

FRANCES F. DUNWELL

**Hudson River Estuary Coordinator, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
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Fran Dunwell is the Hudson River Estuary Coordinator at the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, where she oversees the implementation of the Hudson River Estuary Action Agenda, an ambitious program to conserve the fish and wildlife, landscape, and water resources of the Hudson River Watershed from Troy to New York harbor. In 2012, this program won EPA's highest award.

Fran's career in environmental conservation started in 1975, when she joined the staff of the Dutchess County Environmental Management Council and, soon after, became the Executive Director of the Center for the Hudson River Valley. Over her more than 30 year career, she has:

- strengthened DEC's management of tidal habitats and coastal fisheries and supported the development of the Hudson River National Estuarine Research Reserve;
- played a key role in mapping and then conserving sites on the river side of the railroad tracks that have become new public access areas, such as Denning Point State Park, Kowawese Preserve, Piermont Marsh, Nutten Hook, and Montrose Point. She has also worked with her DEC colleagues to protect shoreline properties at Turkey Point, Four Mile Point and Vosburgh Swamp, as well as greenways in Stockport and Livingston and other places along the river;
- established and fostered a ground-breaking new DEC program to identify and conserve at-risk plants, animals and habitats of the valley through programs focused on improving local land use decision-making, a partnership with non-profit groups and local government officials. This project is now gaining renown under the management of the Region 3 Bureau of Wildlife;
- helped to create the Hudson River Improvement Fund, a grant program of the Hudson River foundation which supports river projects;
- developed ambitious long-range goals for the Hudson River and now supervises the implementation of priority actions to make progress towards these goals;
- administered the Hudson River Estuary Program from its inception to its current status as a model of ecosystem-based management with an annual budget of \$6.5 million, including a grant program, carried out by an interdisciplinary team of professionals, and guided by an active advisory committee of stakeholders.

Dunwell also serves as the DEC representative to Hudson Valley Greenway and the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area and represented DEC on Hudson-Fulton-Champlain Quadricentennial Commission.

Prior to working for DEC, Dunwell was a Richard King Mellon Fellow at Yale University, where she did research for her award-winning book, *The Hudson River Highlands*,

published in 1991 and completed a Master's Degree. Her book was updated and geographically expanded in April 2008 and re-released as *The Hudson: America's River*. From 1980-1982, she served as Associate Director of Scenic Hudson from 1980-1982 and in this capacity supervised a project to list historic sites in the Hudson Highlands on the National Register of Historic Places. At that time, she also established successful statewide bi-partisan coalitions to support passage of NYS Waterfront Revitalization Law and Conservation Easement Law, both of which have enabled sweeping conservation efforts in the state. From 1975-1980, she was Executive Director of the Center for the Hudson River Valley. She is the proud wife of her loving husband Wes and the devoted mother of Davis and Lia.

For more information on the Hudson River Estuary program or to send and email go to:
<http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/4920.html>