

2012-2013

City of Kingston Environmental Program

Bi-Annual Report



Kingston Point Beach – Free Youth Kayaking Trip

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The Importance of the Environmental Program

Since 2005, the City of Kingston's environmental education staff has helped the City become a leader in environmental awareness and stewardship. The City's Environmental Program's mission is to:

- develop and facilitate unique programs designed to educate the public about the local environment
- focus on creating a more positive energy to solve environmental issues while saving tax payer dollars and leveraging public and private investments
- strive to make Kingston a more sustainable and healthy community through programs, activities, education, stewardship and environmental services

Each of these areas are detailed in the following report.

Trends in 2012-2013

The city environmental education staff acknowledges the importance of the "green movement," which recognizes the economic advantages of smart, high performing sustainable practices, and has continued to educate Kingston citizens and visitors on this topic. Staff has observed the influence and growth of the green economy and has increasingly used that awareness to identify the importance of opportunities and the potential to improve the quality of life in Kingston.

Staff continues to develop unique and fun ways to connect youth to the outdoors at a time when prevailing lifestyles have led to a decrease in time and outside activities for all age levels.

Staff continues to refine the environmental education programs by focusing on and promoting sustainable solutions through the education of adults and children with increased program access by instituting online program registration throughout the Parks and Recreation Department.

Recognizing its tremendous influence on many peoples' lives, the staff has embraced social media and exponentially increased their use of many forums, including Facebook, email newsletters, and a new active website: www.kingstonparksandrec.org. Each of these has greatly expanded the reach of communication with members and visitors. Direct online reach at the close of 2013 included:

- 2,175 website members and 3,172 Kingston Parks and Recreation Facebook "Friends"
- 414 Kingston Parks and Recreation public Facebook page "Likes"
- 758 Forsyth Nature Center public Facebook page "Likes"
- 132 Everette Hodge Community Center public page "Likes"

Through 2012-2013, the staff was successful in the development and award of various local, state and federal funds allowing the City to capitalize on the sustainability and efficiency movement. During this time, grant funding was very competitive, which allowed staff to work more cooperatively with outside agencies and not for profit organizations to continue to further the City's and it's participants goals.

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Environmental Education by the Numbers

School Programs

School Programs 2012/2013

Number of Individual Programs	175
Types of Programs	19
Number of Schools/Groups	25
Number of Classes/Teachers	88
Number of Students	4190

Transportation Revenue Generated **\$1577.76**

Supported in part by:

The Ulster County Youth Bureau, Office of Children and Family Services; NYS DEC and DOS Watershed Grants; NYS DEC Recycling Grant; NYS ZBGA Grant Program



Throughout the school year, environmental education staff facilitates outdoor, nature based, environmental education programs including: Hudson River Ecology, Forsyth Nature Center Zoology, and Hasbrouck Park Forest Hikes among many others. Additionally, indoor programs are hosted at the schools with themes including recycling, watersheds, and gardening. Programs are made possible through a variety of grant sources, allowing them to be offered either for free or at a low cost for local schools. This program serves all schools in the Kingston City School District as well as other districts within Ulster County.

Throughout the fall of 2012 and all of 2013, the Parks and Recreation Department was able to utilize online program enrollment through the new web portal, Kingstonparksandrec.org. This portal allowed teachers to easily register for programming in the City parks while reducing in-office phone calls and emails, for a more stream-lined process.

Goals/Vision for 2014

- Work to reach even more students at John F. Kennedy Elementary, Bailey and Miller Middle School as well as Kingston High School
- Work to coordinate outdoor/indoor programming with new Common Core Standards and testing schedules.
- Secure additional funding for programs
- Build a volunteer base for tour guides when staff is not available
- Make program extensions feasible so that teachers use parks as classrooms on their own

Public Environmental Programs

Public Programs 2012/2013

Number of Programs	110
Types of Programs	22
Number of Youth Participants	4733
Number of Adult Participants	4717

Supported in part by: The Ulster County Youth Bureau, Office of Children and Family Services; NYS DEC and DOS Watershed Grants; NYS DEC Recycling Grant; ALCOA Foundation, NYS ZBGA Grant Program and NYS DOH Creating Healthy Places Program



Program Highlights

Public environmental programming, marketed under the “Forsyth Nature Center,” includes an array of free or low cost family programs, offered at the Forsyth Nature Center, Kingston Point Park, and Hasbrouck Park and in other City parks around Kingston. These programs include animal based experiences like Feathered Friends, Reptiles and Amphibians and Turtle Talk, as well as hikes, and maple sugaring. The Forsyth Nature Center also promotes other events and programs including birding programs offered by the John Burroughs Natural History Society, events co-sponsored by Cornell Cooperative Extension including the Plant Swap and Live Well Kingston and a variety of family oriented events sponsored by the Junior League of Kingston and other Kingston organizations.

Public environmental programming continued to grow during 2012 and 2013, with the addition of a newly developed “Passport to the Parks” Program, part of the Department’s Use Your Parks Campaign, an initiative of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County’s (CCEUC) Creating Healthy Places Grant Program. Also during this time, the Forsyth Nature Center website (www.kingston-ny.gov) in partnership with the new Kingstonparksandrec.org were developed and maintained by the environmental education staff. This website provides information about the Forsyth Nature Center and the Kingston Parks and Recreation Department respectively and act as gateways to the Department’s new online registration tool.

With the support of grant funding, most animal based and walk/hike programs were provided at no charge to City residents and visitors. This allows the Forsyth Nature Center to continue to welcome people of all income levels the opportunity to experience high quality, family oriented programs right here in their community. The Department also sponsored a variety of large scale events including the annual Forsyth Nature Center Fall Festival, Boo at the Zoo, Green Friday and Winter Fest.

Goals/Vision for 2014

- Improve tracking of participation data for public programs
- Develop new outdoor recreation programs in the areas of Archery and Cycling

Junior Naturalist Program

Junior Naturalist 2012/2013	
Number of Participants	151
Program Revenue	\$29,420



Program Highlights

The Junior Naturalist Program is a two week nature program for children in Grades K-8, (one week for 6, 7 and 8th graders). This hands on, environmental education experience is a summer program offered daily from 9am-3pm. During this program, educators facilitate environmentally themed activities, in various natural areas in and around Kingston. This program provides youth the freedom to experience the outdoors in the summer, but maintains a strong academic component which enriches the students' outdoor experiences. This program is open to both Kingston and non-Kingston residents.

Since 2006, the Junior Naturalist Program has consistently enrolled a significant number of youth, with a total of 79 in 2012 and 72 in 2013. This program provides a complete, affordable, educational outdoor experience for youths in the Kingston area. This year program participants were able to participate in a variety of outdoor activities including kayaking, swimming, hiking and even mountain biking. These programs are designed to strengthen our youth's connections to the outdoors while building respect of the Kingston Parks System.

Goals/Vision for 2014

- Develop and expand innovative programming and partnerships
- Make space and bathroom improvements at the FNC to accommodate additional programming/visitors
- Seek sponsorships to develop scholarship program for the Junior Naturalist Program



Guided Kayaking Tours

Guided Kayaking 2012/2013

Number of Programs	81
Number of Program Participants	327
Kayak Festival Participants	300
Program Revenue	\$8798.49



Program Highlights

Three different types of nature based kayaking programs are offered on weekends by the Parks and Recreation Department, (weather dependent) from Memorial Day through Labor Day. Two different locations, with two fleets of kayaks, are utilized for the Kayaking program. The newest location is located beneath the Wurts Street Bridge, adjacent to the Public Kayak Dock. This location was utilized on Friday evenings as a program launch site and directly contributed to ecotourism as program participants are encouraged to visit the Rondout and its many shops and restaurants before and after kayaking. In 2013, Friday night programs were Free to Kingston residents thanks to a grant from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC). The program continued to offer kayak tours twice a day on Saturdays, launching from Kingston Point Beach.

An online program registration form and payment option was initiated for this program for the 2011 season and it was upgraded for the 2013 season. This amenity greatly decreased the amount of office work required to register participants and eliminated the need to collect cash for program fees offsite during the weekend hours. It also eliminated the number of absentee registrants and late cancelations, due to the online reservation and payment system commitment.

The Recreation Department and Kenco Outfitters jointly host the annual Kingston Kayak Festival at Kingston Point Beach each June. Participation and activities have grown each year and provide Kingston residents and visitors the opportunity to learn about Kayaking, Kingston's natural resources and test a variety of demonstration boats and techniques on the water. Proceeds from the event go to support the Recreation Department's growing kayak program.

Goals/Vision for 2014

Moving forward, the Kingston Kayak Program will continue to evolve with market trends. In 2005, when the program was first launched, very few people had kayaks and were very interested in programs that both had a guide and provided equipment. While that need still exists into 2014, more kayakers are interested in using their own gear, while also taking part in the educational journey.

- The 2014 program may expand to offer more opportunities for individuals with kayaks and some basic skills, while still offering basic kayakers with little or no skill an introductory program

- Equipment upgrades will continue as the Kingston Parks and Recreation Department continues to work closely with its partner, Kenco Outfitters, which co-sponsors the Kingston Kayak Festival and directs many clients to the City's guided kayaking programs
- Staff would also like to develop a Kayak Rental Program at Kingston Point Beach on Saturday afternoons. This program would allow for equipment rentals and basic guidance to be given to those who would like to simply rent equipment without a guide. Reservations for this service could be taken through the Parks and Recreation Department's online system



Kayaking at Kingston Point Beach

Forsyth Nature Center Facility and Exhibits

2012 and 2013 At a Glance	
Total Number of Visitors	90,000+
Number of Animals	150+
Number of Animal Species	40+
Number of Gardens/Educational Areas	12



Program Highlights

During 2012 and 2013, the Forsyth Nature Center, a City of Kingston Parks and Recreation facility, continued to grow and thrive. The Forsyth Nature Center (FNC), which celebrated its 75th year in 2011, has one full time Caretaker, Mark DeDea. The FNC is open every day of the year and is free to all visitors. This unique educational facility is one of a kind in this area and welcomes visitors from Kingston and beyond. The Forsyth Nature Center recently ranked as one of the Hudson Valley’s “Best Free Family Attractions,” by Hudson Valley Magazine.

In the past two years, the Forsyth Nature Center has welcomed many new residents including Hooley (Steer), Cracker and Zeus (Alpacas), Mario, Venus and Aphrodite (Goats), Ruby Tue (Boa constrictor), and Archie (Black vulture).

During this period of time, a number of projects have been taken on by the City of Kingston Parks and Recreation Department and the Friends of Forsyth Nature Center. The major project during this time included the construction and completion of the Permeable Paver Project, which surrounds the facility. Other interior and exterior renovations were made to the facility to improve exhibits and animal pens as well.

Goals/Vision for 2014

Moving forward, the Forsyth Nature Center will continue to grow and expand. The recent award of the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation’s Zoos, Botanical Gardens and Aquarium Grant Program will allow for the expansion of environmental programs focusing on native animals, as well as the acquisition of and care for additional native animals at the facility in the coming year.

- Increase rentals of Forsyth Nature Center Gazebo during Warmer Months

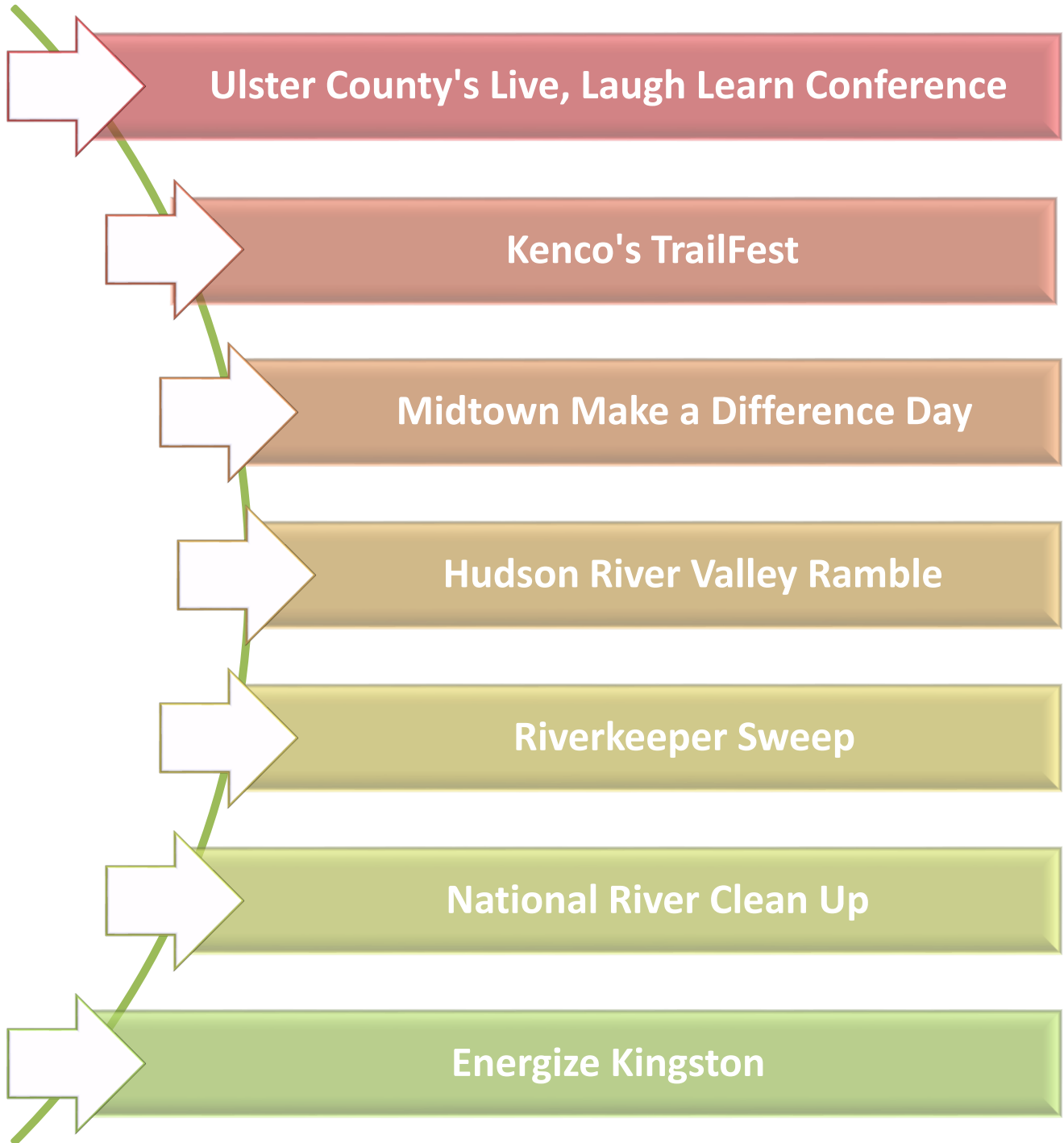
Large Scale Outreach Events

In 2012-2013, the City of Kingston Parks and Recreation Department's Environmental Program developed, planned, organized, and executed seven major public outreach events. Each of these events drew community members and regional visitors to the Kingston Parks System.



Community Outreach Events

In addition to departmentally sponsored events, the Environmental Education staff also participates in community outreach events throughout the year. In 2012-2013, the staff participated in 7 community events. Participation included tabling, programming, and information sharing.



Environmental Services

Climate Smart Kingston

The City of Kingston is a Climate Smart Community, along with hundreds of others throughout the state. The Climate Smart Communities (CSC) program is a New York State initiative to help local communities reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, prepare for effects of climate change and save taxpayers money. The program is designed to address 10 focus areas, or “pledge elements,” as outlined in Kingston’s CSC Pledge: [Climate Smart and Green Jobs Community Pledge](#), adopted in October 2009 by the City of Kingston’s Common Council.



The Climate Smart and Green Jobs Community Pledge created the Climate Smart and Green Jobs Community Task Force (now Climate Smart Kingston).

The mission of Climate Smart Kingston is to create and implement an action plan including comprehensive policies and programs for the City of Kingston to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, enhance operational and energy efficiencies, reduce energy costs, support local job growth, and adapt to a changing climate while improving quality of life, saving taxpayer dollars, and promoting social justice.

Climate Smart Kingston, chaired by Julie Noble (Environmental Educator for Kingston), convenes about six times per year to strategize, plan, and implement the goals of Kingston's Climate Action Plan, adopted in October 2012 by the City of Kingston’s Common Council. The City of Kingston Climate Action Plan presents a summary of the findings of the community and local government energy assessments and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions inventories. A GHG emissions forecast is presented and GHG reduction goals are proposed. The plan also outlines the recommended measures to achieve energy and GHG reduction goals according to six different subject areas:

- a. Energy and Renewables: Buildings and Facilities
- b. Land Use and Transportation
- c. Materials Management: Waste Reduction & Recycling
- d. Sustainable Resource Management
- e. Outreach, Education & Training
- f. Climate Adaptation

[Final Kingston Climate Action Plan](#)

[Climate Action Plan Executive Summary](#)

The basis for the Climate Action Plan was a community and local government greenhouse gas emissions inventory report. This data was compiled by a Climate Analyst, who was hired by federal funding as City staff and supervised by the Parks Department’s Environmental Educators. The final report comprehensively examines the electricity, natural gas and fuel used by City government operations and the local community for calendar year 2010 and established an energy use baseline for City government operations. The government operations information is detailed according to the following:

- Buildings and Facilities
- Vehicle Fleet
- Transit Fleet/Citibus Summary
- Wastewater Treatment Plant Summary
- Water Department Summary
- Public Lighting Summary
- Solid Waste Summary
- Employee Commute

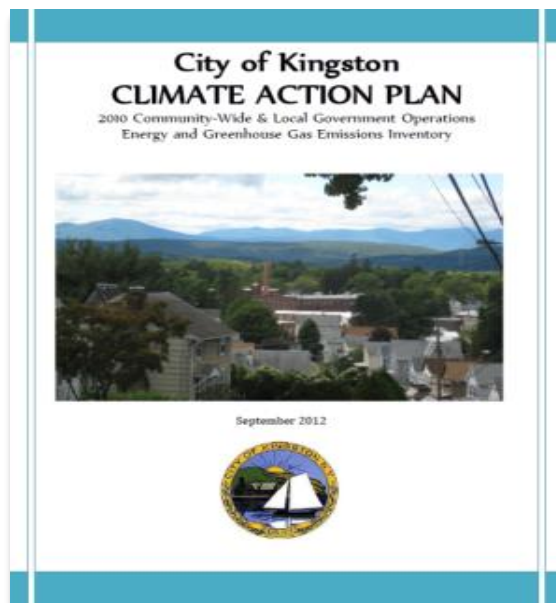
Presentation of this information in this manner is intended to assist City officials and the policy-makers in making informed decisions to reduce energy usage, save taxpayer dollars and cut GHG emissions associated with City operations. Energy and greenhouse gas baseline information can be used to develop the strategies and measures in the Climate Action Plan that can be employed to meet energy and GHG emissions reduction goals set by the City.

[2012 Local Government Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory](#)

[2012 Community Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory](#)

In 2013, New York State offered technical support to communities that have adopted the Climate Smart Communities Pledge. This support came in the form of technical assistance from Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc (VHB), an engineering firm based out of Watertown, MA with offices in NY. VHB created a profile of Kingston, a first step in identifying a technical support service package to help the City of Kingston progress through the pledge elements. This profile, complete with detailed information on actions completed, in progress, and identified for future action can be found on the Climate Smart Kingston webpage under [Climate Smart Communities Profile: Kingston](#).

Additionally, with the assistance of VHB, Climate Smart Kingston was able to execute a prioritization exercise in order to begin to implement the Climate Action Plan. Climate Smart Kingston is now using the results of that exercise to create a strategy to implement the recommendations.



Renewable Energy

Photovoltaic Solar Panels at the Forsyth Nature Center

The installation of a photovoltaic solar array at the Forsyth Nature Center (FNC) was done by an Eagle Scout, with every phase of the project (fundraising, planning, purchasing, installation, and educational interpretation) executed by the Scout in consult with the City. As of the construction completion on August 19th, 2012, the park has been using energy produced by this project during all daylight hours to offset electricity used in the nearby Turtle Building. The total array has a generation capacity of 1.2KW. The total of this project is valued at \$5323.93, which came in the form of donated supplies, supplies purchased with fundraised money, and excess funds, which were presented to FNC as a check at the end of the project.



Recycling and Solid Waste

Increasing Recycling Rates through Single Stream Recycling

Over the three year time period of 2011-2013, over 5500 Recycling Bins were distributed to Kingston City Residents. These totes, ranging in size from 64 to 96 gallons, were provided free of charge to the majority of residential units in Kingston, thanks to the support from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) and New York State Energy Research Development Authority (NYSERDA) Recycling Grant Program monies.

In 2012 and 2013 City environmental education staff worked with the Department of Public Works (DPW), NYSERDA and NYSDEC to implement a grant funded program to create a more efficient and productive recycling system in the City of Kingston while also reducing trash generated and disposed of by the City. The major components of this program are: 1) the distribution of 5500, 96 and 64 gallon Single Stream Recycling Totes with Radio Frequency Identification Devices (RFID), 2) the outfitting of two DPW recycling trucks with on board computer systems, featuring Radio Frequency Identification Devices (RFID) readers, GPS Equipment with a computer system and 3) the development and delivery of public educational programs and distribution of literature pertaining to new recycling policies and procedures. This program has and will continue to allow the City of Kingston to increase recycling rates, track participation rates, and reduce operating expenses for the Department of Public Works. At the conclusion of 2013, recycling rates had climbed 14% since the beginning of 2012 and municipal solid waste tonnage had continued to drop during this period as well.

Recycling and Composting Education

City environmental education staff offers a series of recycling programs throughout the year to educate both the general public as well as school children to the benefits of recycling. Each school year, staff works in each elementary school that serves City of Kingston students to provide informative and age appropriate recycling programs. Additionally, a series of public composting education workshops were held in 2012 and 2013. These workshops educate Kingston residents on how to reduce their trash output through food and yard waste diversion. Additionally, the process of composting generates free natural fertilizer for in- and at-home use, reducing the need for synthetic chemical landscape applications. Furthermore, increased waste diversion saves taxpayer dollars in tipping fees averted.

Goals/Vision for 2014

- Move Kingston to volume based waste collection after successful implementation of trial in 2013 (Over 600 64 gallon Garbage Totes were distributed)
- Increase home and commercial composting, and the development of an online composting registry to track and quantify the amount of food waste being diverted city-wide
- Increase recycling rates, awareness and understanding of recycling rules/regulations city-wide
- Increase numbers and visibility of Public Recycling Receptacles
- Improve recycling compliance and awareness at City Offices and Events

Storm water, Green Infrastructure, & Watershed Programs

Green Infrastructure improvements are a method of storm water management that ensures environmental sustainability. Green infrastructure (GI) practices manage storm water runoff while maintaining or restoring natural hydrology. Green infrastructure consists of practices such as rain gardens, bio-retention areas, green roofs, porous pavement and cisterns.



Porous Pavers at Forsyth Nature Center

In 2011, the Friends of Forsyth Nature Center (FFNC) began a capital improvement project within the FNC of replacing existing deteriorating asphalt with porous pavers on the main pathway around the facility. While improving the environment, this project improves the appearance and functionality of the walkway, while also maintaining handicapped accessibility at the Nature Center. A facility that has been open to the community for 75 years, with 40,000 visitors annually, there is a significant amount of foot traffic leading to wear and tear on the infrastructure. Each visitor uses the walkway to explore the exhibits of the Nature Center, including a large population of visitors with strollers, young children and people using wheelchairs.

In 2013, the entire walkway surrounding the Forsyth Nature Center was completed thanks to efforts of the FFNC and the ALCOA Foundation.



Porous Pavers at Forsyth Nature Center

Porous Asphalt Parking Lot at Forsyth Nature Center

Annual Reporting and Storm Water Outfall Mapping

Environmental education staff annually assists the Engineering Department with the completion of the City of Kingston Annual Storm Water Report, measuring the City's adherence to the Municipal Storm Water Regulations (MS4) also documenting any illicit discharges into the storm water system. Additionally, environmental education staff assisted with the annual storm water outfall monitoring requirements, in which staff visit and inspect each identified storm water outfall within the City.

Geographic Information Systems "GIS" Program

In 2012, the City of Kingston acquired a license for a Geographic Information System (GIS) software package that will allow Kingston to continue to develop its geospatial mapping and data gathering programs. Environmental education staff has training in GIS and are working to connect it with various City departments in numerous applications.

ALCOA Rain Barrel Program

With funding from the ALCOA Foundation, the environmental education staff developed a program to distribute rain barrels to Kingston area households to measure the amount of storm water collected and diverted each week by participating households. This program commenced in 2011 with additional programming through 2013. Rain Barrel education (storm water diversion) programs were also held in 2013 as part of the Department's Green Friday Program.



NYS Department of State – Rondout Creek Watershed Management Plan

In 2011, the City of Kingston was awarded a \$126,000 grant to develop a watershed management plan for the tidal Rondout Creek, encompassing the City of Kingston, Town of Ulster, and the Town of Esopus. The City of Kingston environmental education staff is leading this effort and developed a Request for Proposals (RFP) to hire a qualified consultant to assist with developing the Watershed Management Plan. This work commenced in 2012, continued through 2013 and is ongoing into 2014.

NYS DEC – Urban Storm water Grant

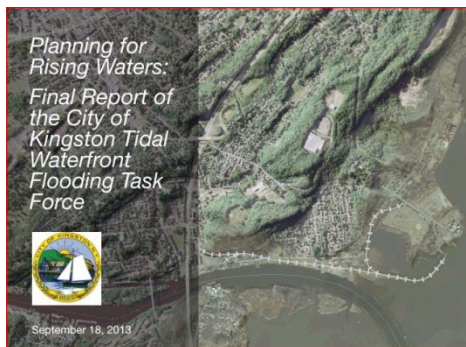
In 2011, the City of Kingston was awarded a \$60,000 Hudson River Estuary Program Grant to develop an Urban Storm Water GIS Mapping Program, as well as an educational program focusing on green infrastructure and urban runoff. Through this program, environmental education staff has 1) generated a GIS System for the City of Kingston with detailed Sewershed Maps, 2) conducted non-point source pollution programming for students and residents both on and off the water, 3) posted educational storm water management information on the City Website and 4) developed a mobile phone based tool (Kingston Report It!) to track watershed related issues (launching in early 2014).



Lower Esopus Watershed Partnership

The City of Kingston has supported an inter-municipal effort to bring awareness and scientific understanding of the Lower Esopus Creek, working cooperatively with municipalities and not for profit organizations along this waterway. This partnership spent much of 2012 and 2013 working on turbidity issues in the Lower Esopus Creek, and is currently working with the NYC Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), and Ulster County, to create a solution to this complicated problem. Environmental education staff worked cooperatively with the City Engineering office on these issues.

Tidal Waterfront Flooding Taskforce



In the fall of 2012, Mayor Shayne Gallo appointed the Kingston Waterfront Flooding Task Force. Mayor Gallo charged the Task Force with evaluating the present and future vulnerability to flooding, storm surge, and sea-level rise along the Rondout-Hudson waterfront. He asked the Task Force to recommend strategies for a resilient waterfront. The Task Force included waterfront and business property owners, representatives of cultural institutions, neighborhood residents, elected officials, City, and County staff. The Kingston Conservation Advisory

Council (CAC), Office for Economic Development, and Planning Department convened the Task Force. City environmental education staff were an integral part of the planning team and continue to play a vital role in this initiative.

The Task Force met seven times between December 2012 and July 2013. Participants at the large public kick-off meeting described their visions of a flood-resilient Kingston waterfront. The Task Force selected the following key themes from that vision to guide the process and ultimately the selection of final recommendations:

- ✓ Recognize waterfront history and preserve a sense of community and a “sense of place.”
- ✓ Promote a waterfront economy and economic revitalization.
- ✓ Prioritize health and safety.
- ✓ Use natural systems to reduce flood risk.
- ✓ Secure infrastructure.
- ✓ Promote the implementation of Kingston’s Climate Action Plan, including reduction of greenhouse gas emissions through green architecture.

The full report, meeting notes, resources and tools can be found at www.kingstoncac.org.

Goals/Vision for 2014

- Improve access to the Esopus Creek (no current access in the City limits), Hudson River and Rondout Creek in the City of Kingston
- Continue to educate the public on complex, environmental problems related to our local watersheds

- Continue to build community partnerships and represent the interests of the City in various working groups, grant projects and state level initiatives
- Continue work on Tidal Rondout Creek Watershed Management Plan for Kingston, Ulster and Esopus
- Work with the City's Office of Economic Development and Strategic Partnerships to further implement Tidal Waterfront Flooding Taskforce recommendations
- Increase City-wide storm water diversion through Green Infrastructure and Rain Barrel Education Programs
- Train additional City staff on use of GIS Equipment and continue to incorporate GIS technology into other City departments and systems
- Continue to ensure City staff research alternative storm water methods when faced with City infrastructure improvements and private development proposals



Community Service and Clean Ups



Kingston Clean Sweep and Riverkeeper Sweep

Working with the Friends of Historic Kingston, environmental education staff was able to bring together 200 volunteers to collect nearly four tons of litter and 15 tons of yard waste and debris from the Broadway Corridor as part of the Clean Sweep program in 2012 and 2013. The Friends of Historic Kingston partnered with over a dozen different community groups and local school children utilizing the Forsyth Nature Center's online program registration form to register volunteers for a variety of clean up locations. Additionally, staff led efforts to organize a cleanup at Kingston Point Beach, as part of Riverkeeper Sweep, where volunteers collected debris from the shorelines and wetlands around Kingston Point. Over two-dozen volunteers assisted in this effort.

Goals/Vision for 2014

- Continue to encourage participation and growth of the program
- 20+ groups join, 250+ participants
- Encourage more youth groups to join Kingston Clean Sweep Efforts

City of Kingston's Everett Hodge Midtown Community Center

In September of 2012, the Kingston Parks and Recreation assumed management responsibility of the Everett Hodge Midtown Community Center.

In addition to this new management responsibility came the opportunity to develop a comprehensive drop in afterschool program.

With Community Development Block Grant funding from the City of Kingston Office of Community Development, staff has been able to increase programming opportunities while also providing a wide range of services with a not for profit partner, Kingston Cares/Family of Woodstock.



Since the fall of 2012, over 140 youth have enrolled in the after school program and have had the opportunity to participate in a variety of indoor and outdoor educational and recreational experiences, many of which focus on environmental issues. Youth are given the opportunity to visit the Hudson River, Forsyth Nature Center, Bronx Zoo, Ice Skating and Roller Skating, Hike at Hasbrouck Park, and much more. Youth also help to care for animals that reside at the Everett Hodge Community Center.

The partnership has been a prime example of how not for profits and government can work together to create a positive program from Kingston's most at risk youth.



Hodge Center After School Program visit's Van Buren Street Park for Pumpkin Picking

Cornell Cooperative Extension Partnerships



Healthy Kingston for Kids

The City of Kingston has been in partnership with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County (CCEUC) to reverse the childhood obesity epidemic in Kingston through environmental and policy change, as part of a project funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. This initiative, with grant support of \$360,000 over four years (2010-2013), made strives towards: 1) making non-motorized transport accessible to children throughout the City for traveling to schools and parks, 2) proliferating community and school gardens and access to local produce, and 3) providing healthier snacks to children during the afterschool hours at school, in afterschool programs, and at school sports events.

In 2012 and 2013, the City's environmental education staff led the initiative's School and Community Garden Committee and participated in the Safe Routes to Schools/Parks Committee. 2013 marked the end of this grant but the beginning of Live Well Kingston, a City wide coalition led by the Mayor and supported by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County.

The Safe Routes Committee envisioned the Kingston City School District as a walkable and bikeable community for children on their way to school and to play. The committee took actions to 1) encourage more children to walk or bicycle to school and 2) diagnose barriers to safe routes in the school district and work with municipalities to fix them. In 2013, environmental education staff received a \$489,000 NYS DOT Safe Routes to Schools Grant which, when implemented through 2016, will allow for more than a dozen pedestrian improvements in and around schools in the City of Kingston.

The Garden Committee's primary objective was to proliferate community and school gardens throughout the City. In 2012 and 2013, the environmental educators worked with community members, parents, teachers, and youth to obtain access to resources for the construction and practical use of gardens and worked with garden stewards to successfully create community and school gardens. A clickable overview of the work is included within this report (See page 24).

Healthy Kingston for Kids
School and Community Garden Committee
2010-2013

Portfolio

School Gardens Support

- Generated a [Report on Barriers to Food Gardens on School Properties](#)
- Supported installment of 11 school gardens, including [meeting with school administrators, staff, volunteers](#); surveying [school garden resource needs](#); and helping to secure [outside funding for resources and supplies](#)
- Generated a [School Garden Impact Report](#)
- Worked with Kingston City School District to Adopt [School Garden language in Health and Wellness Policy](#)
- Supported transition of gardens from schools that were closing to the new respective schools

Community Gardens

- Assessed and [mapped](#) the suitability of [community gardens in City parks](#)
- Reported on the [interest of non-profit organizations](#) to install gardens on their properties
- Completed an [Assessment of Need for Food Gardens in the Kingston City School District](#), Based on Low Income Population Concentrations
- Reviewed a [food desert survey](#): a research project of HKK, Healthy Foods Task Force
- Created a [Community Garden Model Management Plan](#)
- Developed a [Community Garden Site Score Tool](#)
 - Created criteria to survey prospective community garden sites in the food deserts of Kingston
 - Established 10 criteria: Location, accessibility, soil condition, sun, fencing, visibility, lighting, slope, elevation, water
- Produced a Kingston Food [Garden Desert map](#)
- Created a [detailed map](#) of prospective community garden sites within Kingston's food deserts
- Toured prospective community garden sites in Kingston
- Identified an appropriate site in Kingston for a community garden
- Supported the installation of a [new community garden](#) (Thomas Chambers Garden) in front of a low-income housing complex

- Identified a garden steward for the [Thomas Chambers Garden](#)
- Created a [Garden Contract](#) and [Application](#)
- Created a [management plan for the garden](#)
- [Outreached to on-site community](#) members to solicit engagement
- Supported installment of 4 gardens at Kingston area non-profit organizations

Communications/Outreach

- Created a [Communication Plan](#)
- Conducted a survey of existing school and community gardens in Kingston
- Produced a [Google map of school and community gardens](#) in Kingston
- Compiled a comprehensive yearly schedule of [on-going garden grant opportunities](#)
- Hosted a [Kingston area Gardens Potluck Celebration](#), which launched into additional planning and networking
 - Acknowledged and issues certificates of participation and recognition to 34 area food gardens
- Created a garden network website (www.kingstoncitygardens.org)
 - Includes: How tos, Best practices, Local resources, Networking, Case studies, Interactive Google garden map, Logo
- Created a Kingston City [Gardens Transition Plan](#) for moving forward

Policy

- [Resolution supporting community gardening](#) passed by Common Council

Environmental Change

- Branched off into an additional working group: Healthy Foods Task Force, which addressed [access to healthy foods](#) in Kingston through farm markets, corner stores, etc.
- Coordinated with partners establishing other initiatives, such as the establishment of a [Farmer's Market in Midtown Kingston](#) at the former King's Inn site, and the [introduction of produce to neighborhood corner stores](#): Rondout Market and Cedar Street Deli

Creating Healthy Places to Live, Work and Play

Since 2011, the City of Kingston has partnered with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County, through a grant from the New York State Department of Health: Creating Healthy Places to Live, Work and Play (CHP), in a collaborative effort to reduce the occurrence of type 2 diabetes.

The CHP initiative is structured to effectuate policy, environmental and systems changes designed to improve the health and fitness of Ulster County residents. The underlying approach runs counter to traditional education methods, which attempt to persuade individuals to adopt personal lifestyle changes. For many people, such changes can be difficult to achieve because of lack of access to healthy foods and recreational opportunities and thus have been less effective in slowing the rate of obesity. The CHP initiative attempts to improve outcomes by enhancing access and implementing preventive health measures in local neighborhoods and communities, such as:

Developing and launching community initiatives to get residents to walk and bike more within safe streetscape environments; Supporting the proliferation of community gardens; Making it easier for residents to use parks via improved signage and online resources; Increasing healthy snacking and physical activity and decreasing screen time for youth in day and after school care centers; Working with restaurants and eateries to step-up efforts in posting nutrition information; Launching mobile farmers markets to reach communities with less access to fresh produce; Launching a county-wide media campaign focused on healthier food choices and portion sizes on restaurant menus, including greater access to nutritional information; Working with the media to educate residents about obesity and Type 2 diabetes prevention; and engaging county and community leadership to actively participate in and advocate for the project.

The initial target areas for this initiative have been the communities of Ellenville, Phoenicia, and the City of Kingston, in which successful practices are expected to be rolled out to other municipalities throughout Ulster County in successive years. The Co-lead agencies for this initiative are Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County and the Ulster County Department of Health. Key partners include the Community Heart Health Coalition of Ulster County, City of Kingston Parks and Recreation Department, Kingston Land Trust, Gilmour Planning and Healthy Kingston for Kids.



Projects that have been completed to date include: 1) replacement of park signage in all Kingston parks; 2) development of improved online access to the Park System including Kingstonparksandrec.org and the online registration gateway; 3) improved marketing of additional programs to get people to use the Kingston Park system; 4) creation of a new bilingual park brochure, program, guide and interactive mapping tool; 5) development of a Recreation Department online facility and program reservation form; and 6) development with Gilmour Planning, and subsequent adoption by the Kingston Common Council, of a new Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Goals/Vision for 2014

- Improve Park Trail Signage
- Install new Bike Racks/Benches throughout Park System
- Distribute additional promotional materials and increase advertising
- Continue advancements in getting more people outdoors



Professional Development

Environmental Education staff regularly attends meetings, workshops and conferences to further professional development and to keep up-to-date on regionally and locally relevant environmental issues. Staff also participates in various environmentally related committees, both locally and regionally. In 2012-2013, staff participated in:

Conferences

- NYS Conference on the Environment (2012 and 2013)
- Healthy Kids Healthy Communities Grant National Conference (2013)

Webinars/Workshops

- Climate Action Planning Webinar (2013)
- Revitalizing Hudson Riverfronts Workshop by Scenic Hudson and partners (2012)

Trainings/Certifications

- Commercial Driver's License Certification (Steve and Julie)

Boards/Committees

- Climate Smart Kingston (Julie Chair)
- Kingston Conservation Advisory Council (Julie Chair)
- Climate Smart Communities Certification Pilot Program Committee (Julie)
- Healthy Kingston for Kids Steering Committee (Steve and Julie)
- Healthy Kingston for Kids School and Community Garden Committee (Julie Chair)
- Healthy Kingston for Kids Safe Routes to Schools and Parks Committee (Steve)
- Creating Healthy Places to Live, Work and Play Committee (Steve)
- Live Well Kingston (Steve)
- Friends of Forsyth Nature Center (Julie)
- Comprehensive Plan Committee (Julie)
- Kingston Tidal Waterfront Flooding Task Force (Julie Planning team, Steve member)
- NYS Association of Conservation Commissions (Steve and Julie)
- NYS Association of Environmental Management Councils (Julie)
- Ulster County Environmental Management Council (Steve Chair)
- Kingston Land Trust (Steve)
- Hudson River Estuary Management Council (Steve)
- John Burrough's Natural History Society (Mark President)
- Kingston Tree Commission (Mark)

Kingston Environmental Program Press

2013 Newspaper coverage

[Hasbrouck Park to host Kingston Winterfest](#)

[Kingston nature center hosts a Friday that's green, not black](#)

[Kingston hosts Winterfest on Saturday - with or without snow \(video\)](#)

[Black Friday will take on green hue at Kingston's Forsyth Nature Center](#)

[Kingston Kayak Festival is Saturday \(video\)](#)

[Kingston's Winterfest 2013 set for Saturday \(video\)](#)

[Family fun at Forsyth Festival](#)

[Family Fun at 11th annual Forsyth Nature Center Fall Festival \(video\)](#)

[State hikes grant for city nature center](#)

[State hikes grant for Kingston nature center \(video\)](#)

[Kingston's Forsyth Nature Center hosts Fall Festival on Sunday](#)

[Kingston's Forsyth Nature Center to hold annual Fall Festival on Sunday](#)

[Photos: Forsyth Nature Center in Kingston](#)

[Kingston Farmers' Market to get visit from Forsyth Nature Center animals \(VIDEO\)](#)

[At Kingston zoo, a bit of Peru: Alpacas a big hit \(video\)](#)

[Kingston's Forsyth Nature Center improving security](#)

2013 Kingston Life articles

Forsyth Nature Center and Fall Festival – October 2013

Passport to Fun – July 2013

Summer in the Parks – June 2013

Maple Syrup Challenge – May 2013

Kingston Kayak Festival – May 2013

Kingston Clean Sweep – April 2013

2012 Newspaper coverage

[Kingston Kayak Festival this Saturday](#)

[Tapping for Sap \(photo\)](#)

[City surveys single-stream recyclers](#)

[City denies federal aid to YWCA](#)

[Respondents to Kingston survey favor single-stream recycling](#)

[Public Works leaders press for new trucks](#)

A Class Menagerie ~Daily Freeman, 10/1/12

On the Waterfront (photo) ~Daily Freeman, 5/31/12

Adapting to change ~Kingston Times, 5/3/12

Rail trails on the Run ~Kingston Times, 4/26/12

Kids' Almanac: Whistlepig love, Souper Bowl & looking handy in front of your kids

Grants

The City of Kingston environmental education staff develops, administers and implements various grant programs, which cover most salary and benefit related expenses for the two environmental education positions. In 2012 and 2013, the following grants/funding were sought and/or received:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1) NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, Historic Preservation – Zoos, Botanical Gardens and Aquarium Grant
Successful \$30,000</p> <p>2) Ulster County Youth Bureau – NYS OCFS – School and Public Environmental Education Programs
Successful \$22,000</p> <p>3) NYS DEC Estuary Program Grant – Storm water/Green Infrastructure
Successful \$60,000</p> <p>4) NYS DEC Recycling Education Grant
Successful \$43,472</p> <p>5) NYS DEC Recycling Bin Grant Single Stream Recycling Cans
Successful \$112,500</p> <p>6) NYS DOS Watershed Management Grant for Tidal Rondout Creek
Successful \$126,908</p> <p>7) NYS DOT– Safe Routes to Schools Grant
Successful \$489,000</p> <p>8) ALCOA Foundation –Rain Barrel and Porous Paver Demonstration Project
Successful \$15,000</p> | <p>9) Community Development Block Grant- Environmental Education Programs at Everette Hodge Community Center
Successful \$44,000</p> <p>10) NYS DEC Estuary Program Combined Sewer Outfall Monitoring Grant
Successful \$50,400</p> <p>11) NYS DEC Estuary Program Rondout Creek Fishing Pier Grant
Successful \$30,000</p> <p>12) NYS DEC Estuary Program Everette Hodge Center Education Classroom Grant
Successful \$10,000</p> <p>13) NYSERDA Climate Smart Communities Custom Service Strategy, VHB: Climate Action Plan Prioritization
Successful Technical Assistance</p> <p>14) Hudson River Improvement Fund, Fishing Access Grant
Applied \$10,000</p> <p>15) Water Quality Improvement Fund, Parking Lot Improvement Grant
Applied \$365,831</p> |
|---|---|

Partners in the Following Grant Programs in 2012 and 2013

- 1) Kingston City School District: Learn and Serve America Gardening Grant
\$13,000
- 2) Cornell Cooperative Extension: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation - Healthy Kingston for Kids
\$21,500
- 3) Cornell Cooperative Extension: NYS DOH - Creating Healthy Places to Work, Live and Play
\$40,000