

**Hunter College of the City University of New York**  
**Department of Geography**  
**Geography of New York State**  
**Exercise 8– EXTRA CREDIT**

**Air Quality of New York State**  
Due no later than the date of the midterm exam.

*The purpose of this exercise is look at air quality in NYS over time. The Department of Environmental Conservation monitors air quality within each of its 9 regions. According to the DEC, NYS has “one of the most comprehensive and robust ambient air monitoring programs in the nation. New York meets or exceeds current monitoring requirements in nearly all instances.” Air pollution is both gaseous and particulate in nature. The time sequence maps illustrate trends in air quality, both in the types of pollution and the severity of the problem. Locate the regions in which your counties are located before you start the exercise. Go to <http://www.dec.ny.gov/about/50230.html>.*

Surf the links below to find information relating to your counties. If no county information is available, use information from the region in which the county is located. Go to <http://www.dec.ny.gov/about/644.html> to read about the Division of Air Resources and to <http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8406.html> for NYS’s program to track air quality. Find the ambient air monitoring report for 2010 at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/65574.html>. <http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/33276.html>.

**ASSIGNMENT - The “State of the Air” in your counties.**

**1. Mapping Pollutants.**

a) Consult the trend charts ([www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/41318.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/41318.html)). After clicking on a monitoring station, **scroll down** to the bottom of the page to see the graphs. Since not all counties are represented, choose data from one that is in the **same physiographic region** as your counties.

b) Summarize your findings.

**2. Acid Deposition Monitoring Stations.**

a) Go to <http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8634.html>. It shows the monitoring stations statewide for specific acid deposition pollutants. Click on the map to enlarge it. **PRINT** the map.

b) Outline and label your three counties on it. Attach map to your assessment statement.

**3. “State of the Air” Assessment.** Consult <http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8536.html>. **Scroll down to find your counties.**

a) Make a statement about the change in the presence of pollutants in your counties, if any, over the 10 year period.

b) What do you perceive to be the greatest problem facing each area?

c) Based on your findings which one of your counties (or region it is in) has the best air?

**Education Program students:**

For lesson planning suggestions you may want to visit the US EPA’s student acid rain web page ([www.epa.gov/acidrain/education/site\\_students](http://www.epa.gov/acidrain/education/site_students)) and the NYSDEC education site <http://www.dec.ny.gov/26.html>. The online magazine “**New York State Conservationist for Kids**” is found at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/education/40248.html>.