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# Croton Watershed Clean Water Coalition



## CWCWC YEAR-END REPORT

**MARIAN ROSE PhD, CWCWC PRESIDENT**

Since its inception in 1997, CWCWC has been guided by, and has consistently adhered to its mission statement: "The Croton Watershed Clean Water Coalition was formed as an alliance of individuals and groups to protect and improve the quality of the waters in the Croton Watershed through regional action, and to provide alternatives to DEP's proposed chemical treatment/filtration plant for Croton waters because of the disincentive such a plant would have on effective watershed protection, and the adverse impacts of its construction and maintenance on neighboring communities."

Our first task is, and always has been, to protect the Croton Watershed and prevent the degradation of its reservoirs that help supply high quality drinking water to 9 million area residents. Unfortunately, the pressures for developing the Croton Watershed are close to overwhelming, with



Marian Rose, PhD

property in the hands of developers approaching 4,000 acres. Watershed residents are vigorously opposing the destruction of their community character and the beauty of the land in which they live. Planning board meetings are overcrowded with local residents among whom are counted many CWCWC members.

This year alone, we have helped slow down, and perhaps eventually stop, several major developments such as Eagle River, Granite Pointe, Burdick Farms, Terravest, and the Meadows at Dean's Corners.

Although we are trying to stem the tide of development, we shall not be able to prevent it from sprawling all over the watershed without a radical change in attitude by the regulatory agencies. We need far more enforcement of the existing regulations by DEC, and a profound change by DEP that has shown little

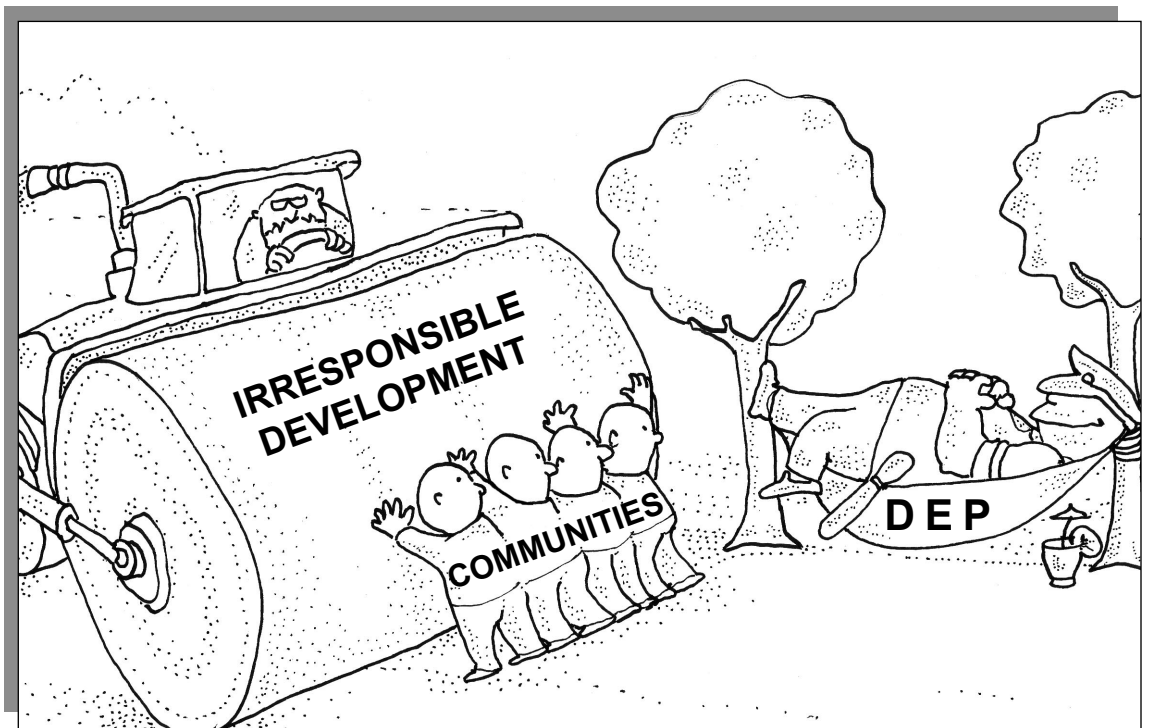


Illustration by Enrique Dura

interest in protecting its Croton Watershed. Since the 1997 Watershed Agreement was signed, DEP has only acquired slightly more than 526 acres in the Croton.

Instead, DEP is pouring money and effort into building a \$1.5 billion chemical treatment/filtration plant for Croton water. The plant will require the digging of a 100-foot hole, 8 acres in surface area, in Van Cortlandt Park in the Bronx. CWCWC has opposed such a plant for many reasons among which the unnecessary expense, and the serious health consequences for the residents in the neighborhoods close to the project.

CWCWC is now in court, challenging DEP's lack of a proper environmental impact review in its selection of a water treatment plant. CWCWC claims that DEP did not properly consider alternatives such as membrane filtration that would have far less of an environmental

impact, and be far less costly.

**The advantages of membrane filtration include better protection against dangerous pathogens such as cryptosporidium; a far smaller footprint that would open up the possibilities of many sites rather than Van Cortlandt park; significantly lower cost and the reduced need of chemicals. NOTE: You will find further information on membrane filtration on our website at: [www.newyorkwater.org](http://www.newyorkwater.org).**

The outcome of this legal battle could be critical for the future of the watershed. We hope that it will result in membrane filtration being considered as a serious alternative, and that the regulatory agencies will finally be forced into effectively protecting the Croton Watershed. ■

### **STEVEN KAPLAN PhD, CWCWC BOARD MEMBER**

**I** have mostly been working on more reasonable sewage treatment in the Croton Watershed.

I spoke very forcefully at both the Westchester Board of Legislators and the Yorktown Board against putting —2 million gallons per day *more* secondary-treated sewage into the Hudson at the County wastewater treatment plant at Annsville Creek. After kayaking there, it is clear that neither more



*Steven Kaplan PhD*

phosphorus nor more nitrogen is needed in that area. It is not too far upstream from the new public kayak launch!

I also secured a copy of Yorktown's inflow and infiltration (I&I) report. Armed with copies of these reports, I hope our Board can successfully turn attention back to upgrading the

Yorktown plant. ■

### **CAROLYN ZOLAS, CWCWC BOARD MEMBER**

**I** first met Dr. Marian Rose and members of the CWCWC Board a few years ago at a meeting in the city. I will never forget that as Dr. Rose presented important facts about the Croton watershed and practical methods to save it, DEP Commissioner Christopher Ward sat with his arms crossed, looking bored.

This is my first year on the Board of CWCWC and also as Chair of the Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter Watershed Committee. While our committee has taken on many issues in the watersheds, the Croton remains the first line of defense in saving our entire water system. I believe that the fate of the Croton will have a great effect on the Catskill and Delaware watersheds.

Thanks in large part to CWCWC, residents in Croton have become aware of the threat to their watershed and their way of life. Despite



*Carolyn Zolas*

overwhelming public rejection of harmful development, town planners and city agencies continue to support builders in their assault on our precious water. Yet gradually, that is changing.

Inroads are being made. Environmentally enlightened people are becoming part of the political process. Although the transition seems slow, we are taking the first steps towards saving our water.

Dr. Marian Rose continues to light the way, fighting polluters and constantly researching better alternatives, such as membrane filtration.

It is an inspiration to serve on the CWCWC Board, all of whose members are so generous and dedicated to saving their watershed. ■

## **ANN FANIZZI, CWCWC VICE PRESIDENT**

The year 2004 has been bittersweet, offering much hope and much concern for Putnam County and for the maintenance of the Croton's high water quality.

County Executive Bondi's proposal for a county \$20 million open space referendum to be submitted to the voters for approval, will replenish the dwindling East of Hudson Funds, will position the county as a negotiating partner with the DEP and other preservation organizations and offers our best hope to realize CWCWC's and the Coalition's goal to protect the Croton Watershed at its source. Open Space preservation is the most cost effective and scientifically supported method of maintaining the Croton's high quality drinking water for the inhabitants of Putnam County and for New York City's nine million water users.

However, the method of funding such an initiative has been contentious. To tie the funds to sales revenue obtained from destructive "Big Box" developments, we feel is counter to our efforts to protect the watershed from overdevelopment. We have advocated principles of sustainable development which would limit retail development to village centers thereby curtailing auto dependency, reducing impervious surfaces, supporting local businesses while at the same time generating tax dollars.

Indeed, the Coalition has been encouraged by findings from (countywide) polling of residents by Trust for Public Land and Open Space Institute, that an investment of \$1.25 a week (or \$60.00) would be a small one to pay for preserving open space and their quality of life. Open Space is surely an investment that keeps on giving.

We are also heartened that the Town of Southeast has become a first in creating a citizen's Open Space Advisory Committee and we hope that it will become a model for other Putnam towns. Although we have provided technical assistance to the Town of Carmel, the most populous and the County seat, as yet, we have not received a positive response from its supervisor nor from the Supervisor of Putnam Valley. We are hopeful that the year 2005 will bring these two towns into the fold and help Putnam replicate the successful endeavors of the thirteen Westchester open space town

committees who have been able to conserve approximately 600 acres.

Additionally especially the Town of Southeast, Kent, Putnam Valley, and Patterson have taken steps to re-assess their Master Plans, zoning codes, stormwater regulations and wetland ordinances in light of the new standards for watershed protection. This new awareness of the environmental impact of overdevelopment has indeed been gratifying. Yet, while codes and ordinances have been written, implementation continues to be spotty. We are especially concerned that stringent Wetland Ordinances adopted by the Town of Southeast be strictly enforced. Planning, Zoning and Conservation Boards must all recognize their duty to fully implement both the spirit and substances of these codes. Developments involving

wetlands and wetland buffers that will test their resolve are currently before the Conservation Commission, including the mega-industrial development known as Terravest International Corporate Park and the private landowner, but significant, Fisher Development in the Town of Southeast.

Although residential development pressures have been dampened by town moratoriums and upzoning, developers in their efforts to overcome the

constraints of 3-acre town-wide zoning (Paul Camarda has sued the town), have instead exploited the Town of Carmel senior housing laws to maximize density and profits. The Hamlet of Carmel alone will be the site of approximately 1,200 senior housing units, increasing its population by 20%, straining responder and health services, increasing congestion and impacting the Middle Branch, Croton Falls, and West Branch reservoirs. Presently, a 388 senior housing development has been planned off Stoneleigh Avenue.

Additionally, commercial development has been proposed, unleashed by the illusion that tax dollars generated by "Big Box" will cover the burden of school taxes resulting from the decade-long frenzy of residential development. At present, situated at Exit 19 off I84, Brewster Highlands, the mega-retail center of 361,000 sq. ft, covering 61 acres and acres of impervious surfaces for the 2,400 parking spaces, is close to being fully occupied. Together with Terravest



*Ann Fanizzi*

***Open Space  
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drinking water***

International Corporate Park, also on Rte 312, currently occupied by some County offices, is being transformed into a gritty industrial area with Ace Endico, a food distribution warehouse set to occupy 216,000 sq. Ft.; Westchester Tractor, an assemble, distribution firm and several other similar, at present, occupants unknown but to the developer, Rte 312, bordering on the Middle Branch, is fast becoming the I 287 of Putnam County.

And these are not the only projects. Interstates have now become the venue of choice of retail developers. North of Exit 19, on Exit 18, another "Big Box" development of over 410,00 sq. ft is being proposed on the border between the Towns of Kent and Patterson. According to the developer, Cosco, Loews, and Bed Bath and Beyond have all but signed on the dotted line and which is strongly supported by officials of the Town of Patterson and county officials. Community impacted: Lake Carmel, populated by a

majority of Kent's 14,000 residents. A community of small homes on less than 1/2 acre, relying on septic surrounds Lake Carmel that empties into the Middle Branch reservoir and is responsible according to the DEP for over 50% of the phosphorous loading of the Middle Branch.

And this is the tip of this bittersweet narrative. There is Orchard Hill bordering North Salem and the Town of Southeast, proposing a hotel/conference center and golf course that will result in the complete deforestation of 172 acres.

And yet, the Coalition with the magnificent support of Croton Watershed Clean Water Coalition, its Board and President, Dr. Rose, will continue to work diligently to confront these challenges and to applaud those initiatives, however tentative, that will protect our watershed. ■

#### **FAY MUIR, CWCWC SECRETARY**

I was fortunate to assist and support CWCWC during the year the admirable and effective Watershed Protection Plan was written. When the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) put forward their Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) on the proposed Chemical Treatment Plant, I testified against the Harlem River site and worked with neighborhood groups to defeat it. When the DEP targeted the Van Cortlandt Park site, I lobbied the New York City Council exhaustively but gained only five votes against the project and one abstention.

I worked with local groups to put together a video "Clean Water: Dirty Deal" which was used as outreach and education. Bloomberg and Ward were "visited" by the community on actions that educated the media. Of particular note was the Bronx Day Parade sponsored by the Borough President when one contingent marched in the parade while another protested across from the reviewing stand. Jeffrey Klein, newly-elected State Senator, was embarrassed enough to leave and has since become a supporter.

There was a special broadcast on WBAI Radio's "Eco-Logic" featuring New York water issues, during which Carolyn Zolas, Marian Rose and I were featured. Many aspects of this issue were thoroughly explored.



*Fay Muir*

The Environmental Justice lawsuit against the proposed chemical treatment/filtration plant by the community has been filed. I took the lawyers and land use experts on a tour of the area in order to allow them to prepare a more balanced environmental impact than that supplied by DEP. While the matter is being decided in the Court, I will renew my efforts to gain a wider audience. I started with a conference of researchers and grass-roots groups called the Urban Agenda, at which a discussion began on how to work effectively with each other. This was sponsored by the NYC Central Labor Council and Queens College Labor Resource Center in Manhattan. There was a very diverse group. Representatives from Community Service Society, Good Jobs New York, Brennan Center for Justice, New York Civic and Participation Project, ROC-NY, Domestic Workers United, Community Voices Heard, SEIU 32bj, Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice, Urban Justice Center and the Taxi Workers' Alliance made presentations and there were about 60 audience participants in attendance.

I worked with our CWCWC attorney to sign up members of the Norwood community for his excellent lawsuit. Also, I supported the Friends of Van Cortlandt Park, who filed for Article 78 to stop the project. ■



## **WELCOME TO OUR WATER, OUR FUTURE'S NEW OPINIONS PAGE!**

### **Opinions and Perspectives from Around Our Watershed**

**A**t CWCWC, we are in the midst of crafting an ambitious plan to promote our organization and its important causes more and more to the general public. To that end, we are taking on a number of development projects. A few highlights are:

**We are continuing the process of making our Website at: [www.newyorkwater.org](http://www.newyorkwater.org) a more attractive, informative, timely and useful tool for the public to use. Among other areas of the site that are in development is the building of a Local and National Resource Links List, to inform those interested in the fight for the Croton Watershed of other local and national organizations involved in the same issues—in specific and in general. We are also seeking to add to the number of organizations that link to our site, in order to increase traffic and interest.**

**Additionally we are introducing an opinion forum in this Newsletter. This forum will allow you, our membership and the interested public, to read what others like you have to say. Our hope is that you will be encouraged to add your voice!**

#### **The Marketing of Our Cause**

*By Wendy Appleton*

**A**s we look forward to 2005, after a year of successes and struggles in the ongoing fight for the Croton Watershed, we do so knowing that one of the most important things we can accomplish in this coming year is to find a way to ignite the public's interest in this most important cause. How do we awaken public interest in protecting their watershed, the first line of defense in keeping their drinking water safe for now and the future? And furthermore, how do we awaken public interest in replacing NYC's proposed water treatment plant in the Bronx's Van Cortlandt Park by one based on modern, less costly



*Wendy Appleton*

and more effective technology?

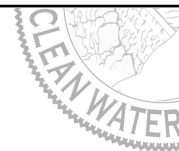
We know that the individual contributions of our Board and Coalition Members and those of our Coalition Member Groups have been and will continue to be tremendous. We also know that healthy change and choices will not happen on the scale that they need to unless the public takes up some of the charge.

What can we do to interest the public in a cause that, to us, seems without question worth the daily fight? What tactics might we adopt to

**Visit our web site: [www.newyorkwater.org](http://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: 1/1, 3/1, 5/1, 7/1, 9/1 and 11/1



## Opinions and Perspectives from Around Our Watershed

encourage a groundswell of interest?

It seems that we do all that we can to get our cause covered in the Press, but editorial boards have a preference for less complex issues that make an appealing story. What can we do to combat this? How can we get around them and to the people? Or, alternatively, how can we use them to help us get to the people?

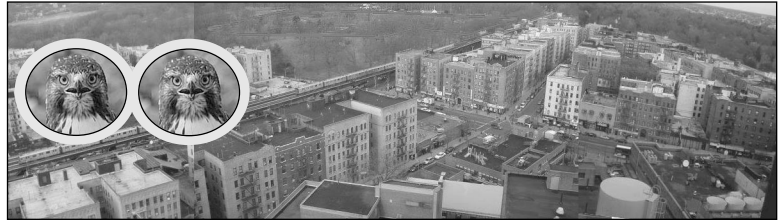
An example of a story that really grabbed the public's interest is the recent nationwide obsession with the plights of Pale Male and Lola, the two Red-Tailed Hawks that were ousted from their nesting spot on the façade of an exclusive Manhattan apartment building off Central Park. People as far away as California jumped on the bandwagon to come to the aid of the two hawks. It seems that CWCWC might use something akin to that story to generate interest in our cause.

First of all, the plight of the two hawks was immediately, and with the right focus, addressed in the media by the Audubon Society. The hawks had had press devoted to them before as well, so many people had already heard of them. Audubon recognized this story as one that was likely to tug at the heartstrings of the public. The media made the same recognition, and so wisely chose to give the story close coverage.

In general, too, people root for the underdog, and the plight of the two hawks that have against all odds prospered and raised young in the harsh environment of New York City was a story tailor-made to appeal.

Of course, CWCWC's cause is not so neatly sewed up. Why don't we look at the big picture and wonder what small but essential part of it might be focused on in order to generate interest in the greater cause? Certainly there are many, many animals and birds whose habitats and very lives are threatened on all sides in the watershed—by the hazards of unchecked development, pollution, noise and from water contamination in their habitats from these and other sources. But is any one of these animals or birds that we might focus on going to tell the greater story? One of them might be a beginning, at least...

Perhaps if we concern ourselves with getting the attention of the public with a microcosmic story, we can then, once we



*Perhaps we might devote more thought to a small yet extremely significant emblem that we might sentimentalize somehow in order to make an unabashed bid for the public's eyes and hearts.*

catch their interest, find forums to expand the story and to tell more of it—to fill in the blanks until we piece together all of the important elements that are part of OUR story.

For example, it's too bad that the two Red-Tailed Hawks were not roosting in a treetop in Van Cortlandt Park in the Bronx. If their tree were to be about to be cut down to make way for the DEP's massive chemical treatment/filtration plant, perhaps some greater interest in this terrible saga might be taken.

How do we find and promote a similar story? Perhaps we might devote more thought to a small yet extremely significant emblem that we might sentimentalize somehow in order to make an unabashed bid for the public's eyes and hearts. There's no question how greatly we need their support in our mutual cause now and in the future.

It seems to me such a no-brainer that the fight for the Croton Watershed and the incredible value of its preservation and protection should be MORE than enough to get people's attention. Perhaps the story is too cumbersome, though, to make "good copy" and people get bogged down and lose interest, no matter how clearly they comprehend the essential truths.

It is, of course, true also that we have city and state politics, the developers, the Unions and the vested interests to fight as well as we try to get our story out there, and those are foes of no small significance. Do we think that a human-interest story can get around them, and grab the interest of people in spite of the obstacles? Perhaps we ought to address this possibility and begin to market our story the way an advertiser might market a product or service.

In this supposedly enlightened day and age, it is unfortunate that we might need to take this tack, but it is one that we might devote some thought to! ■

### **CWCWC Welcomes your opinion!**

Send submissions of not more than 500 words in length for consideration for *Opinions and Perspectives From Around Our Watershed* to:



CWCWC  
Opinions Editor  
9 Old Corner Road  
Bedford, NY 10506

Call the CWCWC office with questions at (914) 234-6470  
Or email your submission to us at: [crotonwshed@aol.com](mailto:crotonwshed@aol.com)

# CWCWC'S ANNUAL MEETING 2004

## FOOD, FUN AND NEWS FROM THE FIGHT FOR THE CROTON!



CWCWC Members, Members of the Board of Directors and other guests enjoy great food and conversation about our mutual interests and goals for healthy change in our Watershed...



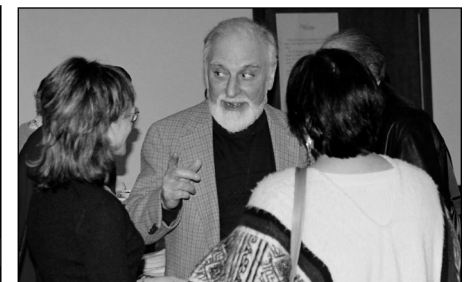
IVANKA ROBERTS,  
CWCWC ADVISORY  
BOARD



PAUL MOSKOWITZ PhD,  
NEWLY-ELECTED CWCWC  
BOARD MEMBER



MARIAN ROSE PhD, CWCWC PRESIDENT  
MICHAEL COLE ESQ., CWCWC ATTORNEY



DAVID FERGUSON, CWCWC BOARD MEMBER



JIM BACON ESQ., CWCWC ATTORNEY



SINGER/SONGWRITER JOEL LANDY PERFORMED FOR GUESTS.



*It was an animated evening that we all wish to repeat soon...*

# LANDMARK VIDEO DOCUMENT CHRONICLING "THE FIGHT FOR THE CROTON" AVAILABLE NOW!



CWCWC Board Member David Ferguson announces the release of the broadcast-quality video, *Unfiltered Facts*, which chronicles the many facets of the fight surrounding the DEP's potential chemical treatment/filtration of Croton water...

During 2004, New York City resident and activist David Ferguson distilled some 800 hours of videotapes that he shot over the course of seven years. These tapes cover all aspects of the effort to protect our Watershed and prevent the DEP's building of a billion and a half-dollar chemical treatment/filtration plant in Van Cortlandt Park in the Bronx. CWCWC retained video editor and director Jim Graniela to produce the broadcast-quality video, *Unfiltered Facts* using this footage.

*Unfiltered Facts* is composed of many voices: Bronx and Watershed residents, experts in various fields, governmental agencies, elected representatives and other stakeholders.

## The video is organized into sections:

**The Consent Decree Allows for an Alternative**

**The Industrial Nature of the Planned Chemical Treatment/Filtration Plant**

**What's Carbon Got to Do With It?**

**How DEP Has Failed to Protect the Croton Watershed**

**Who Pays for the Proposed Chemical Treatment/Filtration Plant?**

**Who Benefits?**

**How Chemical Treatment/Filtration Can Threaten Good Water Quality**

**An Overview: What Needs to Be Done**

The running time for *Unfiltered Facts* is roughly one hour and fifteen minutes. There is also in the works a 10-minute long version, designed to introduce the full-length video to as many potential media outlets as possible.

We are in the process of getting the word about this landmark video document to the major media. If you would like a copy of the video for media use, or if you might assist us somehow in getting the word out about its availability, please contact the CWCWC office! We would be most appreciative!



Contact the CWCWC office at:  
**(914)234-6470 or via email at: [crotonwshed@aol.com](mailto:crotonwshed@aol.com)**

JANUARY FEBRUARY 2005

**PLEASE JOIN US**

Through regional action, CWCWC is dedicated to providing alternatives to chemical treatment/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 subscription to CWCWC's newsletter, "Our Water, Our Future" and (at your request) a free copy of the multi-award-winning video, "The Fight for the Croton Watershed."

Most importantly, your membership will help you get involved with the preservation of one of our most precious resources, our water.

**Croton Watershed Clean Water Coalition Membership Application**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

- 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? (Circle one)

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**

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