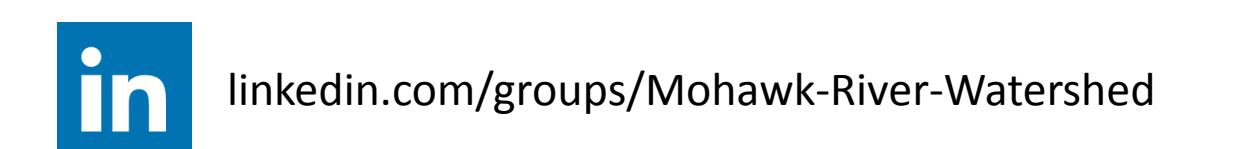
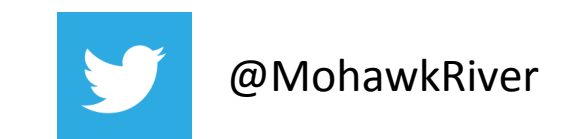


Engaging the Community

Mohawk River Watershed Management Plan



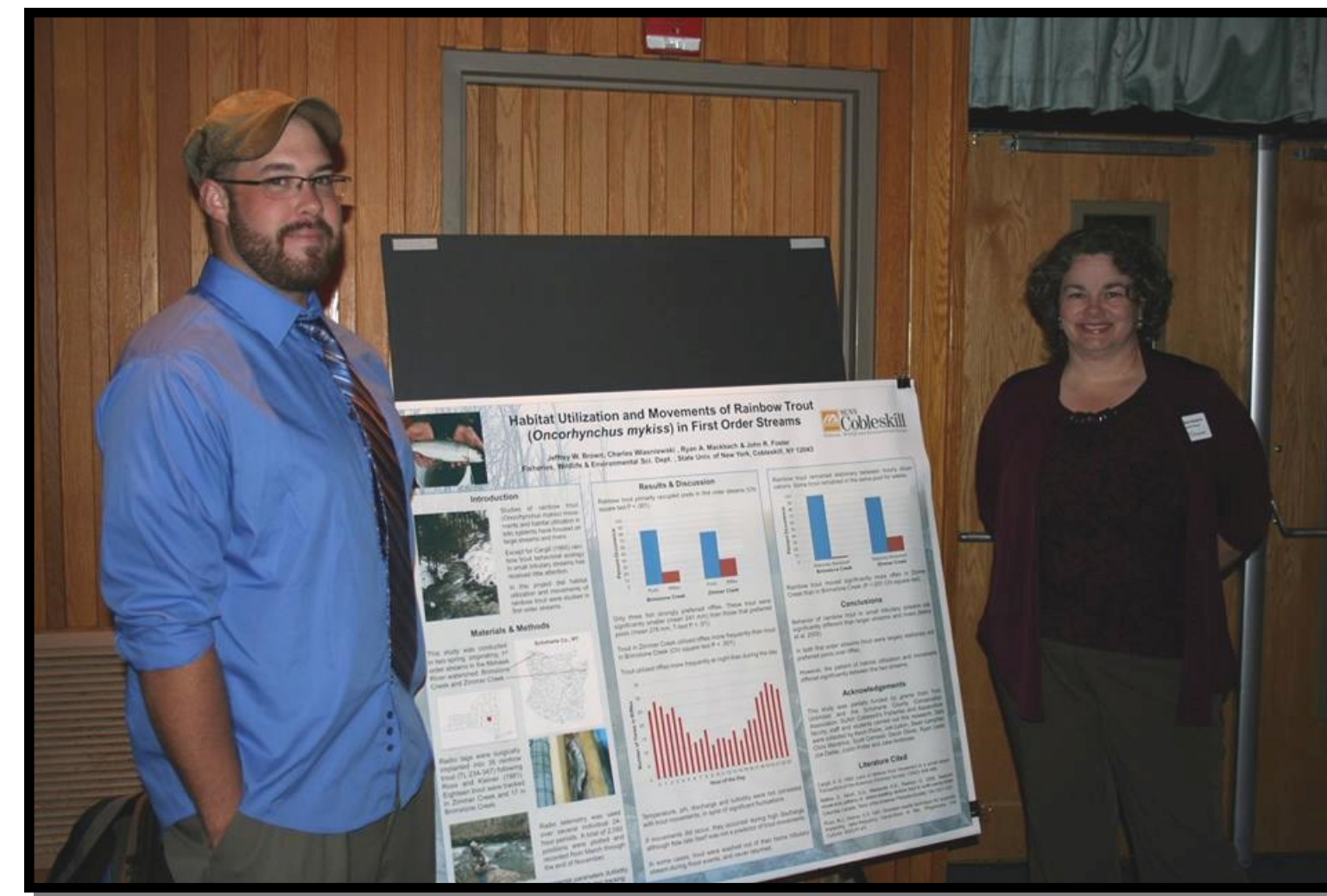
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GOAL: To build public interest in the watershed Coalition's Plan by raising awareness in watershed communities, and to learn about people's concerns by engaging a diverse, active audience.

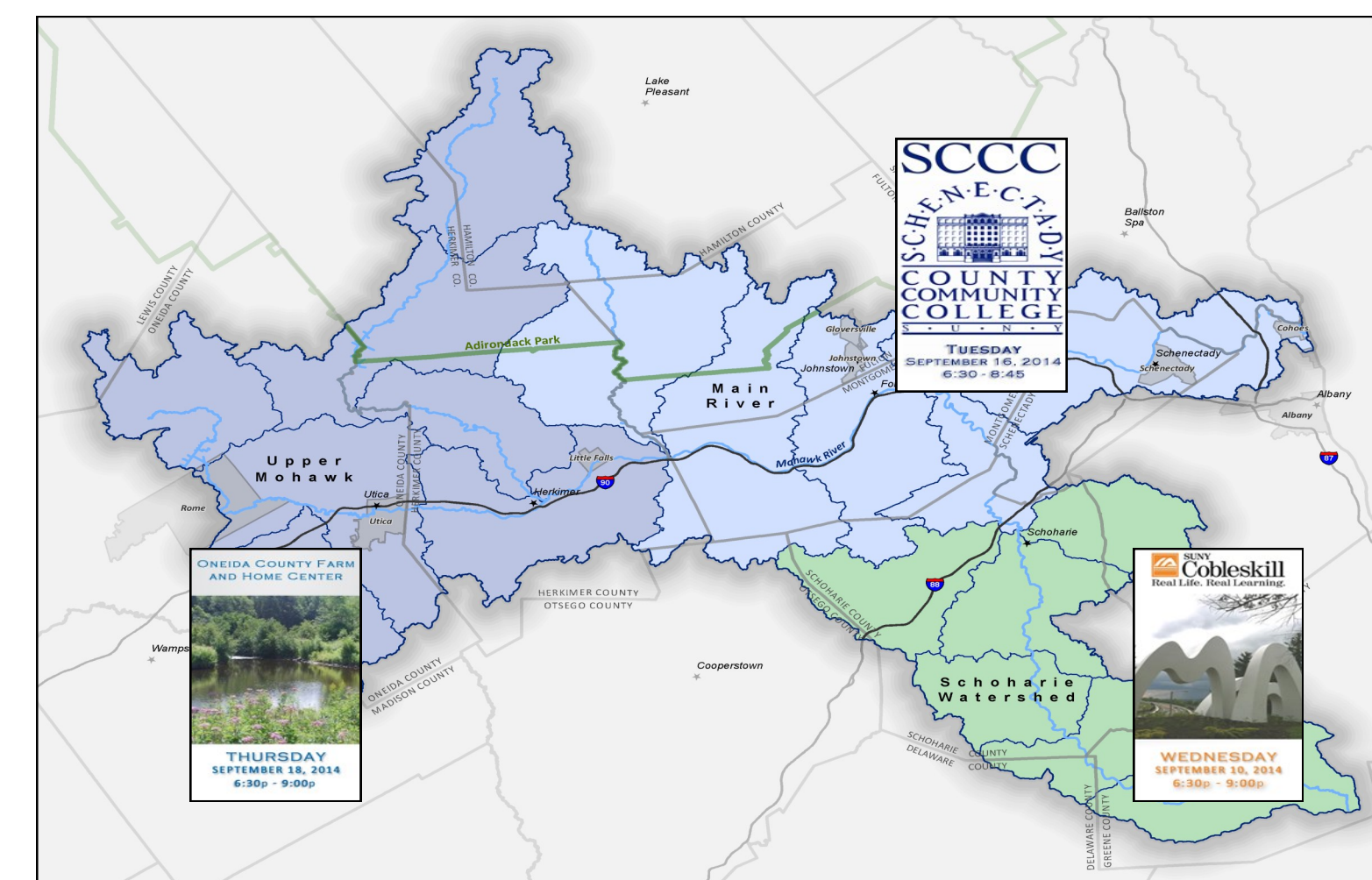
CHALLENGE: The Mohawk River watershed is large, with 600,000 residents in 170 municipalities. Success depends on many institutional players and partners to coordinate efforts as they carry out the plan, and strong public support is essential to sustaining these efforts.

How did we engage citizens?

- **Enlisted expertise** of a public relations firm (Buzz Media Solutions), which helped to build awareness of the Plan and bring communities to public meetings.
- **Created MohawkRiver.org**, a website where people can read the Plan, find news about grants and events, and use the online watershed mapping tool.
- **Used social media** (Email blasts, Facebook, Twitter) to increase attendance.
- **Reached out to students** through poster sessions held in partnership with SUNY-Cobleskill and Schenectady Community College, increasing age diversity at the meetings.
- **Hosted three public meetings**, one in each subwatershed region.
- **Invited each municipality** to send a representative to the public meetings.
- **Encouraged state senate and assembly members** to attend the public meetings.
- **Shared visually appealing technical information** through public presentations, building on GIS maps created by Stone Environmental.
- **Used clear, jargon-free language** when describing scientific findings and opportunities for improvement in the watershed.



Students at local colleges developed posters on the watershed and presented them at sessions that drew faculty and students prior to two of the public meetings.



Who participated?

- **More than 120 people**, with greatest age diversity at public meetings where we partnered with a local college.
- **Residents of each subwatershed**, who could choose to attend the public meeting closest to their home. Holding three public meetings also allowed people to raise local issues and hear local legislators address specific concerns.



The Mohawk River Watershed Coalition reached out to citizens across a 3,460-mile watershed, which provides drinking water to more than half of the state's residents.

What were the public's concerns?

At public meetings, people asked questions about the draft watershed management plan, and the Coalition incorporated this input as it finalized and approved the plan. Here are some of the concerns expressed:

- *Who is responsible for **implementation** of the plan?*
- *Where will the **money** for implementation come from?*
- *Does the plan adequately address **flooding** and flood mitigation? Can impervious surfaces be limited?*
- *Does the plan adequately address **pollution** and pollution control? What about nutrients? Pesticides? Sediment?*
- *Does the plan address the problem of **invasive species**?*
- *Where can I get more **information** about the plan?*
- *What are the **opportunities** for personal involvement?*
- *Can **projects** be added to the plan in the future?*
- *Will implementation of the plan lead to over-regulation of **agriculture**?*

How can we all stay engaged?

The Mohawk River Watershed Coalition will share news about progress, and its members will keep the plan before municipal boards and public officials. The Coalition encourages people to:

SUPPORT WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PROJECTS IN YOUR MUNICIPALITY

- **Engage with public officials** responsible for implementing the plan.
- **Volunteer** to help where you can.

SEEK OUT INFORMATION

- **Visit the MohawkRiver.org website**, where the watershed management plan will be updated as a living document.
- **Attend future public meetings** where the plan or its projects are discussed.