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COLLEGE

CENTER FOR THE URBAN RIVER AT BECZAK

# SAW MILL & HUDSON RIVER STAKEHOLDER REPORT

This research is part of the lower Hudson urban waters collaborative in partnership with the Bronx River Alliance and Riverkeeper. Data as part of this research is also shared with partner databases such as Riverkeeper and the Billion Oyster Project Community Water Quality Testing program.

**A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR PROGRAM  
FUNDER CONEDISON FOR THEIR  
CONTINUED SUPPORT OF THIS PROJECT**



## JUNE 2025

I have mentioned cloud burst events in past years' reporting. For those who are unfamiliar, it is exactly what you imagine it to be; clouds suddenly (sometimes unexpectedly) downpour an excessive amount of rain water in a short period of time. Many of those living within the southern portion of the Saw Mill River this week experienced cloud burst events a number of times, including on Tuesday. Our Director Ryan sampled the Hudson River at the neighboring YPRC dock a number of time including before the CSO alert sent out by NYAlert. On Wednesday morning, taking a quick peek at the first sample, he exclaimed that the tray was maxed out. Here meaning that the amount of bacteria in the sample far exceeded the maximum result that the test is able to provide. In between targeted sampling, Ryan also mentioned that he witnessed people fishing on the river - likely for sport. But, this is a perfect example of simultaneous happenings on the river and the importance of community AND communication.

## MONTHLY WEATHER SUMMARY

Although the percentage of the month impacted by rain was exactly the same as May, the amount of rainfall increased by 0.78" with no CSO alerts for the month of May and one for the month of June. On 6/10, it was reported that a CSO triggered at the Yonkers pump station released an estimated 1 million gallons of partially disinfected wastewater and rain mixture. This has led me to infer that the rain events in May were much more spread out versus the cloud burst event in June. This is a supporting example of the direct impacts of cloud bursts on our environment other than the immediate flooding of neighborhoods.

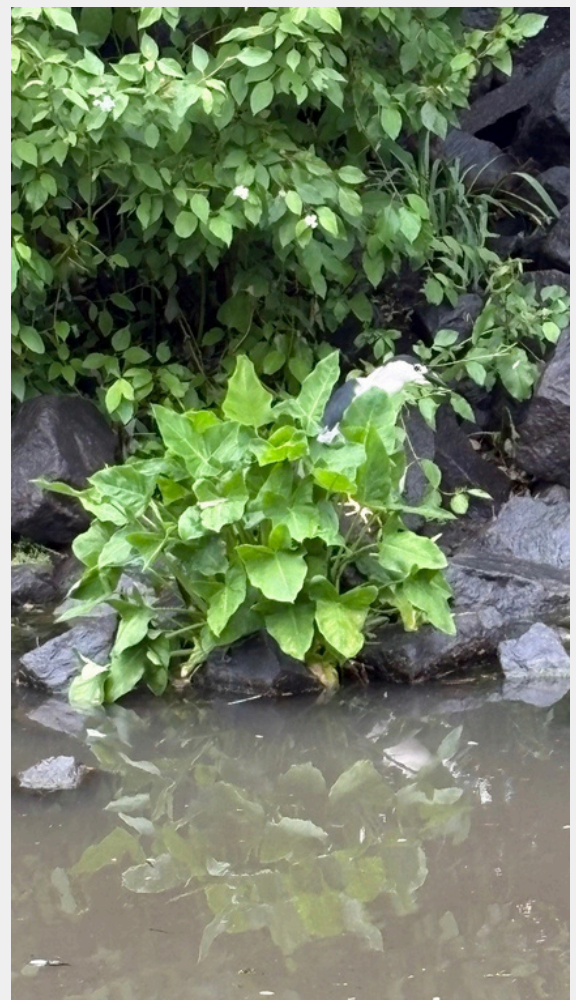
Timespan: 5/11/25 - 6/11/25

Percent of month impacted by rain events\*: 30%

Total rain fall amounts for the month: 3.73 inches

\*At least 0.1" of rainfall recorded on a single day

## PHOTO OF THE MONTH

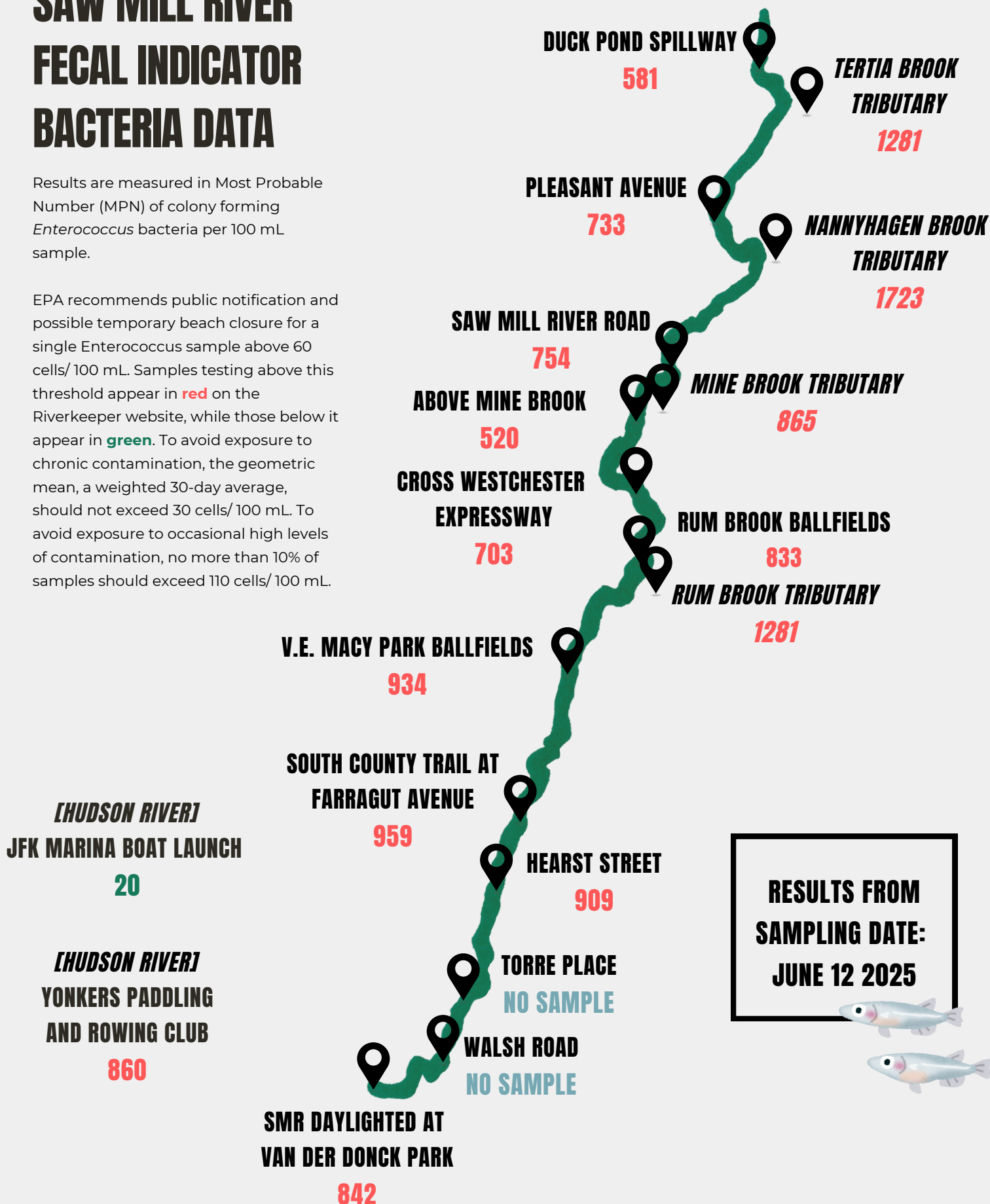


**PHOTO CREDIT: KATIE LAMBOY ROMAN  
LOCATION: VAN DER DONCK, DOWNTOWN YONKERS**

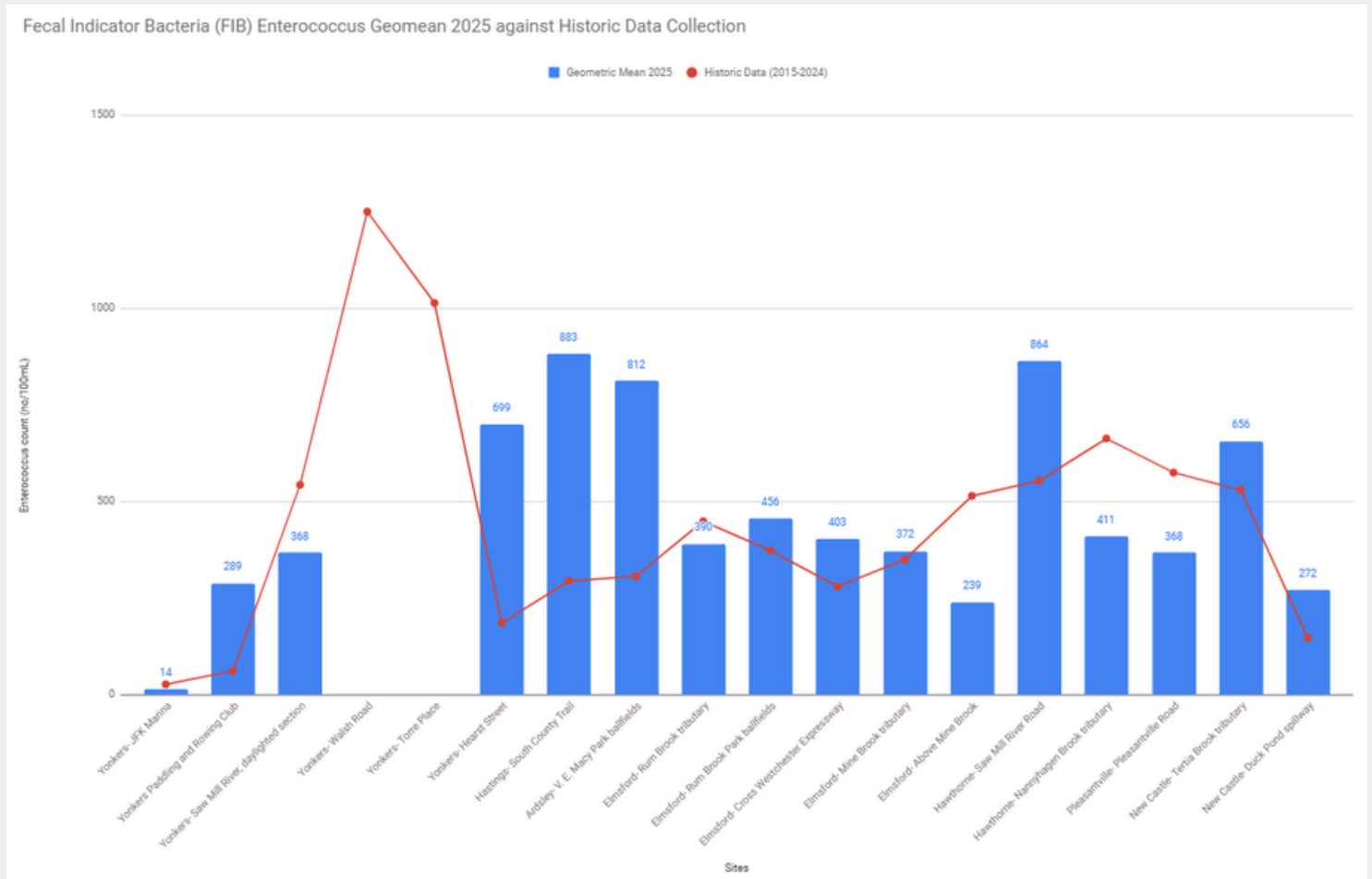
# SAW MILL RIVER FECAL INDICATOR BACTERIA DATA

Results are measured in Most Probable Number (MPN) of colony forming *Enterococcus* bacteria per 100 mL sample.

EPA recommends public notification and possible temporary beach closure for a single *Enterococcus* sample above 60 cells/100 mL. Samples testing above this threshold appear in **red** on the Riverkeeper website, while those below it appear in **green**. To avoid exposure to chronic contamination, the geometric mean, a weighted 30-day average, should not exceed 30 cells/100 mL. To avoid exposure to occasional high levels of contamination, no more than 10% of samples should exceed 110 cells/100 mL.



# THE DATA SO FAR



## DATA SUMMARY

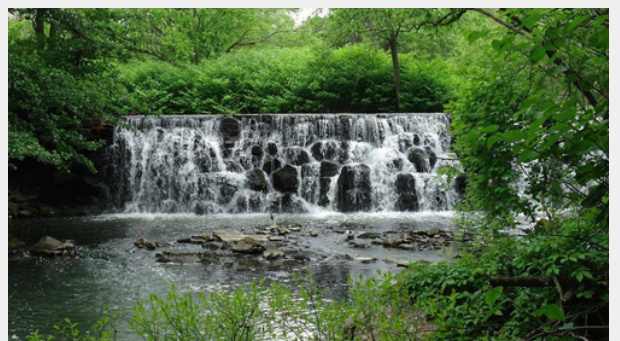
As expected, heavy rainfalls pushed our 2025 geometric mean of bacterial counts closer to the 1,000 MPN/100 mL level and many sites far exceeding the historic data averages.

**Percent of samples that fail to meet EPA criteria limits this month:** 93.75%

## PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

The **Bronx River Alliance** (BxRA) works collaboratively with public and private partners to protect, improve and restore the Bronx River corridor and greenways so that they can be a healthy ecological, recreational, educational, and economic resources for the communities through which the river flows. They coordinate community teams, water quality testing and reporting, stewardship events and fun paddling opportunities along the river for stakeholder engagement.

To learn more about BxRA and sign up for their e-newsletter, [check out this link](#).



**PHOTO CREDIT: BRONX RIVER ALLIANCE, MATTHEW MORALES**



# (THE DISTINGUISHED RIVER)

## A SECTION OF OUR NEWSLETTER DEDICATED TO THE GREAT EVER CHANGING RIVERS

On June 5<sup>th</sup> 2025, a most magical happening took place along the beach area of Habirshaw Park in downtown Yonkers. A visiting seining field trip class of fourth graders from Eugenio Maria de Hostos Microsociety School excitedly pulled the net in from the Hudson River; haul after haul we counted what felt like a never ending number of bay anchovy. Although it was a good feeling for each catch to showcase evidence of river life, the shock of being removed from the river left many of the small iridescent fish in less than amazing shape and many students with worried faces. The second seining cohort had a similar start to the classmates in the prior group that had moved on to a scavenger hunt. The continuous common catches of white perch, blue crab, bay anchovy, and grass shrimp of the early season were safely removed from the river sprinkled amongst the anchovy. Hauling in rocks alongside all of the species of the Hudson River is not uncommon and often expected. CURB Educators often exclaim “a rock fish” has been caught in the net as we pass along the hand sized boulders to the students who often return a look of confusion. I have personally hauled in so many rocks in my six years of working on the Hudson River, it is borderline comical and slightly notorious. So, as David J. from Eastchester High School (spring intern) pulled the seine net in from the deep end of the river while I chatted with two overly excited students on the shallow end, the weight of the net did not seem out of the ordinary. We would all have to flex some additional bicep muscles simultaneously exclaiming in variation with certainty, “This is the biggest rock to ever be caught in the seine net!”. The students were dismissed from their hauling responsibilities to wet their hands in the circle bucket for the safety of the possible fish inside the net as David and I wrangled the last bit of strength we had to pull in the haul. It began to wriggle. I began to panic. A full size American Eel? A dog shark? I have caught one of those before on the Sound while fishing with a reel and hook - so I know what that looks like, the thing in the net looks close enough. I pull apart each of the ends of the net cradling the species. I exclaim out loud “Christina!” looking for my colleague who I had just seen snapping photos of the students (she was on her way back to the building). “Who has a phone?!?” - I called out remembering I had left mine at my desk. The students began to peer into the net as I held it cradled like a hammock, “Students, you have just caught one of the rarest things you could possibly catch in a seine net!”. “This is a STURGEON!”. Its length approximately  $\frac{1}{2}$  of one of the excited students height. We all looked down at it in awe as it wriggled trying to get as far from us as possible. None of us believing what had just taken place, we admired it with stares; my mind looked through the rolodex of sturgeon facts that lived in my brain and spewed them out one after another. The interns had an ongoing friendly competition of who caught the best thing of the day, safe to say who had won on this day. There was no way we could keep it for other staff to see it in real life, we had no buckets big enough - pictures would have to suffice. We knew we couldn’t keep it out for long and soon it was time to say so long. Our environmental education intern Amy L. held it cradled in her arms so gently talking to it as she returned to the depths of the Hudson River to which it was found. She tells me later via email, “I felt this incredible responsibility in ensuring our friend was returned to its habitat. [...] It was an honor to get this huge, heavy, strong, regal fish back into the river!!!!” I want to believe that we were all changed a little bit that day, experiencing the bounty and legend of our mighty Hudson River. Our new river friend was further identified as a shortnose sturgeon back in the office. Funny, I thought - we just had our rarest catches poster printed recently. Our staff jokes - catching an Atlantic Sturgeon would have been more exciting.

Please note, “Officially listed by the National Marine Fisheries Service as endangered, the shortnose sturgeon is fully protected by the Endangered Species Act of 1973. It is unlawful to kill or possess this fish. This action, along with ongoing water quality and habitat protection efforts, offer a bright future for NY’s shortnose sturgeon populations.” - NY DEC. To learn more about this protected species, check out this [link to the NY DEC webpage](#).

