



Water Innovation Network of the Hudson Valley

The Water Innovation Network of the Hudson Valley (WIN-HV) is a hub and organizing platform for people who are involved in protecting and restoring water resources and want to develop new action strategies through creative partnerships.

Background: Why We Exist

The Hudson Valley is home to world class expertise in water resource management. The region's accomplishments range from the New York City Watershed Agreement to keep upstate source waters clean, to the cleanup of PCBs in the Hudson and restoration of the river and shorelines' environment. Expert organizations like Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory work side by side with powerful grassroots movements such as Riverkeeper and Clearwater, in a way that visibly gets things done.

Today, these experts and organizations are called to address new challenges. How will we replace enormous amounts of aging water infrastructure? How are we going to protect people and nature from stresses on our waters in a changing climate? How can we make sure our water is safe from emerging pollutants?

We believe that these challenges will only be met by developing new partnerships and strategies. WIN-HV has come together to advance new partnerships that will support and enhance the important work underway. Specifically, WIN-HV is based on four premises:

- Water stewardship needs more **public-private partnerships**, in order to engage private capital in major projects, and even more to develop

innovative financing and business models to meet new water challenges cost-effectively.

- There's also a need for more sophisticated, ongoing **community partnerships**, to help people use water more wisely where they live and work.
- Water has been misunderstood by too many people, as a cheap, easy to access resource that comes into our lives and goes "away" to be recycled by Mother Nature. But those cycles have been disrupted by people's footprint on the planet, increasing the risks from storms, floods, droughts and unexpected sources of water pollution. Now people need to redesign our systems of using water, as a culture, so that water is valued and managed as a precious resource in the public trust.
- If we can make a positive contribution in these three areas, we will produce an additional benefit: a new innovation economy, in eastern New York, that is inspired by water stewardship and restoration.

Who We Are:

WIN-HV is an informal group supported by Sustainable Hudson Valley. It is guided by a steering committee who are experienced in the work of water stewardship, technical and process innovation, business and organizational development, and creative process design.

Mary McNamara is an activist working on watershed and water quality issues in the Lower Esopus Creek Watershed, a board member of the Hudson River Watershed Alliance and a member of Riverkeeper's Advisory Council.

John Lonczak is principal of Phi-d Product/ Brand Development, a firm based in the Hudson Valley and in Je-Ju Island, South Korea. John supports technology incubation programs and works to establish connections among tech firms in the U.S. and Asia.

David Dell, Ph.D. has a unique background in technology commercialization, investment banking and organizational development. He is Chairman of SHV.

Melissa Everett, Ph.D. is Executive Director of Sustainable Hudson Valley. She coordinated the 2015 conference, *Water Wealth*. She is an experienced coach, strategist, and information architect whose work focuses on developing replicable models for innovative projects.

How We Work

WIN-HV brings together people and organizations interested in water stewardship, business, finance, social enterprise, education, marketing and community organization.

Our mission is to develop better strategies for managing water resources by bringing together expanded networks and examining the work to be done through a new lens.

Our tools include strategic planning, demonstration and pilot projects, creative problem solving, business and resource development, community based outreach, education, and social marketing.

Our testing ground is the Hudson Valley, from the river's headwaters to New York Harbor.

Our hope is to make a positive difference for water stewardship.

What We're Doing:

Since 2014, we have been investigating the connections between water stewardship, economic development, learning and decision making. We've seen areas, like Milwaukee and the Great Lakes, where sustainable water resource management has become a driver for business development, education and training. The Hudson Valley is a powerhouse of public sector expertise which has been focused on research and development of strategies to address historic pollution and resource depletion. But bringing our antiquated water infrastructure into shape for today's challenges will require an order of magnitude more investment than public dollars alone can provide. WIN will explore models for public-private investment partnerships and innovative water utility management to speed and scale up the development of high-efficiency, low-impact water infrastructure.

First, business and financial organizations need to be more centrally involved in spreading ways of protecting and restoring water that make good financial sense. This includes creating better revenue models for building new water infrastructure, and replicating success models in highly water-efficient industrial processes (such as textiles and farming) that are actually being pioneered in the Hudson Valley.

Second, communities and social networks need to be more centrally involved in the stewardship of water – not just local water bodies with aesthetic or

recreational value, but all the water that our lives require. Water-efficiency is promoted in many communities through public education, incentives, advocacy and inspirational campaigns – but not much of this activity is underway in the Hudson Valley. Especially in communities with vulnerable water supplies, WIN can design campaigns to:

- Help people replace bottled water with drinking fountains and refillable water bottles;
- Upgrade home plumbing and appliances for water efficiency;
- Change our culture of lawn and garden care to use landscape designs that need less water and that also make our properties more flood- and storm-secure by holding rain water where it falls.

In 2018-19, we intend to conduct at least one pilot project in each of these areas. For example, the Hudson River Comprehensive Restoration Plan has identified many specific locations for priority projects along the Hudson and its shoreline communities. To see these projects implemented, broad and vibrant partnerships will be needed, and so will innovative financing mechanisms. Another example: communities with compromised water supplies may be receptive to conservation opportunities, and so might the “Hudson Seven” that draw their water from the Hudson,

Beyond the opportunities that are visible at any given time, there is real benefit in providing a hub for everyone who is interested in fresh thinking about water stewardship to spark collaborative responses to emerging issues. That kind of hub can also attract specific opportunities by serving as a go-to portal . A group of social investors asked us, “If we wanted to come into New York and find business opportunities in water related social enterprises – businesses developed to solve real world problems – where would we start? Who would we turn to?” WIN is our response.

We are building a network of people, projects and resources that support innovative, highly efficient, lower-impact and restorative ways to work with water. That network will not only enrich our inventory of possibilities, but serve as a community of practitioners who are motivated and capable of capturing opportunities like the ones discussed here.

After an intensive period of studying and deliberating on the nature of this opportunity, WIN is ready to test new ways of making a difference in the sustainable management of water resources for the Hudson Valley and beyond.