

Hudson 7

Seven Campaigns and Key Actions

2020-2024

Safeguarding the Hudson River as a Drinking Water Source

Published March 19, 2025

A report compiled by Rebecca Martin, Source Water Protection Coordinator.

on behalf of www.hudson7.org

Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations.....	2
Foreword by Mayor Gary Bassett, Village of Rhinebeck Mayor and Chair, Hudson 7.....	3
1. The Formation of the Hudson River Drinking Water Intermunicipal Council (Hudson 7).....	4
2. Drinking Water Source Protection Program (DWSP2).....	8
3. Champlain Hudson Power Express (CHPE).....	11
4. Hudson River Anchorages.....	15
5. Turbidity from the Ashokan Reservoir releases to Lower Esopus Creek and impacts to the Hudson River.....	18
6. The Advancement of the Salt Front in the Hudson River Due to Climate Change.....	22
7. Central Hudson Manufactured Gas Plant (“MGP”).....	25

List of Abbreviations

Hudson 7	Hudson River Drinking Water Intermunicipal Council
DWSP2	Drinking Water Source Protection Plan
DEC	New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
NYSDOH	New York State Department of Health
NYC	New York City
PFAS	Per-and polyfluoroalkyl substance
CHPE	Champlain Hudson Power Express
EM&CP	Environmental Management & Construction Plan
TDI	Transmission Developers, Inc.
RNAs	Regulated Navigation Areas
MSIB	Marine Safety Information Bulletin
NYC DEP	New York City Department of Environmental Protection
DEIS	Draft Environmental Impact Statement
SEQR	State Environmental Quality Review Act
ARWG	Ashokan Release Work Group
HREMAC	Hudson River Estuary Management Advisory Council
USGS	United State Geological Survey
MGP	Manufactured Gas Plant
PWTF	Poughkeepsies' Water Treatment Facility

Foreword by **Mayor Gary Bassett**, Village of Rhinebeck Mayor
and Chair, Hudson River Drinking Water Intermunicipal Council (Hudson 7)

As Mayor of the Village of Rhinebeck and a founding member and Chair of the Hudson 7, I'm proud to share our ongoing efforts to protect the Hudson River as a vital drinking water source for our communities.

The Hudson 7 is the first intermunicipal council of its kind in the region, setting a new standard for collaboration in safeguarding this critical resource. As part of this work, we've developed *Seven Campaigns and Key Actions 2020-2024*, a report outlining our approach to addressing seven priority issues that are essential to the river's health and the well-being of the communities that rely on it.

This document reflects years of collaboration and significant progress. I encourage you to explore the report and join us in ensuring the Hudson River remains a clean, safe water source for generations to come.

[TOP](#)

1. The Formation of the Hudson River Drinking Water Intermunicipal Council (Hudson 7)

AT A GLANCE: The Hudson 7 is the first intermunicipal council of its kind in the history of the Hudson River. Its work has resulted in a paradigm shift, making drinking water protection a high priority in decision-making at all levels of government.

The Hudson River Drinking Water Intermunicipal Council (Hudson 7) is a collaboration of the mid-Hudson municipalities and counties that draw drinking water from the Hudson River Estuary. More than 100,000 people in the Town of Esopus, Town of Hyde Park, Town of Lloyd, Town and City of Poughkeepsie, Town and Village of Rhinebeck located in Dutchess and Ulster Counties rely on this water source. These communities are served by five drinking water treatment plants that utilize Hudson River water, operated by the City and Town of Poughkeepsie, Village of Rhinebeck (for the Village and Town of Rhinebeck), Town of Esopus, Town of Lloyd and Dutchess County Water and Wastewater Authority (for Hyde Park).

The goal of the Hudson 7 is to ensure a reliable, clean water supply from the Hudson River, safeguard the water source from pollution, and address regional water management challenges, such as water quality protection, sustainability, and emergency preparedness. The partnership also aims to advocate for policies that preserve the river's health and ensure safe drinking water for all communities involved.

1. The Hudson 7 is the first intermunicipal council of its kind in the history of the Hudson River. It provides attention and advocacy to

ensure that water protection is a primary goal, amid competing uses of the Hudson River. Its work has resulted in a paradigm shift, making drinking water protection a high priority in decision-making at all levels of government.

2. The concept was the brainchild of the Village of Rhinebeck Mayor Gary Bassett and Riverkeeper's Dan Shapley. At a meeting on the banks of the Rondout Creek, they decided to **reach out to each of the other communities that rely on the Hudson River** as a drinking water source, and develop a platform that would encourage a collaboration between the five drinking water treatment plants and the communities they serve.

3. The first organizational meeting of the Hudson 7 took place on July 10, 2017 with Mayor Gary Bassett (Village of Rhinebeck), Plant Administrator Randy Alstadt, (PWTF), Supervisor Elizabeth Spinzia (Town of Rhinebeck), Supervisor Diane McCord (Town of Esopus), Supervisor-elect Shannon Harris (Town of Esopus), Water and Sewer Superintendent Don Kiernan (Town of Esopus), Town Board member Bill Carlos (Town of Poughkeepsie), Supervisor Jay Baisley (Town of Poughkeepsie), Neil Curri (Town of Lloyd Environmental Conservation Council), Town Board member and Deputy Supervisor Emily Svenson (Town of Hyde Park) and Dan Shapley and Rebecca Martin (Riverkeeper).

4. An informal collaboration began with Riverkeeper to [**produce a report**](#) using Riverkeeper's "Drinking Source Water Protection Scorecard" to develop recommendations. That report, authored by the Center for Watershed Protection and commissioned by Riverkeeper with funding from the Park Foundation, was released in February, 2018. Forming an Intermunicipal Council was among the top recommendations of the report, with a focus for the long term protection of the Hudson River as a drinking water source.

5. The Hudson 7 intermunicipal council representing the seven municipalities that draw drinking water from the Hudson River was officially formed on May 31, 2018 when all seven municipalities gathered to sign an [**Intermunicipal Agreement**](#) and [**Bylaws**](#) with a [**ceremony at Marist College's historic Cornell Boathouse on the banks of the river in Poughkeepsie**](#). The Hudson 7 has [**met monthly**](#) at the [**Poughkeepsie Water Treatment Facility**](#) (PWTF) located on the Marist College campus and on zoom ever since.

6. Five years later in 2023, a new [**Memorandum of Agreement \(Amendment #1\) dated 2/7/23**](#) included membership of both Ulster and Dutchess Counties, bringing the council to nine voting members.

7. The Hudson 7 shares all of its agendas, minutes, key source materials and video from its monthly meetings located on its [**website under the meetings page tab**](#). [**Notable press**](#) is also available. The Hudson 7 keeps track of all of its important work in a living [**motions**](#)

[document](#). This public facing document maintains the council's history and makes it easy for the public to review every motions that the council has put forward since it began meeting in 2018.

[TOP](#)

2. Drinking Water Source Protection Program (DWSP2)

AT A GLANCE: The Hudson 7 has worked with a New York State program to draft the first-ever Drinking Water Source Protection Plan for the Hudson River. The plan identifies strategies to address six priority issues:

1. Emergency Notification System / Update Emergency Response Plans
2. Pilot Source Water Monitoring / Research Agenda
3. Education and Outreach
4. Watershed Management
5. Utility Coordination and Shared Services
6. Interagency Coordination to Align State and Federal Policies

The state is reviewing the draft, and approval is anticipated in 2025. Each of the other issues described in this document are addressed through the interagency coordination and policy alignment identified by the sixth priority issue.

The Drinking Water Source Protection Program (DWSP2), launched by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and NYS Department of Health (NYSDOH) in 2018, provides free technical support to help municipalities protect drinking water through locally driven, state-supported efforts. The program provides tools for updating risk assessments, identifying vulnerabilities, and addressing threats such as land use changes, climate impacts, and industrial activities.

For the Hudson 7, the DWSP2 Source Water Assessment and Protection Plan builds on past efforts, including [Riverkeeper's Drinking Water Source Protection Scorecard](#). It provides a structured, collaborative opportunity to address local water quality concerns and advance environmental

stewardship, ensuring the long-term sustainability of the Hudson River as a drinking water source.

1. In 2019, the Hudson 7 communities, with support from Tighe & Bond and sponsorship by the Town of Esopus, submitted an application for the DWSP2 program. The application, developed collaboratively by the City and Town of Poughkeepsie, Village and Town of Rhinebeck, Town of Hyde Park, Town of Esopus, and Town of Lloyd, was designed to guide the creation of a source water protection plan for the Hudson 7.
2. On [May 3, 2021](#) all five of the Hudson 7 communities with drinking water intakes were selected to participate in the DWSP2 program by the DEC.
3. On [May 20, 2021](#) the Hudson 7 established a DWSP2 committee to take on drafting a first-of-its-kind protection plan for the river.
4. Although treated Hudson River meets state and federal drinking water standards for regulated contaminants, ongoing challenges could affect water quality. With technical assistance from the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH), the Hudson 7 has identified several concerns, including: climate impacts (salt front, sea level rise and storm surges on critical infrastructure), legacy industrial contaminants (e.g., PCBs and coal tar), combined sewer overflows, the risk of industrial shipping spills, disinfection byproducts, turbidity

and sediment from New York City's (NYC) Ashokan Reservoir, invasive species, emerging contaminants and unregulated chemicals such as Per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and pharmaceuticals and leachate from both active and inactive landfills.

5. On [**August 26, 2021**](#), a kick off presentation of the DWSP2 program process was presented by Grant Jiang, Drinking Water Specialist for the New York State Source Water Assessment and Protection Program.

6. In December of 2024, the [**Hudson 7 submitted its draft DWSP2 plan to New York State for their review and approval in 2025**](#). The Hudson 7's DWSP2 committee developed an information packet to share with Hudson 7 municipalities, counties and the public more broadly.

7. In 2025, the Hudson 7 will provide presentations to municipalities and counties on the DWSP2 plan.

[**TOP**](#)

3. Champlain Hudson Power Express (CHPE)

AT A GLANCE: The Hudson 7 worked proactively to establish a series of protection measures that ensured the installation of TDI's CHPE transmission cable did not impact Hudson River drinking water quality.

Transmission Developers Inc.'s (TDI) Champlain Hudson Power Express (CHPE) project had been permitted years before the formation of the Hudson 7. The project involves burying an electric cable in parts of the Hudson River, including in the vicinity of the Hudson 7's water intakes. The Hudson 7 was concerned that the method used to install the cable could mobilize contaminants in Hudson River sediments, fouling intakes. The Hudson 7 played a proactive role in the CHPE project, advocating for the protection of drinking water sources. When concerns arose about the proposed transmission cable's proximity to the Hudson 7's water intakes and the potential risks from jet-plowing technology, [the council worked with technical advisors to push for additional pilot studies of the jet-plow technology's impact on water quality so the Hudson 7 could advocate for needed safeguards based on a data-based understanding of the risks](#). These efforts led to an adjusted cable route, moving it farther from the intakes to mitigate risks, as well as a range of monitoring and procedures to minimize risks.

While the studies concluded that construction would not jeopardize the Hudson River as a drinking water source, the Hudson 7 stayed involved

throughout the Environmental Management & Construction Plan (EM&CP) process, focusing on critical segments (19A and 19B). This ongoing advocacy highlights their commitment to ensuring water quality for their communities.

For a deeper dive into the series of actions and negotiations, the Hudson 7's blog post titled, [A timeline of events: Hudson 7 and the Champlain Hudson Power Express \(CHPE\) Transmission Cable](#) offers a comprehensive overview.

1. In [November, 2020](#) the Hudson 7 sent a letter to the Public Service Commission (PSC) and relevant state agencies, raising immediate concerns about the in-river (or “submarine”) CHPE cable project and emphasizing the need for coordinated action.
2. On [January 21, 2021](#), Transmission Developers Inc. (TDI), the developer of the CHPE project, gave a presentation at a full Hudson 7 council meeting to address the council’s questions about the project.
3. On [February 25, 2021](#), the Hudson 7 held a special public workshop on the CHPE project, focusing specifically on its impact on drinking water.
4. The Hudson 7 established a CHPE Committee on [March 18, 2021](#). In April, the following members were appointed to serve: Mayor Gary Bassett (Village of Rhinebeck), Town Board member Bill Carlos (Town of Poughkeepsie), Emily Svenson (Technical Advisor, Land Use),

Randy Alstadt (City of Poughkeepsie), Paul Malmrose (Technical Advisor, Engineering), Dan Shapley (Technical Advisor, General) and Shannon Harris (Town of Esopus).

5. On [January 22, 2022](#), the Hudson 7 presented Transmission Developers Inc. (TDI) with its "Proposed Testing & Monitoring Protocols for Cable Installation near Drinking Water Intakes" — a pilot study developed by Hudson 7 Technical Advisors Paul Malmrose and Randy Alstadt. As a result, [the cable's distance from the drinking water intakes was significantly increased](#), providing greater protection for the water supply.

6. On September 9, 2022, TDI conducted pilot testing near Chelsea, in the southern part of Town of Poughkeepsie, to assess the impacts of jet plowing. This test was designed to be a safe, reliable method for evaluating the potential impacts of the jet plow without posing any risk to or inconveniencing the operation of a public water system. The test site was selected because available sediment and contaminant data indicate it closely represents conditions at the Hudson 7 water treatment plants.

7. On [May 13, 2024](#), the Hudson 7 successfully submitted public comments to improve conditions for both the EM&CP for 19A and B, with contributions from Technical Advisor Paul Malmrose, Technical Advisor Dan Shapley, and Source Water Protection Coordinator Rebecca Martin. This resulted in further testing and notifications to

water plant operators whenever the CHPE cable was being installed near the Hudson 7 drinking water intakes, upon request. [TOP](#)

4. Hudson River Anchorages

AT A GLANCE: Industrial vessels that use the Hudson River, including those carrying hazardous cargoes, may anchor according to rules established by the Coast Guard. Potential spills are an ongoing concern for the Hudson 7, as is the potential for anchors to damage intake structures. The council is monitoring the shifting rules that govern where industrial ships can anchor, in order to reduce the risk of spills and protect intake structures.

In 2023, the Hudson 7 raised concerns about the Coast Guard's proposed redefinition of the Port of New York, particularly the risks to drinking water sources and the environment in the Hudson River estuary. They identified two key threats: the potential damage to intake pipes on the riverbed from unrestricted vessel anchoring north of the Cuomo Bridge, and the risk of hazardous material spills from vessels carrying diesel fuel or heating oil. Such spills could spread with tidal movements, threatening clean drinking water for the seven Hudson 7 communities. In response, the Hudson 7 advocated for Regulated Navigation Areas (RNAs) to limit or prohibit anchoring in sensitive zones. This advocacy has sparked continued discussions about Area Contingency Planning and Spill Drills, prioritizing spill response strategies to protect local water resources.

1. Recognizing the importance of the upcoming Coast Guard announcement, the Hudson 7 hosted a crucial presentation on [June 15, 2023](#), with Lieutenant Commander Singletary and Commander Dan McQuate from the Coast Guard Sector New York Prevention Department. The session provided key insights into a proposed rule

change and their potential impact on the Hudson River. Following the presentation, the Hudson 7 formed an Anchorage Committee to evaluate the proposed changes, assess their effects on drinking water intakes and community safety, and develop a coordinated response strategy.

2. On [July 11, 2023](#), the Hudson 7 requested Regulated Navigation Area (RNA) process information from First Coast Guard District Staff Attorney JD Lavallee.
3. On [July 20, 2023](#) the Hudson 7 invited Captain John Lipscomb of Riverkeeper to serve as a technical advisor on the Hudson 7 Anchorage Committee.
4. On [July 25, 2023](#), the Coast Guard issued the Marine Safety Information Bulletin (“MSIB”) 2023-001, that would allow vessels to anchor virtually anywhere north of the Governor Mario M. Cuomo Bridge.
5. [September 19, 2023](#), Riverkeeper contends that the Coast Guard bulletin was issued unlawfully, without the necessary environmental studies.
6. On [November 9, 2023](#), Congressmen Ryan, Molinaro, and Lawler introduced the Hudson River Protection Act. Shortly after on [November 13](#), the U.S. Coast Guard rescinded a policy that would

have posed significant risk to endangered species and drinking water sources and announced a public participation process.

7. On [May 15, 2024](#) the Hudson River Protection Act, which permanently bans the creation of additional anchorages between Yonkers and Kingston passes the House of Representatives and heads to the Senate.

[TOP](#)

5. Turbidity from the Ashokan Reservoir releases to Lower Esopus Creek and impacts to the Hudson River.

AT A GLANCE: Recognizing that excess turbidity discharged from NYC’s Ashokan Reservoir could increase the cost of treatment at Hudson 7 plants, the Hudson 7 advocated for its concerns to be addressed in a supplemental Environmental Impact Study. The Hudson 7 also gained a seat on the Ashokan Release Working Group to ensure it is a part of ongoing discussions. In 2024, New York City announced a new interim release protocol that is meant to prevent the release of highly turbid water. The Hudson 7 will continue to engage on the issue to ensure the interim protocol is successfully implemented, and ultimately made enforceable through inclusion in NYC’s permit.

For over a decade, the NYC Department of Environmental Protection’s (NYC DEP) discharges of highly turbid (muddy) water from the Ashokan Reservoir into the Lower Esopus Creek has raised significant environmental and community concerns. High-volume releases, like those following the 2020 Christmas storm, left the creek silted and muddy for months. The Ashokan Reservoir, a critical part of NYC’s water supply, experiences persistent turbidity due to storm-induced erosion—an issue exacerbated by climate change. To protect NYC’s water quality, turbid water is released into the 32-mile Lower Esopus Creek, shifting the burden downstream and severely impacting farmers, residents, businesses, wildlife, and recreational areas. These discharges also affect the Hudson River, a primary drinking water source for communities like the Hudson 7. The Hudson 7 has been concerned that their increased costs to filter excess turbidity were not

accounted for. Addressing this problem requires collaboration to balance NYC's water needs with the health of downstream ecosystems and communities. For a longer history, please see the [Ashokan Reservoir/Lower Esopus Creek Timeline](#).

1. On [December 14, 2020](#), the DEC announced a public hearing and comment period for the draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) related to the Ashokan Reservoir Catalum Permit under the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) process. Just days later, on Christmas Day, an 11-year flood occurred. Four days after that, on December 28, 2020, the NYC DEP began releasing clay-filled water into the Lower Esopus Creek, covering the entire 34-mile stretch from the Ashokan Reservoir to the Hudson River. These muddy discharges continued intermittently for four months, from December 28, 2020 to February 12, 2021, and again from March 10, 2021 to April 17, 2021.
2. During the four months of discharges following the Christmas 2020 storm, the Hudson 7 estimated that New York City released approximately 8,240,000 pounds (4,120 tons) of solids into the Lower Esopus Creek, equivalent to 294 dump truck loads (14 tons per load). While Hudson River treatment plants are designed to filter natural turbidity, which fluctuates due to factors like precipitation and runoff, the added turbidity from these discharges increased treatment costs. These costs include chemical additives, electricity, and sludge disposal. Compared to previous years, Hudson River

treatment plants experienced significantly higher treatment costs due to the NYC DEP's releases of turbid water following the storm.

3. On [**February 18, 2021**](#), Hudson 7 Technical Advisor Paul Malmrose (Engineering) raised concerns about the ongoing muddy releases from the Ashokan Reservoir and their impact on the Hudson River as a primary drinking water source. In response, the Hudson 7 formed the Lower Esopus Creek Committee in April, which continues to meet today.
4. On [**May 20, 2021**](#), the Hudson 7 passed a resolution outlining the negative impacts of turbid water releases from the Ashokan Reservoir into the Lower Esopus Creek, and subsequently into the Hudson River and local drinking water sources. This resolution authorized the council to communicate these water quality concerns. On June 16, 2021, Paul Malmrose was approved to represent the Hudson 7 on the Ashokan Release Work Group (ARWG).
5. On [**June 1, 2021**](#), the Hudson 7 submitted a comment letter to the DEC during the public comment period, expressing serious concerns about the impacts of turbid water releases and the effects of climate change on water quality in the mid-Hudson River, which serves as a critical drinking water source.
6. On [**February 9, 2022**](#), the DEC issued a decision on the SEQR process requiring a supplemental DEIS for the Ashokan Reservoir

Water Release Protocol. This decision mandates a comprehensive examination of the impacts of reservoir water releases on the Hudson River drinking water supply, a measure strongly influenced by the Hudson 7's advocacy.

7. On [July 1, 2024](#), DEC and NYC DEP announced a plan to limit muddy water releases from Ashokan Reservoir and enhance flood protections for the Lower Esopus Creek. This new plan represents a significant win for the Lower Esopus, the Hudson River, and the Hudson 7. It will help to mitigate the environmental impacts caused by muddy water releases from the Ashokan Reservoir while improving flood protections for the Lower Esopus Creek. This decision addresses ongoing concerns about water quality and ensures better management of reservoir releases, benefiting both local ecosystems and drinking water sources for Hudson 7 communities. The Hudson 7 will continue to monitor the situation to ensure the plan is effectively implemented, and that it is ultimately incorporated into NYC DEP's relevant DEC permit.

[TOP](#)

6. The Advancement of the Salt Front in the Hudson River Due to Climate Change

AT A GLANCE: As an estuary, the Hudson River is influenced by salt water from the Atlantic Ocean. While the Hudson 7 draws water from the freshwater portion of the river, occasional droughts result in higher salinities in drinking water, and sea-level rise will result in saltier water influencing the river farther north. The Hudson 7 has successfully advocated for a state-sponsored study of how sea-level rise will influence the “salt front”, and it will review the results of the study to identify any actions needed to proactively prepare.

The Hudson River is vulnerable to changes in salinity due to climate change and rising sea levels. The salt front, where fresh and saltwater meet, is moving north, which threatens drinking water intakes for communities in the Hudson 7. A key project is underway to study how this salt front could impact drinking water supplies over the next 50 years. The goal is to determine how often the salt front could reach water intakes and create a plan to either prevent saltwater from entering or treat the water. Recent events, like higher salinity levels at the Poughkeepsie and Chelsea Pumping Stations, show how urgent the issue is. Since solutions could take up to 25 years to put in place, delays could jeopardize drinking water. A \$500,000 investment will fund the necessary studies to protect the drinking water for millions of people in the Hudson Valley and New York City, ensuring a secure water supply for the future.

1. In the summers of 2019 and 2020, the mid-Hudson Valley experienced droughts, which caused the salt front in the Hudson

River to move further north, reaching as far as Poughkeepsie. This shift led to a "salt front episode", where sodium concentrations in the water spiked to 100 milligrams per liter—five times higher than the recommended limit for people on low-sodium diets.

2. On [April 15, 2021](#), Hudson 7's Technical Advisor for Engineering, Paul Malmrose, raised critical concerns about the impact of climate change on the salt front and its potential threats to drinking water supplies. His insights underscored the urgent need for proactive strategies to protect water quality as environmental conditions continue to change.
3. On [February 23, 2022](#), the Hudson 7 urged the state to create an action plan to prevent salt intrusion into the drinking water supplies of its communities. With support from Riverkeeper, the Hudson 7 submitted [testimony](#) during the Joint Legislative Public Hearing for the Executive Budget Proposal (Environmental Conservation). In their testimony, they recommended allocating \$400,000 to study the advancement of the salt front in the Hudson River due to climate change.
4. On [October 22, 2022](#), Paul Malmrose organized a series of meetings to discuss this problem further on [January 28, 2022](#); April 8, 2022 (DEC and DOH); May 18, 2022 and September 28, 2022 (that focused on developing a scope for a hydraulic model, assessing the effects on habitat, and conducting an engineering study to treat

saltwater).

5. On April 20, 2023, Hudson 7 Technical Advisor (Land Use), Emily Svenson, attended the Hudson River Estuary Management Advisory Council (HREMAC) meeting on behalf of the Hudson 7. During the meeting, the DEC reported that it was collaborating with the United States Geological Survey (USGS) on a scope of work to study the salt front. This project is expected to span 2-3 years.
6. On [November 15, 2023](#) the DEC notified the Hudson 7 that they had approved a \$500,000 scope of work to begin evaluating the salt front. The hydraulic study will assess the potential movement of the salt front over the next 50 years. [The deadline for the Salt Front Hydraulic Model Scope for Stakeholder Vetting ended on 12/13/23.](#)
7. In 2024, the DEC worked to finalize a funding mechanism and contract with the [USGS to begin evaluating the advancement of the salt front in the Hudson River](#). The project is scheduled to start in 2025 and end in September, 2027, representing a key step in protecting drinking water supplies from the impacts of climate change.

[TOP](#)

7. Central Hudson Manufactured Gas Plant (“MGP”)

AT A GLANCE: The Hudson 7 worked with PWTF to raise concerns about the plans to remediate extensive coal tar contamination found near Poughkeepsie, given the potential for mobilization of contaminants during the project. NYS DEC and Central Hudson are developing engineering plans with the goal of removing the contamination with methods that will not put drinking water at risk.

Central Hudson is responsible for a multi-year remediation project under the oversight of NYS DEC to clean up extensive coal tar residues left by a former manufactured gas plant (MGP) that operated on Poughkeepsie’s riverfront from 1911 to the 1950s. These plants provided gas for lighting and heating but were decommissioned as natural gas systems became more widespread. The cleanup is being overseen by the DEC and NYSDOH. Central Hudson has completed the first phase, which focused on removing contaminants from the shoreline of the former plant site. The next phase will address the remaining residues in the river sediment, an essential step to reduce environmental and public health risks.

1. In December of 2018, as work commenced on the then-approved remediation plan, a sheen from coal tar, disturbed during initial site work known as "sheeting," reached Poughkeepsie’s drinking water intakes. Riverkeeper promptly notified the DEC and the local water treatment plants about the potential contamination. In response, Central Hudson reported the incident as a “minor” release. This event raised concerns about the impact of contaminants on drinking water quality and prompted further scrutiny and monitoring of the site’s remediation efforts.

2. In May 2019, Central Hudson announced a dye test to investigate potential migration of coal tar contamination from a former gas plant site in Poughkeepsie to the Hudson River water intakes. The test raised concerns, prompting the City of Poughkeepsie to hire Dr. Chant, an environmental expert, to review the plan. Dr. Chant identified several flaws in the test's methodology and scope, calling for a more comprehensive and scientifically sound approach to ensure the safety of local drinking water.
3. In August 2019, Central Hudson's dye test results faced objections from Poughkeepsie and the Hudson 7 due to concerns about the study design and proposed dredging plans. In response, Central Hudson revised its approach, adding a "moon pool" to improve water intake protections. The Hudson 7 threatened a press conference on October 1st to address these concerns. In November, Central Hudson announced a second dye test as part of its ongoing efforts to protect drinking water.
4. In May 2020, Randy Alstadt of Poughkeepsies' Water Treatment Facilities (PWTF) reported that Central Hudson informed them the "moon pool" approach had failed. They proposed switching to hydraulic dredging, which would require extensive water treatment and engineering. For 2020, Central Hudson planned only pilot work and planning, postponing full dredging efforts.
5. On June 18, 2020, Randy Alstadt reported that Central Hudson abandoned the clam dredging method due to the failure of the moon

pool. After two weeks of material testing, they planned to resume work in September. The DEC recommended either vacuum dredging or relocating. Bill Carlos, Town of Poughkeepsie board member and founding member of the Hudson 7, praised the council for suggesting hydraulic dredging, which Central Hudson adopted. Randy also noted they planned to purchase equipment, aiming for operations by August.

6. In July 2020, Central Hudson outlined plans for hydraulic dredging to protect water supplies, with pilot tests scheduled by September. Unlike clamshell dredging, this method uses geobags for water treatment. The project would dredge seven acres over four years, removing up to seven feet of material. Randy Alstadt highlighted the need for better transparency from the DEC, which had received updates but hadn't shared details with the group. Later, Central Hudson [provided an overview](#) to the Hudson 7 of the project's [regulatory and pilot test status](#).

7. Central Hudson MGP Remediation Summary (2018-2024)

- a. 2018-2019: A sheen from coal tar reached Poughkeepsie's drinking water intakes, prompting concern. Central Hudson proposed a dye test to track contamination, which was criticized for its design.
- b. 2019-2020: After objections, Central Hudson revised its approach, opting for hydraulic dredging, suggested by Hudson 7. Dredging tests began in late 2020, but the process faced

challenges, including the appearance of sheens and slow progress due to debris in the riverbed.

- c. 2021: Central Hudson confirmed that large-scale dredging wasn't feasible, and no in-water work would occur. The focus shifted to [alternative methods](#) like removal and capping. A pilot study for Air Bubble Curtain technology was introduced to protect water quality during remediation.
- d. 2022-2023: Central Hudson continued redesign the cleanup plan and conducted additional tests. In 2023, new NYSDEC personnel took over oversight of the project, and the DEC considered alternatives that it anticipated providing for public review in late 2024. .
- e. 2024: Hudson 7 was informed in October that DEC will require Central Hudson to gather new data about the extent of contamination in river sediments, so that a new set of remediation alternatives can be developed based on fresh information.
- f. Ongoing Efforts: The Hudson 7 remains actively involved in ensuring water safety, collaborating with Central Hudson, DEC, and other stakeholders throughout the ongoing remediation process.

[TOP](#)