

**Elbridge Commission on the Environment**  
**Save Our Streams**  
**2001 Research Award**

The Elbridge Commission on the Environment became involved in a unique environmental project three years ago. Their CAC secured a pilot grant from Great Lakes Aquatic Habitat to participate in a Project Watershed of Central New York initiative. The initiative was called, "Save Our Streams". Its goal was to have citizens volunteer to monitor the health of various streams in a scientifically useful manner. The Elbridge group volunteered to monitor Skaneateles Creek; a main tributary of Skaneateles Lake. Although Skaneateles Lake is one of America's cleanest lakes (supplying abundant water to Syracuse and surrounding communities), the creek passes through property of a now defunct chemical plant in the nearby hamlet of Skaneateles Falls. The Stauffer Chemical plant is a New York State toxic waste site due for eventual cleanup...so you can probably guess where the Elbridge CAC chose to monitor things. That's right...just downstream.

In addition to Skaneateles Creek, the Elbridge CAC assists student interns (three this year) with monitoring Carpenter's Brook. These two streams are the main ones flowing through the Township of Elbridge. Carpenter's Brook is famous among regional fishermen because a large trout hatchery of the same name (Carpenter's Brook) is still operated by Onondaga County. It is a favorite haunt of Elbridge school children and Kingfishers.

The streams are monitored several times a year but always at the same stream area. High waders and specialized specimen nets are required. Testing is done for general/physical characteristics and biological health (collection, identification and counts of macro-invertebrates). Nine chemical water quality tests are included in the stream monitoring.