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Quality of Water Resources Issues

The hydrosphere or water area of New York State is a diverse area of our physical environment. It includes surface water, underground water, the shoreline and coastal zone, and wetlands. Water quality issues are just as diverse. Water resources are dependent on various elements of the natural environment, including those of the lithosphere (including geology) and the atmosphere (including weather and climate), influence all living things (the biosphere) and are impacted by the works of people. Public health, ecosystems, and habitats are all affected by it. There are also economic implications.

The periodic New York State Water Quality reports, mandated by the Federal Clean Water Act provide a detailed view of the on-going assessment of the state's water bodies. The 2010 water quality report is at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/66532.html>, the 2008 report is at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/23837.html>, and the 2006 report is at www.dec.ny.gov/docs/water_pdf/305breport2006.pdf).

Among the many water quality issues that need to be addressed by concerned citizens are:

1. land use and water quality within drainage basins
2. municipal water supplies
3. conservation
4. acid precipitation
5. erosion control
6. thermal pollution
7. industrial, household and agricultural waste disposal
8. underground water supplies
9. coastal zone management
10. preservation of wetlands
11. flood control
12. drought
13. power production
14. fisheries
15. recreational use
16. imposition of rules and regulations