Arc was built by an ordinary citizen, just like the rest of us here tonight. ■

Visit our web site: www.newyorkwater.org

Please send articles for submission to:

CWCWC

Wendy Appleton

9 Old Corner Road

Bedford, NY 10506

(914) 234-6470

2004 deadlines for materials are: 5/1, 7/1, 9/1 and 11/1

Artwork and layout by Enrique Dura 914-232-4333



PLEASE JOIN US, the Croton Watershed Clean Water Coalition, which through regional action, is dedicated to providing alternatives to filtration and to protecting and improving the naturally filtered, high-quality waters of the Croton Watershed for today and for generations to come.

SEND in your membership and receive membership mailings, a free copy of the multi-award winning video, The Fight for the Croton Watershed, and most importantly, a chance to preserve one of our most precious resources, our water.

Croton Watershed Clean Water Coalition Membership Application

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

- Group/Coalition membership (Voting) \$25/year [For Groups/Assoc. only]
- Individual membership (Non-Voting) \$10/year [For individuals only]
- Is this a renewal or a new membership?

Make checks payable to Croton Watershed Clean Water Coalition and mail, along with your membership form, to:

FAY MUIR, Secretary
CWCWC, INC.
9 OLD CORNER ROAD
BEDFORD, NY 10506



Our Water, Our Future

Croton Watershed Clean
Water Coalition
9 Old Corner Road
Bedford, N.Y. 10506

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