

PASSAIC RIVER RESTORATION REPORTER

Passaic Valley Sewerage Commissioners

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PVSC SPONSORS FIRST-EVER NOVICE REGATTA ON THE PASSAIC RIVER

It was the famous quote from the movie “Field Of Dreams” in which Kevin Costner’s character says “If you build it they will come.” In a nautical fashion the PVSC River Restoration Program has been dedicated to cleaning up the Passaic River to provide an arena in which scullers “will come.” PVSC has taken another step in that direction by sponsoring a regatta or sculling race. On Saturday, May 2nd the first annual Passaic River Novice Regatta was held under gray skies in Kearny/ North Arlington. T-shirts and medals for what we hope to be an annual event were provided by PVSC.

The regatta, featuring underclassmen from Montclair, Ridgewood, Nutley, Belleville, Kearny, DonBosco and Teaneck high schools, took place at the Kearny Crew House. More than 340 high school athletes participated. Varsity teams from those schools also held exhibition races as part of the day’s events.

“For more than a decade now, PVSC has spent considerable time and funds to expand our mission from just wastewater treatment to revitalizing the Passaic River and its role and value to the region” said PVSC Commissioner Thomas Powell. “We created the River Restoration Program to not only help clean up the Passaic, but to re-focus attention to its attributes, its beauty, its functional uses for the community.” “This regatta will allow younger rowers, just learning the sport, to participate in a real competition that will hopefully attract spectators from all the communities participating as well as other towns along the river” said PVSC Commissioner Frank Donato, who first came up with the idea to create and sponsor the regatta.



Women’s crew team removing their scull after a hard fought race.

“By seeing this kind of use on the Passaic, we hope that residents will begin to understand that the river really does have so much to offer economically and recreationally.

“A century ago, the Passaic River was the centerpiece of the quality of life of residents in this region. Our goal is to make that so once again” Donato added.

“Belleville High School is delighted to participate in the Novice races” said Jeff Lahm, Belleville High School’s girls’ crew coach. “As members of the Philadelphia Scholastic Rowing Association our team does most of their competing in Philadelphia on the Schuylkill River. This is a great opportunity for family and friends who cannot make the drive to Philly to see their athletes in action. We are grateful to the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commissioners for hosting this Regatta and for all they have done to beautify the river and the area around the Kearny boathouse.”

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FROM PAGE ONE

“A Novice Regatta is a long time coming to the Passaic River” said Kearny Councilwoman Carol Jean Doyle. “Through the combined efforts of the PVSC sponsoring cleanups along the Passaic River, hard work and the dedication of many committed volunteers this Regatta is a dream becoming a reality. The Town of Kearny applauds this wonderful opportunity for local residents.

“I am happy to say that for 18 years I have coordinated an annual cleanup and I personally see the difference with PVSC's Education Program in our local schools” Doyle added. “Reaching out has made a change in the way young people respect our river. Students and volunteers take ownership in the river when they clean and sort trash along the water's edge. I hope this is one of many opportunities for Kearny residents to see the return of a premier waterway and the efforts of many be enjoyed not only on this day, but for years to come.”

“As a crew coach, I have to say that the PVSC has proven itself to be an invaluable resource to the rowing community along the Passaic River” said David Paszkiewicz, who leads the Kearny High School team. “They have a true interest in bringing the Passaic River back to its former glory and are very supportive of activities which promote the use of the river. They regularly skim the river keeping it free of

debris which is not only unsightly but could also pose a risk to crews rowing on the river. In addition, they offer education on the Passaic River environment and assist in as well as sponsor river cleanups. I can't say enough about their commitment to the communities of the Passaic River Valley.”

To ready for the regatta, PVSC Restoration Program staff helped clean the riverbank in the area of the Kearny Crew House, removing litter and debris. The PVSC team also constructed a moveable dock system, cleaned the Crew House parking areas and constructed a temporary enclosure where the teams can house their boats. “The Commissioners created the River Restoration Program 10 years ago with the idea that it could be used to help clean up the Passaic River” said PVSC Executive Director Bryan Christiansen. “It began with our staff organizing volunteer riverbank clean-ups and evolved from there.”

“We now have the staff and equipment to conduct much more complex clean-ups that not only help beautify the river, but can also aid in flood mitigation” Christiansen continued. “We added our skimmer vessels a few years later to remove floating debris on the river, and have expanded our programmatic functions to include our Education Outreach Program, specific projects with our member towns and counties, and sponsorship of river-related events like the Novice Regatta.”



PVSC's pontoon boat served as the starting line for the races.



PVSC's safety boat trail some of the race participants.



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PVSC ADDS TO ITS CLEANUP ARSENAL

Passaic Valley Sewerage Commissioners River Restoration Department has had a new addition to the tools at its disposal in its mission to maintain a clean waterway. The pontoon boat pictured on the right is 32' x 14' and in a prior life was used in oyster farming in Connecticut. We plan on using what is basically a motorized barge for a very different purpose; but there is still some modification work that has to be done to meet that end. The sheer amount of square footage of this vessel will allow us to put a 10 yard dumpster on board as well as a grapple type crane of the kind that are commonly seen on tree removal trucks, as seen in the picture on the left. The pontoon bottom will allow us to get into the shallow areas along the riverbank where so much heavy debris gets lodged. This material, truck tires and large sections of trees can trap all sorts of other floatables and is inaccessible by land because it is often at the base of a steep riverbank. It is also too heavy and stuck in the muddy bottom to be removed by hand. The barge boat will have buoyancy, stability and size to allow us to pick this stuff up by this crane and load it onto the onboard container for eventual removal from the river at one of our offloading sites.

So much of what still remains of the debris we see is in these spots we can't get with our skimmers or using our men and volunteers. We think this is the perfect complement to the rest of the cleanup work that we have been doing. If all goes according to schedule this modification work can be completed by this fall so that it can take its place at the docks alongside the skimmer boats at our new facility in North Arlington.



Example of loader that will be used on our pontoon boat.



PVSC's new pontoon boat that will be outfitted to remove larger shoreline debris.

Who We Are

The Passaic Valley Sewerage Commissioners (PVSC) was established in 1902 in response to a public outcry to alleviate pollution in the Passaic River and its tributaries. Today, PVSC services the wastewater treatment needs of commercial, industrial and residential users in 48 municipalities across Essex, Hudson, Bergen, and Passaic Counties. Currently the fifth largest wastewater treatment facility in the nation, PVSC continues to be a true leader in environmental progress.

In 1998 PVSC began the Passaic River/Newark Bay Restoration Program as a means to return the Passaic River system to its potential as a source of recreation and pride in the communities that we serve.

The Passaic River Restoration Reporter is a publication funded by the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commissioners. It is intended to provide information on the progress of the Passaic River/Newark Bay Restoration Program.

RUNNING TOTALS

**DEBRIS REMOVED BY PASSAIC
RIVER RESTORATION PROGRAM
SINCE 1998:**

Shoreline Cleanups 6,249.16 tons

River Skimming 1,384.61 tons

CONSTRUCTION TO START ON NEW OFFLOADING FACILITY

The proverbial light at the end of the tunnel is finally upon us. The Passaic River Trash Skimmer Operations facility in North Arlington was advertised for bid in December 2008. Bids were received on December 23, 2008 and Navka Construction Company Inc. of Newark, NJ was low bidder and awarded the contract on February 2, 2009. The notice to proceed with the work was issued on March 2, 2009 and the project is required to be completed within 270 days of the notice to proceed. It is anticipated that the facility will be operational on or before November 30, 2009.

As a result of conditions imposed by the NJDEP and the Army Corps of Engineers to protect warm water fish spawning in the Passaic River, any proposed construction activity near the banks of the river are prohibited between March 1st and June 30th. The contractor will start construction on July 1, 2009 in order to comply with this environmental restriction. Construction is scheduled to be completed in the fall of this year.

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