

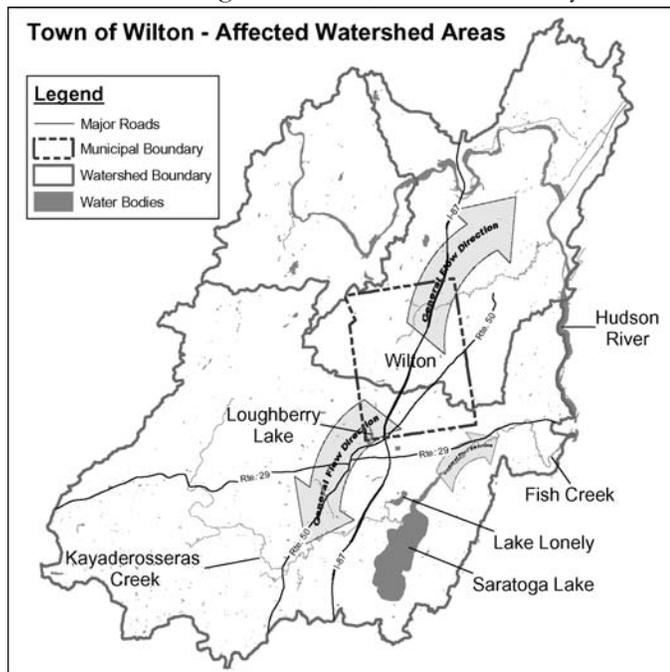


Watershed Concepts for the Town of Wilton

A watershed is defined as a land basin in which all water that falls in the basin eventually ends up in a single place. The catch basin is the land that water flows across or under on its way to a river, lake, stream or bay. Water travels over farm fields, forests, suburban lawns and city streets, or it seeps into the soil and travels as groundwater. The water's path is determined by its watershed boundaries – ridgelines and high points such as hills or slopes.

Land use activities throughout the watershed have a direct impact on water quality. There are many pollutants that are a result of daily human activities, many of which are not obvious but can be detrimental to water quality. Examples of pollutants include soil from construction sites, waste from septic systems, fertilizers, pesticides, road salt, and animal waste. In addition to pollution, a watershed can also be harmed when people change how and where water flows, for example, by paving large parking lots or changing the direction of a stream. Problems such as flooding or lower groundwater levels can result.

The Town of Wilton drains to two separate watersheds. The northern two thirds of the Town drains to various water bodies and groundwater, which eventually flow into the Hudson River. The southern third of the Town flows



to Saratoga Lake. Saratoga Lake's outflow is Fish Creek, which makes its way to the Hudson River. The map shows the Town of Wilton and the two watersheds into which groundwater, overland flow, streams, and lakes flow. As is evident from looking at the map, water that lands or is collected within the boundaries of the Town of Wilton does not stay there, but drains to various wetlands, streams, and lakes, all draining to the Hudson River, which flows to the Atlantic Ocean.

Even though most stormwater runoff is regulated by the Clean Water Act of 1972 and the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System, many pollutants still reach receiving waters. As a national goal, waters of the United States were to be fishable and swim able as a result of the Clean Water Act. Much of today's improvement is the result of the elimination and cleanup of point sources of pollution. Point sources of pollution are those that are discernible and discrete conveyances such as pipes, ditches, conduits or any other direct source from which pollutants are discharged. Nonpoint sources of pollution are diffuse

and are more difficult to identify. They include poor septic systems, runoff from farmland, or urban runoff.

Within the watersheds that Wilton is part of, Lake Lonely and the Hudson River are both priority waters. Priority waters are those that do not meet water quality standards even after point sources of pollution have installed the minimum required levels of pollution control technology. The Hudson River is listed as impaired for PCB and mercury contamination, which are mostly the result of industry discharges to the river. Lake Lonely is listed as impaired because of high phosphorus levels and urban and stormwater runoff, some of which comes from Wilton.

A watershed based approach to water quality planning and management considers the entire drainage area as a whole, interconnected hydrologic system. This approach coordinates towns, counties, citizen groups and other interested parties, and allows a cooperative and more efficient approach to improving water quality. The Town of Wilton is currently working with adjacent communities on water quality issues.

A great way to help protect your watershed is through the development of local watershed stewardship programs. For more information on watershed stewardship, go to

<http://www.dec.state.ny.us/website/dow/stewop.html>.

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