



# Croton Watershed Clean Water Coalition



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## FROM YOUR NEW PRESIDENT

by Fay Muir

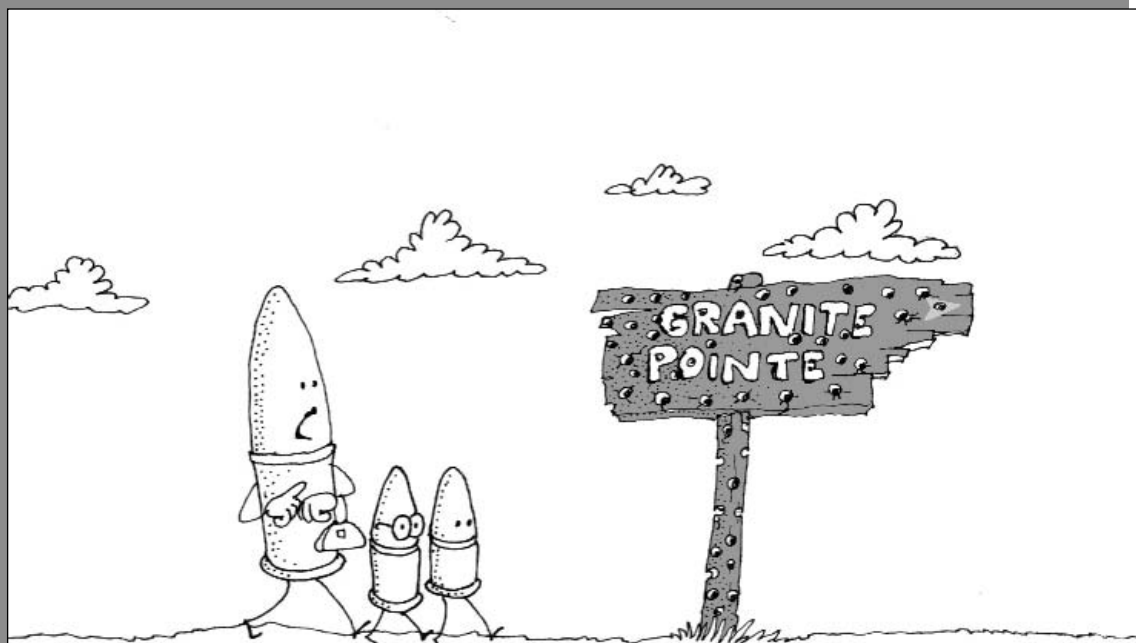
I am presented with the challenge and privilege of serving as successor to our founder, first president and much esteemed Marian Rose. Her vision and foresight brought the Coalition through tough times and now our voice, as champion of environmental conservation in the Croton Watershed, has total credibility. To live with sensitivity for the natural environment means better quality of life today and for future generations. We choose to build intergenerational and multicultural awareness and responsibility through personal reflection and organizational focus. It is a journey with many hurdles but together we travel forward in anticipation of success. Thank you for your confidence and support.



Trump golf courses which are now donated parkland, stopping the proposed diversion of sewage from Yorktown into the Hudson River and the legal victory ordering the preparation of a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement

(SEIS) for a proposed housing development known as "Meadows at Deans Corners." However, these come at a high monetary cost for consultants and legal services, and, therefore, our current emphasis needs to be fundraising. We will focus on funding for organization growth, outreach and education as well as services for achieving watershed protections. I feel certain our funding efforts will receive as much success as our issues have done so far. As we step into uncharted territory, the knowledge we have that we beat the odds in the past keeps us encouraged. Our best is yet to come.

Our Coalition's victories speak volumes. Among the most recent are two



"ALRIGHT KIDS, NOW I WANT YOU TO BE VERY RESPECTFUL AS WE ENTER OUR LARGEST LEAD CEMETERY"

# Update on Granite Pointe

by Olga Shamraj, PhD.  
CWCWC board member

The proposed Granite Pointe subdivision in Somers, NY on a Peninsula in the Amawalk Reservoir is located on property that is heavily contaminated with lead and other heavy metals. The proposal to build 23 single family homes on this 29-acre site at the intersection of Granite Springs Road and Tomahawk Street/Route 118 needs to be stopped. Not only is the property right on the Amawalk Reservoir which is phosphorus impaired and can be damaged by further development, but the lead and other metals from a former shooting range are dangerous contaminants. This property is owned by Suelain Realty of which, John Harkins, a local developer, is the spokesman.

In 2003, this proposed development was in the final stages of approval when local activists discovered that the property was the site of a former shooting range. The presence of high levels of lead on this property was confirmed in 2004. At that point, the Somers Planning Board rescinded the final subdivision plan approval and asked the developer to prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) to test for lead and other heavy metals as well as to detail a remediation plan. Results of tests by the developer's engineering firm as well as testing ordered by the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) on the Amawalk Reservoir buffer zone show high levels of lead which exceed NY state guidelines.

At this point, a "limited" written comment period for the SEIS has been extended to January 24, 2007 at the request of the Watershed Inspector General, Jim Tierney. Comments are still being accepted only from the NY Attorney General's office, the DEP, the NY DEC, the Westchester Country Department of Health (WCHD) and the NYS Department of Health.

On January 10, 2007, the Somers Planning Board determined that a Final

Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (FSEIS) will be required to deal with contamination and remediation issues. Once released, the public will have 30 days for comments on it. A critical issue which has not been determined is what regulations will apply should the property be remediated: 400 parts per million (ppm) lead based on NYS guideline for single family residential development or the more stringent 63 ppm lead "unrestricted" standard to protect ecological resources. DEP has stated that the more stringent standard should apply to both the developer's property and Amawalk Reservoir buffer zone. The developer has rejected that standard, pointing out that the Westchester County Department of Health (WCHD) and the New York State Department of Health (DOH) have made recommendations that the less

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stringent standard apply. If the property must be cleaned up, we need to make it clear that it must be cleaned up to the more stringent standard to protect the children who may live there in the future and be unknowingly exposed to the lead traces and to protect the Amawalk Reservoir's water supply.

Many citizens and environmental organizations have expressed concerns that remediation may do more harm than good. CWCWC thinks the most prudent course of action would be to preserve this property without remediation because this option poses the least risk to the reservoir and other ecological resources. The remediation itself endangers the environment because the contamination may be unintentionally transferred to the reservoir or adjacent properties. At the request of local residents, the Somers Town Board is currently considering acquisition of the property for preservation as open space and seeking acquisition partners. This effort is being conducted by the Somers Town Board and is completely separate from the Somers Planning Board's process.

# Executive Director's Report

By *Oreon Sandler*

Since our retreat last summer, I have been learning "the ropes" at CWCWC. To summarize these months, I must say that this organization is dynamite with regard to resisting some of the damage that is occurring in the watershed from irresponsible and excessive development. The time spent studying the many finite details of each and every project in this alarming situation is astounding. I am impressed with the tenacity that Marian and others have devoted to the material that developers and their professionals have presented to the public and to the lead agencies for each of their proposed projects. The work is tedious, intensive, and fulfilling. There are so many threats to the Croton watershed, I wonder how well we will do in the future without Marian's guidance. But the work goes on, and as Carl Schwartz recently said, there is hope. Thank you for the opportunity to join this staff and to carry on these projects.

## Radio interview

On Monday, January 8, 2007, I joined Marian Rose for an interview on WVOX radio by host Paul Feiner, Supervisor Town of Greenburgh. The interview provided an opportunity to cover a lot of details on the Croton Watershed Coalition mission, achievements, and activities. We responded to questions about why we are trying to protect Croton water, its importance to Greenburgh, and we got to emphasize what individuals could do to help us by joining our coalition and participating in our activities. We mentioned our website [www.NEWYORKWATER.ORG](http://www.NEWYORKWATER.ORG) twice. We talked about septic maintenance legislation that we are promoting with the League of Women Voters and FCWC, and the Intermunicipal Agreement (IMA) that we pursued with New Castle, Bedford and Mount Kisco that is affecting the Kisco River watershed. Three activist groups (CWCWC, Trout Unlimited Croton Chapter, and Federated Conservationists of Westchester County) developed this IMA concept and the three towns are cooperating on a watershed problem and its repair. We established a model that we hope to duplicate with other towns in the Croton watershed as these streams do not recognize town borders. We also mentioned other efforts in both Westchester and Putnam Counties to examine and realistically correct illicit storm water discharges as required improvements to meet the MS4s deadlines in April 2008. All municipalities must address stormwater issues. The comparison of the Croton to the Cat Del surface water systems led to the discussion on filtration avoidance for West-of-Hudson systems. Ironically, Riverkeeper is now trying to duplicate on West-of-Hudson watersheds what we already did in the Croton by getting Governor Pataki and the Army Corps of Engineers to designate the Croton as Critical Resource Waters. The interview was a success in getting CWCWC's mission broadcast over the radio waves.

## Adirondack Mountain Club invites CWCWC, 7:30 pm April 4th

We have been invited to present our video and message to the local ADK Club at the Westmoreland Sanctuary, a 625 acre nature preserve in Bedford. The Westmoreland Sanctuary has 8 miles of trails open to the public, a variety of organized activities, and environmental education programs for children and adults of all ages. The Adirondack Mountain Club is a membership organization that protects wild lands and waters through a balanced approach of conservation and advocacy, environmental education, and responsible recreation. ADK's mission is to represent all those who love wild places and to insure that those places are protected and accessible for generations to come. ADK offers a broad spectrum of educational and cultural programs designed to increase environmental awareness and appreciation while learning the skills and ethics for a rewarding outdoor experience. We hope to enlist the Bedford Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club into our coalition.



## Croton Watershed Corporation concept suggested by Bill Harding, Watershed Protection and Partnership Council (WPPC)

Bill Harding appeared before the Northern Westchester Watershed Committee (NWWC) in December suggesting that the WPPC and NYC DEP was considering an idea to recommend forming a Croton Watershed Corporation similar to the Catskill Watershed Corporation. The NWWC, by verbal vote, chose to explore this idea with the appropriate authorities and to resolve such a future plan by the next NWWC meeting. For background, the Catskill Watershed Corporation was established January 17, 1997 with the signing of the landmark New York City Watershed Memorandum of Agreement between city, state, federal and environmental entities, and local municipalities. It was funded by NYC DEP with the mission of community development, water

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## Executive Director's Report *(cont'd from page 3)*

quality protection, educating and helping homeowners in the Catskill watershed with new regulations and efforts to protect the Catskill surface water system. The Catskill Watershed Corporation was established as a Local Development Corporation to protect the water resources of the New York City Watershed West of the Hudson River (WOH); to preserve and strengthen communities located in the region; and to increase awareness and understanding of the importance of the NYC Water System. For background on the WPPC, it represents the broad-based diverse group of interests that share the common goal of protecting and enhancing the environmental integrity of the NYC Watershed and the social and economic vitality of the Watershed Communities on both sides of the Hudson River. The WPPC meets periodically to discuss concerns, ideas, information, and recommendations on Watershed protection and economic development issues. It serves as a dispute resolution forum and reviews implementation of the Watershed regulations, partnership programs and water protection milestones. West-of-Hudson WPPC representatives appointed by the CWC are on the 16-member WPPC Executive Committee and the 14-member Technical Advisory Committee which advises on scientific and technological developments in the field of water pollution control and Watershed protection. The WPPC, funded by the City and the State, is coordinated by the Department of State's Local Government Services office. William C. Harding is its Executive Director. Getting back to the idea of a Croton Watershed Corporation, some thought this might enhance the Croton watershed by bringing more attention to the problems of sprawl and urbanization, particularly in northern Westchester and eastern Putnam County. On the other hand, some had reservations that such a new corporation at this time might also become another unnecessary layer of government with another taxing authority that would become a burden to our property owners. We all were anxious to see what evolved.

At the January Northern Westchester Watershed Committee meeting, the concept shifted from calling it the CROTON WATERSHED CORPORATION to recommend a public benefit concept primarily dealing with Municipal Separate Stormwater Sewer Systems

(MS4s). They adopted a written statement titled SUPPORT FOR REGIONAL APPROACH TO STORMWATER MANAGEMENT which will be available if you call our office. Basically, the NWWC recommended to the NYS Department of State, the WPPC, and the NYS Attorney General's Office that these agencies explore the creation of a regional approach to stormwater management and provide details regarding appropriate structures that would allow such a regional approach to be implemented in the NYC watershed areas that would provide an expeditious solution to the ongoing stormwater management issues facing the region, and provide each municipality with the necessary tools for compliance with the existing and proposed stormwater regulations. Ironically, this is just about what the Westchester County Planning Department has been recommending for all these years to NWWC, but for whatever reason, they finally agreed to deal with stormwater remediation throughout their towns on a regional basis instead of by individual municipality. We will be reporting on this new effort as it takes shape to be a benefit to the Croton.

### **Westchester's Board of Legislators (BOL) suggests legislation on two Westchester County sewer issues:**

#### ***a. Consolidated expenses of all Westchester County sewer districts.***

This legislation was passed.

#### ***b. Homeowner cost relief for those who pay County Sewer Taxes but are not connected to County sewer systems.***

This is pending.

a. In the first case, the BOL has combined the expense side of the thirteen County sewer districts which will do two things: first, there will be some cost reduction with the bill paying consolidation and secondly, this will reduce the large differences in tax rates to some degree. Those in smaller and newer sewer districts have been paying substantially higher rates than those in the larger older sewer districts. Consolidating assets and capital programs was not done.

b. Legislation has been suggested for cost relief to Homeowners who pay sewer taxes but are on septic, not connected to the County's centralized sewers.

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## Executive Director's Report

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systems. The legislation before the BOL is suggesting that the County reimburse homeowners for their septic maintenance such as for the cost of septic tank pump outs, up to \$150 per year. This action would be an effort to compensate homeowners for paying annual sewer taxes for a service they don't have. The concept brings to light a serious problem with the County's system of charging homeowners for no service rendered. The number of homeowners in this category is not revealed but this cost relief seems justified, if not late.

In closing this Executive Director report, one more thing I hope we can do during this transition is to build an emphasis on developing CWCWC's relationships with educational institutions. We can do a better job of educating and informing our members, our stakeholders, and our communities how important our watershed protection has become.

## Yorktown Purchases Land for Open Space

**By Paul Moskowitz,  
CWCWC board member**

In 2006, the voters of the Town of Yorktown approved a \$5 million bond issue for open space purchases. The bond will be paid off by an open space tax of \$30 per lot that was previously approved by the voters, the New York State Legislature, and the Governor of New York. The per-lot tax results in \$400,000 per year for open space.

The first purchase made using \$1.25 million of the open space fund is an undeveloped property of 34 acres known as Solomon's Farm located in the northern part of Yorktown. The property may be used for a combination of passive and active recreation, including possible hiking trails and ball fields.

### CROTON WATERSHED CLEAN WATER COALITION 2007 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Olga Shamraj, PhD, Westchester County, NY

**Read about our attorney Jim Bacon's victory in Southeast on The Meadows at Deans Corner, on our website [www.newyorkwater.org](http://www.newyorkwater.org)**





**PLEASE JOIN US**

Through regional action, CWCWC is dedicated to protecting and improving the naturally-filtered, high-quality waters of the Croton watershed and providing alternatives to chemical treatment/filtration 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: \_\_\_\_\_

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|---|-----------|--|-----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Group/Coalition Membership | \$50/year | <input type="checkbox"/> Students/Seniors        | \$10/year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family Membership          | \$25/year | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                   | \$ _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Membership      | \$20/year | <input type="checkbox"/> Additional Contribution | \$ _____  |

Is this a Renewal or a New Membership? (Circle one)

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

Don Pachner, Treasurer, CWCWC, INC., 19 Rock Hill Road, Bedford NY 10506



**Our Water, Our Future**  
Croton Watershed Clean  
Water Coalition, Inc.  
9 Old Corner Road  
Bedford, N.Y. 10506

