



# Riverkeeper Strategic Plan - Outline

June 2011

## Riverkeeper Vision

**The Hudson River and the NYC Watershed are healthy ecosystems teeming with life. Residents and visitors care for and help protect these ecosystems, which provide safe drinking water and abundant opportunities for swimming, fishing, boating and other recreational activities.**



## Riverkeeper Mission

To protect the environmental, recreational and commercial integrity of the Hudson River and its tributaries, and safeguard the drinking water of nine million New York City and Hudson Valley residents.



# Organizational Values

- ***Riverkeeper stops the bad guys and helps the good guys:*** We believe in taking tough action against polluters *and* supporting sustainable business, development & energy practices. We are both watchdogs and problem solvers.
- ***Riverkeeper seeks to increase membership and major giving by treating supporters as partners:*** Riverkeeper invites its members to engage in grass-roots advocacy, call in pollution incidents, push elected officials to invest in the river and watershed, etc. Riverkeeper believes in cultivating deeper relationships with major donors as a first priority, and that giving will then follow.
- ***Riverkeeper covers the entire River and Watershed:*** Riverkeeper believes in taking effective action from one end of the Hudson River to the other and throughout the Watershed.
- ***Riverkeeper connects people to the Hudson:*** Riverkeeper wants to help people connect with and appreciate the river more deeply, to build a broader constituency and more public support for our waterways.
- ***Riverkeeper is a proactive, transparent and accountable organization.*** We take an analytical approach and work to achieve clearly-defined goals, but also are flexible enough to adjust to changing conditions, learn new best practices and respond to input from our members and partners.
- ***Riverkeeper values its staff.*** We believe in promoting an environment where staff are recognized for great work and can learn, grow and advance, individually and in collaboration with fellow staffers.

# Strategy: The Hudson River

*To reach our goal of a fishable, swimmable and boatable Hudson with abundant natural resources, Riverkeeper will employ the following strategies:*

- Riverkeeper will **protect fish and other aquatic life from destruction by power plant and industrial cooling water intakes**, through stronger regulations mandating use of best technology to reduce fish mortality by as much as 98%.
- **Riverkeeper will expand its campaign against storm-related “combined sewer overflows” [CSOs]**, the Hudson’s largest remaining water pollution problem, through a mix of traditional techniques & new “green infrastructure” projects.
- Riverkeeper will help **retire Indian Point, saving the lives of over a billion fish and other aquatic life each year and reducing the plant’s risk to human health and property**. In the process, Riverkeeper will help **foster a new State energy plan** relying on conservation, efficiency, and renewables as replacement power .
- Riverkeeper will aggressively patrol the Hudson, individually and with government partners, to **assure fuller enforcement of clean water and habitat protection laws**.
- Riverkeeper will press for the **full cleanup and sustainable, community-centered revitalization of contaminated sites** like Hudson River PCBs; Newtown Creek/Greenpoint, Gowanus Canal and Hastings/BP/ARCO. Riverkeeper will fight to assure that **riverfront development** is done at a manageable scale, following sustainable building techniques and providing for extensive public access to the river.
- **Riverkeeper will expand our water quality sampling program**, sharing its data with the public to help them understand where and when it’s safe to swim in the Hudson. Our data will also drive infrastructure improvements and more enforcement against polluters.
- Riverkeeper will seek to **mitigate the expected impacts of climate change**, which include increased flooding, storm surges, rising water tables, saltwater intrusion, and loss of wetlands and other ecosystems.



# Strategy: The Watershed

*To reach our goal of assuring that the New York City Watershed provides clean drinking water, abundant natural resources and recreational opportunities, Riverkeeper will employ the following strategies:*

- Riverkeeper will **fight to prevent fracking in the NYC Watershed** and assure that fracking elsewhere in the state does not occur at the expense of human health, clean drinking water or other natural resources.
- Riverkeeper will push for **full compliance with the 1997 Watershed Agreement** and its successor agreements, so that New York City drinking water continues to be among the best in the world and the City continues to respect the interests of both downstate water consumers and the upstate communities where supplies originate.
- **Riverkeeper will assure that stormwater is being managed to federal guidelines**, both within the watershed and by NYC within the reservoir system, to achieve healthier rivers, creeks and streams.
- Riverkeeper will **prevent new development from damaging wetlands and stream corridors**, destroying sensitive open space or promoting sprawl.
- Riverkeeper will more **aggressively patrol the Watershed**, individually and with community and government partners, to assure fuller enforcement of clean water and habitat protection laws.
- Riverkeeper will seek to **mitigate the expected impacts of climate change**, which include increased flooding, storm surge, loss of wetlands and other ecosystems and water shortages.

## Strategy: Development, Communications and Governance

- **Riverkeeper will become “locally owned” again**, by re-emphasizing membership building, grass-roots community organizing and cultivating local “Ambassadors.”
- **Riverkeeper will harness the power of the social network** to increase its public profile and drive mission success. Riverkeeper will be known widely and respected as an effective, no-nonsense defender of the Hudson and the NYC Watershed. Our social network contacts will not just follow us, but will actively support our casework, lobbying, fundraising and events.
- **Riverkeeper donors will give more, learn more, have more fun** and engage more deeply with us. Total donations and other core revenue will rise to meet new staffing, scientific research & education needs. The total number of annual givers to Riverkeeper will grow from 4,000 to 8,000, by 2016.
- **Riverkeeper will be led by a strong board-staff team**, engaging one another regularly not just at board meetings but in project-based work sessions, visits to local communities and other events.

# New Operational Tactics



## Hudson River & Watershed Programs

*Our work on behalf of the Hudson and Watershed falls into 10 distinct but interrelated campaigns. To increase our success in these campaigns, Riverkeeper will employ the following new operational tactics:*

- As a companion to litigation, Riverkeeper will **lobby more for stronger environmental laws and greater clean water investment**. We'll also allocate more resources to **promoting policy solutions** to problems like climate change, declining fish populations, sprawl and poor waterfront planning.
- **Riverkeeper will support community activists** who can help us develop new cases and bring in new members. Satellite offices in Kingston [opened in May 2011] and Brooklyn [planned for late 2011] will enable us to provide such support and broaden our geographic reach.

## Communications Program

*While Riverkeeper is the environmental NGO that more and more people turn to on clean water issues, there are still millions of New Yorkers who care about these issues but know nothing of our work. Here are the keys to better communications for Riverkeeper:*

- Riverkeeper will convert its more than 20,000 total facebook friends, twitter followers and email contacts into active members, campaign advocates and local ambassadors.
- Our water quality sampling program will be “Exhibit A” in our effort to make Riverkeeper’s work relevant to more people**. Local groups like the Friends of Sparkill Creek, which came into being because of our sampling work, will promote expanded water protection programs and greater support for Riverkeeper.
- We'll organize a plan for **events, publications and celebrations tied to our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary** in 2016.