



Hackensack Riverkeeper® is the independent, non-governmental advocate for the Hackensack River.

NJDEP Threatens Hackensack Riverkeeper Oyster Research Project

By **Dr. Beth Ravit**

On June 7 New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) Commissioner Bob Martin issued a sweeping new rule that could shut down Hackensack Riverkeeper's oyster research project. This long-term research is needed to re-establish this animal that once thrived in Newark Bay and the Hudson-Raritan Estuary (HRE), of which the Hackensack River is a component. The NJDEP action was taken in spite of the fact that the State of New Jersey and the NJDEP are members of the NY-NJ Harbor Estuary Program – the group that is the sponsor of the HRE Comprehensive Restoration Plan. The Plan document, issued in 2009, calls for the restoration of 500 acres of oyster reef in the estuary

by 2015. Today, thanks to the efforts of NY/NJ Baykeeper and Hackensack Riverkeeper, there is approximately 1 acre of new oysters in the HRE. Without further research and an increase in NJDEP-permitted restoration locations, meeting the goals of the Plan is decades away.

NJDEP issued a press release calling the research oysters an imminent threat to human health, suggesting that poachers could illegally harvest the oysters and illegally get them onto the market. As the Riverkeeper volunteers who have seen the cages and recovered the oysters for measuring know, this is a far-fetched supposition. Over the last four years, we have never seen evidence of tampering with the subtidal research cages,

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Hackensack Riverkeeper and Colleagues Launch NJ League of Conservation Voters

Coalition seeks to empower environmental voters, hold politicians accountable

By **Hugh M. Carola**

On the Capitol steps in Trenton on May 12, eleven of New Jersey's leading environmental activists – among them Hackensack Riverkeeper Captain Bill Sheehan – launched the New Jersey League of Conservation Voters (NJLCV). The group is a non-partisan, non-profit, public education and policy-making organization that works to make environmental protection a top priority among elected officials, decision-makers and voters.

Like its national counterpart, the

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Upcoming Events You Don't Want to Miss!



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Litigation and Advocacy Update

Staff Attorney Chris Len summarizes our most pressing legal issues

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At the helm



*A word from
Captain Bill*

Two Victories for Open Space and Recreation

With all of the bad news spewing forth from Trenton these days, I thought I would take some time to talk about two tremendous projects moving forward at opposite ends of the Meadowlands. Both Bergen and Hudson Counties have a lot to celebrate. Bergen County has finally held the grand opening for the New Overpeck Park located in Ridgefield Park and Teaneck. After fifty years of promises by several Freeholder boards and two county administrations there is now a park that offers something for everyone on the shore of the Overpeck Creek. The amenities the new park has to offer are without a doubt the best in the region and even include two brand new launch sites for access by the paddling public. On the land side there is a new entertainment venue with a sound system that should make anyone's performance reach the audience with a dramatic view of Bergen's eastern ridgeline. I am looking forward to seeing and hearing great shows in the park. Of course there are state of the art playing fields that should meet much of the demand for that type of outdoor recreation and yes, there is also a 21st century playground for families with younger children to enjoy. They aimed for children's safety and fun, and I think they hit the target.

Much has been written in the newspapers lately questioning the overall cost of the project and some opinions were solicited from folks who commented off-the-cuff on issues that they have no knowledge of. But the facts don't lie and one fact is that if the county had not dumped hundreds of tons of garbage into the Overpeck Marshes there would have not been a need to cap the entire site before park construction could begin. This dumping did not happen recently but was inherited by the current county officials. If the former county governments had fulfilled their promise of building a park, there would have been no need for a lawsuit against the Schuber administration. Once the lawsuit was filed the die was cast and the court decided to hold the county to its original promise – again, a situation inherited by the current county officials. And as far as the cost goes, if the former administrations had lived up to their promise the park would certainly have been cheaper to build. So before you go blaming the current crop of elected and appointed officials for squandering public dollars you should instead thank them for fulfilling the empty promises of their predecessors.

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GUILTY!

Secaucus Crown Plaza Hotel cops a plea; admits pumping sewage into Hackensack River

By **Hugh M. Carola**



Captain Bill on patrol in front of the Crowne Plaza

The dirty joke officially ended on March 22 when the Crowne Plaza hotel's corporate owner – RD Secaucus LP – pleaded guilty before Superior Court Judge Lourdes I. Santiago in Hudson County. The Montreal-based company copped to a fourth-degree charge of unlawfully discharging a pollutant (*raw sewage*) to the Hackensack River in violation of the New Jersey Water Pollution Control Act. The charge stemmed from a state Grand Jury indictment brought by the NJ Division of Criminal Justice (DCJ) on September 2, 2009.

For Tidelines readers unfamiliar with the case, the indictment was the result of information obtained in May 2009 by Captain Bill Sheehan through a confidential source. According to the source, wastewater collected in pits and tunnels under the hotel was being pumped into the river – and had been three times a week *for more than a year*. Capt. Bill immediately turned the intelligence over to Supervising Deputy Attorney General Edward R. Bonanno, head of the DCJ's Environmental Crimes Section. After a short investigation and securing a search Warrant, authorities raided the hotel on June 8.

RD Secaucus LP was subsequently indicted on September 9 based on the informant's testimony and evidence collected during the raid. SDAG Bonanno both presented the case to the Grand Jury and took the guilty plea.

"If the company had simply fixed the problem in the first place – like it *should* have done – none of this would have happened," explained Captain Bill. "The hotel now has a system in place to properly pump any stormwater and wastewater that collects under the hotel into the sewer system operated by the Secaucus

Municipal Utilities Authority."

Under the plea agreement, the company has implemented a program to physically monitor the system to prevent any future pollution. A DCJ-approved environmental consultant has been brought in to monitor the flow rate from the pits, grates and tunnels at the hotel into the sewer system. If the consultant detects any changes in flow rate indicative of a leak in the hotel's wastewater pipes, RD Secaucus must take immediate action to identify and repair the leak and provide samples to NJ Department of Environmental Protection and the Secaucus Health Department. In addition, the company was assessed a \$75,000 bounty payable to Hackensack Riverkeeper to help support our ongoing river patrols and anti-pollution activities.

"We received the first \$25K installment back in April; and it came at just the right time to help close some of the budget gap created by the economic crisis," said Captain Bill. "We were able to use some of the money to pay for the refurbishing of the Keeper vessel *Robert H. Boyle*, whose seats and deck were in sorry shape, and to purchase badly-needed seat covers for both boats."



Robert H. Boyle stripped bare...



and now better than ever!

In a DCJ press release issued on March 22, New Jersey Attorney General Paula T. Dow thanked Hackensack Riverkeeper for our assistance during the investigation. We appreciate her kind words and want her (and our readers) to know that the Crowne Plaza affair was not the first time our organization has worked with law enforcement.

Since 2008, the Environmental Crimes Section has partnered with Hackensack Riverkeeper and NY/NJ Baykeeper to establish a pilot program in which our staffers patrol local waterways looking for potential environmental crimes. In 2007, we participated in a workshop on maritime security conducted by the NJ State Police Marine Services Bureau. In January 2003, then-Attorney General Peter Harvey lauded us for our work in helping put an end to Eastern Concrete

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Help Hackensack Riverkeeper maintain NJ's regulatory protections

(or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Chlorine Gas)

By Christopher Len

For Tidelines readers willing to bet that that the new DEP oyster policy would be the stupidest decision to come out of Trenton this year, don't book that hotel room at Caesar's just yet. The New Jersey Legislature is seriously considering downsizing the state's environmental regulations to the federal minimum.

If S1986/A2486 is passed and signed into law by Governor Christie, New Jersey will add to the growing list of policy screw-ups including, "Lets hire a drunk to pilot our oil supertanker!" and "Dioxin? Just dump it in the Passaic!" and "There's never been a major oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico! What, me worry?"

Federal regulation exists as an absolute floor – it's the national minimum standard required for any state. Rather than overregulate, the Federal government seeks to find the lowest possible requirement necessary in any state, and then relies on state regulation to tailor standards locally. If S1986/A2486 becomes law, then standards that a Washington bureaucrat decided were the minimum appropriate for South Dakota would be the maximum standard

for New Jersey.

Consider that each facility handling dangerous chemicals operates within a zone of danger. Consider further that there are numerous facilities with over 1,000,000 peo-



ple inside that zone of danger. The Kuehne Chemical Company in South Kearny for example, stores enough chlorine gas – a WW1 weapon of mass destruction – to kill or seriously injure 12,000,000 people in its 14-mile danger zone. A federal standard appropriate for a state like Wyoming could never deal with safety issues on such a scale. Indeed, there are more people in that 14-mile danger zone

than live in all but 6 states (based on 2000 Census numbers).

Based on that threat, why on earth would the legislature want to hamstring the Toxic Catastrophe Prevention Act? Or lower lead standards? Or reduce special education standards? Or Traffic requirements? Or almost any other conceivable regulation? Note that nothing in S1986/A2486 limits its coverage to environmental issues.

There's a fine line between pro-business and anti-citizen, and S1986/A2486 takes a supersonic trans-Atlantic flight over that line. Thanks to hard work, to which Hackensack Riverkeeper contributed, S1986/A2486 seems to be bogged down. The way the New Jersey legislature works, however, it's impossible to say that it won't come back. We intend to keep our eyes on the issue and do our best to keep it away from the Governor's desk.

In the meantime, if you live in New Jersey, please contact your state Senator and Assemblypersons and urge them to oppose S1986/A2486. Not sure who they are? Just point your Web browser to www.njleg.state.nj.us and find out.

Letters to Riverkeeper

Thank you for what you do (i.e. awareness to people, advocacy, activities, etc.). Sometimes it is difficult for individuals like myself to understand the implications of legislation or effects of the Governor's DEP Report. You really help to understand. I appreciate your passion and determination.

Please continue to suggest how we can support you in your advocacy and awareness mission.

I am sending you a donation that hopefully will help in your advocacy mission and in the battles for the environment.

Keep up the great work!

Anna Mosca

New NJDEP-Proposed Rules Will Block Public Access

Proposals fly in the face of and seek to deny centuries-old rights

By Christopher Len

Ever since the Fifth Century when Roman Emperor Justinian wrote laws mandating that the seashore be preserved by the government for the people, the public trust doctrine has preserved the rights of citizens to access the water. The public's right proved so durable and important over the years that it was explicitly included in the Magna Carta and applied to the United States by the Supreme Court in the Nineteenth Century. The duty to preserve public access to the shore is one that no branch of American government can divest itself of. Just don't tell the NJDEP.

On June 15th, just days after its stroke of brilliance in ending oyster restoration research, the bright minds at the DEP issued a press release proposing "new common sense public access rules ... for state's beaches and waterways." Evidently, the DEP doesn't think too much of your right to access

your public trust resources. The proposed policy eliminates industrial waterfront access dedications unless it is for a "new" use, drops restroom requirements, ends 24/7 access, exempts marinas from providing through-facility access and immediately removes public access requirements from new and pending DEP permits. Effectively, they've preserved the public trust doctrine, sometimes, and only if you live on the Atlantic Coast.

If you live in any one of New Jersey's major population centers from the Amboys to Alpine, don't expect the DEP to look out for your interests; especially since there are so many special interests to appease. According to published reports, "Public access will not be required near waterfront dredging activities, developments at existing port facilities, and any existing facility prohibited by federal law from providing public access because of homeland security con-

cerns." Previously, exempt facilities were expected to mitigate their impact on shore access by supplying off-site access points.

As is typical for the DEP these days, they shoot first and ask questions later – i.e. issue a press release without undertaking the steps necessary to legally change regulatory requirements. Despite all their hype, the DEP has not issued – let alone adopted – any new rules. But that hasn't stopped them from ignoring rules currently on the books. DEP has immediately removed access requirements from waterfront permits even though existing rules require them. This jumping of the gun may subject the DEP to legal challenge. If a consortium of environmental groups including Hackensack Riverkeeper has anything to say about it, DEP won't strip your public trust rights until they've jumped through every last legal hoop – longer if Emperor Justinian has any say in it.

Eleven Acres Saved in River Vale!

By Capt. Bill Sheehan

In early July Hackensack Riverkeeper partnered with Bergen Save the Watershed Action Network (SWAN), Trust for Public Land (TPL) and Bergen County to acquire about 11 acres of forested land at the end of Stanley Place in River Vale.

The story behind this acquisition started well over 20 years ago. In the 1980's United Water transferred hundreds of acres of critical buffer lands to the United Properties Group (UPG) for future development. That action led to a suit being brought by SWAN, which was represented at the time by the Environmental Defense Fund. After an extended period of litigation, a settlement was reached in which

United Water agreed to take back most of the properties. Those acres will continue to buffer the River and Reservoirs in Bergen County in perpetuity.

But under the terms of the settlement, several choice tracts of land were left in the hands of UPG and subsequently were snatched up by developers.

By the mid 1990's, we in the conservation community began pushing for a voter referendum to establish an Open Space Trust Fund under the acronym BOSCO (Bergen Open Space COalition). BOSCO was a broad based coalition of environmentalists, conservationists, recreational advocates and eventually then-County Executive Pat Schubert.



In 1998 the Bergen County Board of Chosen Freeholders placed the first Open Space Trust Fund question on the November Ballot. The question passed with over 70% plurality. The following year Mr. Schubert appointed me to a 15 member Advisory Committee and charged us with reviewing applications for funding and making recommendations to the Freeholders of the projects worthy of funding.

Over the past ten years the trust fund has provided substantial fund-

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Litigation and Advocacy Update

ISSUE	BACKGROUND	ACTION TAKEN	FUTURE ACTION
Oysters	Since 1997, the year of our founding, Hackensack Riverkeeper has conducted oyster restoration research in the Hackensack River. Oysters are a keystone species in our estuary, and no possible restoration of the watershed would be complete without an ecologically functional and self-reproducing oyster population.	DEP has announced its intention to ban all oyster restoration research in closed waters - essentially all New Jersey waters northwest of Sandy Hook, including the Hackensack River. Hackensack Riverkeeper has reached out to its network to encourage the DEP to reverse its decision, and has lobbied the New Jersey Legislature to overrule DEP's short-sighted policy change.	Continue advocating for a statutory solution for DEP's intransigence through legislative outreach. State Senator Gerald Cardinale (R-39) has, in particular, been a forceful advocate for oyster restoration. Hackensack Riverkeeper will continue explaining the importance of oyster restoration to the press and all levels of government as we work toward a solution.
Berry's Creek TAG	Berry's Creek is listed on the EPA's National Priorities List for Superfund Remediation based on shockingly high levels of Mercury. Technical Assistance Grants are available for groups to acquire technical experts to help interpret technical minutiae and administrative jargon for the affected public.	Chris Len and Dr. Beth Ravit reported on Hackensack Riverkeeper's proposed role to a national committee of EPA regulators at EPA Headquarters in New York City.	We await a favorable response from the Environmental Protection Agency.
Paramus "Enchantment" Development	A developer purchased roughly 30 acres of real estate in Paramus for \$90,000.00. The price was low because all parties believed the land to be protected by a conservation easement that barred development. Unfortunately, the easement was never recorded, and the developer hopes to construct town homes on 30 acres of Paramus Wetlands, a tributary to the Oradell Reservoir.	Chris Len twice attended Paramus planning board meetings to register Hackensack Riverkeeper's objections to the proposed development. The developer is attempting to get around Category One restrictions by claiming the site is a hazardous waste dump that needs development to protect residents from glass. "I've heard of caps for chromium, for mercury, for dioxin," Len told the Bergen Record, "I've never heard of anyone protecting the public from cuts and scrapes with a cap."	A third hearing is scheduled for August 12th. The Town of Paramus is challenging the conservation easement issue in the New Jersey Courts. Hackensack Riverkeeper staff will continue attending planning board meetings and will monitor DEP permitting decisions closely to ensure this project never gets off the ground.
River Vale Conservation	A twenty year battle over the preservation of several ecologically sensitive parcels in River Vale has largely concluded. The town of River Vale has closed on one piece and setting it aside for preservation. Hackensack Riverkeeper and its allies have been working to preserve a second piece, the third remain vulnerable.	On July 1st, Hackensack Riverkeeper and its partners closed with the developer, purchasing the property and promptly conveying it to Bergen County for permanent conservation.	The matter is now closed. Hackensack Riverkeeper continues to consider its options for preserving the remaining imperiled parcels.
Turnpike Authority and Off Highway Vehicles	For years, Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) aficionados have trespassed and degraded Turnpike Authority property south and east of north-bound turnpike exit 16-W and north and west of the Hackensack River and Berry's Creek Canal. The erosion caused by this reckless use has introduced pollution to the rivers, weakened the foundation for the exit ramp and bridge and created a hazard to navigation. In addition, Berry's Creek Canal is a Superfund site and is contaminated with toxic Mercury.	Captain Bill and Chris Len toured the site with representatives from the Turnpike Authority (TA). The TA expressed willingness to consider structural improvements to discourage OHV use on the site. The TA is considering a number of responses, but have placed their response on hold pending developments with an ENCAP project which may require its own barrier on the site. TA Supervising Engineer Steve Buente reports that Authority personnel have seen no evidence of recent OHV use.	Follow-up with the Turnpike Authority to assure that measures are implemented and prove

Laughter is the Best Medicine

Hot weather got you down? The economy making you sad? Kids driving you nuts? We've got a solution.... Join Hackensack Riverkeeper for a night of laughter at our

Comedy Night!

On Thursday August 26th promoter Rich Carucci – the “Steamroller of Comedy” will host a night of laughter to benefit Hackensack Riverkeeper. This popular event will be held at Redd’s Restaurant in Carlstadt – and it promises to be a great evening of entertainment you won’t want to miss!

The talented lineup is expected to include:

- Eric Alexander - his Mom says he’s a “funky fresh Jewish boy with a wise mouth edge – what’s not to love?”

- Sharon Simon – best known for her radio show “Drunk Dialing”, Sharon is one of today’s funniest standup artists.

- Angry Bob – he’s performed at venues all across New York City and has been on CNN and Last Comic Standing.

- Joe Pontillo – Joe was a finalist in Long Island’s Funniest Comic contest in 2004 and 2006 and has been a featured comic in the 2006 New York Underground Comedy Festival.

- Sheba Halley Mason – daughter of comedian Jackie Mason, she has performed standup comedy in major cities since 2002 and has appeared as an actress and singer

for most of her life.

- And the man who puts this all together for us: Rich Carucci – known as “The Steamroller of Comedy” for his in-your-face but still personable style, Rich is a writer, producer and entertainer who has raised over \$700,000 for non-profit organizations through the power of laughter!



Rich Carucci

This will be the fifth year that Rich, his outstanding cast of comedians and Redd’s Restaurant will be donating their talent and their services for the evening. This means that all proceeds from the show go directly to Hackensack Riverkeeper to support our work to protect, pre-

serve and restore the Hackensack River and watershed.

Advance tickets are only \$20.00 and are available by calling Hackensack Riverkeeper at 201-968-0808 or visiting our website at www.HackensackRiverkeeper.org. While they last, tickets will be available at the door for \$25.00. Our last Comedy Night was a full house – so reserve your seats early!

Redd’s Restaurant and Bar is located at 317 Washington Avenue, Carlstadt, NJ – just north of the Meadowlands Sports Complex. Redd’s owner Doug Palsi invites ticket holders to come early for a pre-show dinner but stresses that reservations are strongly recommended. You can call them at (201) 933-0015 and you can check out their great menu or get directions at www.reddsrestaurant.com.

The doors open at 7:00 pm, show starts at 8:00 pm, and there will be a cash bar open throughout.

Please note: There may be adult language and/or subject matter in the performances; this show is not recommended for children or those offended by adult content. And just so you know, the lineup of performers may change without prior notice.



Angry Bob



Sharon Simon



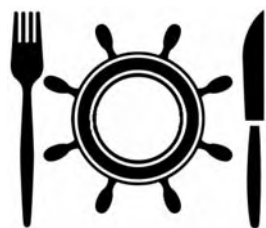
Eric Alexander



Sheba Halley Mason



Joe Pontillo



Tickets on Sale Now for Hackensack Riverkeeper's Annual Awards Dinner & Super 50/50!

Hackensack Riverkeeper will hold our Annual Awards Dinner and Sustainable SeafoodFest on October 14, 2010, and tickets are now on sale! This year's event will be held at a new location - the Holiday Inn in Hasbrouck Heights on Rt. 17 South - and will feature a silent auction and tricky tray, the drawing of our Super 50/50 Raffle, a cocktail reception featuring scrumptious items from Whole Foods Market, and a delicious, sustainable seafood dinner.

This year's honorees are David Grant, Former President and CEO of The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation; Margaret Utzinger, former President of Hackensack Riverkeeper's Board of Trustees; and Gil Hawkins, Executive Director of the Overpeck Preserve. All of them have made a difference in our watershed (and beyond) and we hope you will join us as we honor their achievements.

It promises to be an exciting night, and we hope you will be a part of it! Tickets are \$125 each and can be purchased at www.hackensackriverkeeper.org or by calling our office at 201-968-0808.

Super 50/50 Tickets are \$25 each.
1st Prize 30% of proceeds, 2nd Prize 15% and 3rd Prize 5%.
To buy tickets, return below coupon with payment (check or credit card), buy online, or call our office!
Tickets will be mailed upon receipt of payment.
Drawing will be held on October 14th, 2010 at our Annual Awards Dinner. Winners need not be present!

Super 50/50 Tickets

Name..... Phone #.....

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City.....State.....Zip.....

Number of Tickets..... x \$25 = Total \$.....

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Better Know a Colleague: NY/NJ Baykeeper

Part three of our 37-part series features our closest friend and ally

NY/NJ Baykeeper is the citizen guardian of the Hudson-Raritan Estuary. Since its founding more than twenty years ago, the organization has worked tirelessly to protect, preserve, and restore that special place to the benefit of both its natural and human communities. Baykeeper's track record is most impressive.

Through its comprehensive programs Baykeeper works to end pollution, improve public access, conserve and restore public lands, restore aquatic habitats (including shellfish beds and oyster reefs), encourage appropriate development and oppose the inappropriate. The organization also conducts public education campaigns and works with federal and state regulators, and citizen groups to plan for a sus-

tainable future in the region.

Founded in 1989 with the help of Hudson Riverkeeper and the American Littoral Society (and its founder, the late, great Dery Bennett), NY/NJ Baykeeper is now an independent nonprofit organization and a founding member of the Waterkeeper Alliance. Baykeeper has a full and part time staff, a Board of Directors and many dedicated volunteers. Baykeeper is the only bi-state full time advocate for the Hudson-Raritan Estuary and the NY/NJ Harbor region. The group is led by Baykeeper Debbie Mans, an environmental attorney and former environmental policy director during the Corzine administration.

In addition to the great work done in and around their home waters, the organization also helped



launch both Raritan Riverkeeper and our own Hackensack Riverkeeper. Former Baykeeper Andrew Willner was Captain Bill Sheehan's mentor in the early years of our organization and remains one of his most trusted advisors. Raritan Riverkeeper was founded as a Baykeeper program and is ably run by Riverkeeper (and our good buddy) Bill Schultz. You can learn all about our friends and the great work they do by clicking on: www.nynjbaykeeper.org.

Second Annual Reservoir Challenge

Hundreds celebrate alongside, recreate upon the Oradell Reservoir June 5

By Nicholas Vos-Wein

By all accounts, the 2010 Reservoir Challenge was a rousing success. Hackensack Riverkeeper and United Water partnered to bring over two hundred people to the reservoir on June 5 – paddlers and spectators alike. Paddlers from Bergen/Hudson/Rockland Counties, New York City and Central Jersey participated in the event. Rental boats were provided by our Paddling Center and by Ramsey Outdoor – one of our seven event sponsors. Other event sponsors were AXA Advisors, Bank of New Jersey, *Hackensack Chronicle*, *Northern Valley Suburbanite*, Rockland Electric Company, and Whole Foods Market – which donated both delicious, organic BBQ fare and the valuable time of volunteers to cook and serve it.

Check-in opened at 8 AM and the first race started at 9:30 AM. We staggered the 10K and 5K races, running them concurrently. The 10K winners were: Michael Mazur of Park Ridge, NJ in a 21-foot single kayak (1st Place 54:03), John Ponticorvo of Ridgefield, NJ in a 16.6-foot single-paddler canoe (2nd Place 55:15), and Bill & Jeanne-Marie O'Donnell of Bogota, NJ in an 18-foot canoe (3rd Place 1:02:50). The next-closest finisher was more than four minutes behind. The more competitive 5K race ended with Matthew Sheehan of Oradell, NJ (no relation to the Captain!) in his 16.5-foot kayak (1st Place 36:57), Dan Yoffee of Orangeburg, NY in a 12-foot Hackensack Riverkeeper kayak (2nd Place 37:23), and Robert Caruso of Verona, NJ in his 14-foot kayak (3rd Place 37:34). The top seven racers finished within four minutes of each other.

The next event was the Mayors



5k and 10k participants get ready to race!

Cup race – open to all mayors serving in upper Hackensack Watershed communities. As it happened, the outcome didn't change much from last year! Defending Cup champion Mayor John Birkner of Westwood once again took 1st Place despite the best (and comical) efforts of Haworth Mayor John Dean DiRienzo and Emerson Mayor Louis Lamatina (who finished second and third) to overtake him.

By holding the races in the morning – the coolest part of the day – we made it easier for all the racers. Doing so also allowed us to devote the bulk of the afternoon to leisurely paddling and a pair of 2-hour guided paddles led by yours truly. Although the wind picked up late in the day, making it a hard pull for some, a good time was had by all.

“There was something for everybody,” explained Hackensack Riverkeeper Captain Bill Sheehan. “Five paddling events to participate in or watch, great food and refreshments, and lots of fun – a good time was certainly had by all.”

In addition to the paddling events and BBQ, the 2010 Reservoir Challenge also featured live music from “Watchung Ridge” and “Crash Gordon and the Dummies” – a pair of north Jersey-based folk/bluegrass trios. Also, Hackensack Riverkeeper Program Director Hugh Carola led a pair of Bird-Walks along the lakeshore when he wasn't selling Keeperwear at the Riverkeeper booth.

“It's an incredible sight to see all those people in kayaks and canoes enjoying the pristine waterways that provide drinking water to nearly a million people in Bergen and Hudson counties, said United Water Senior Vice President Rich Henning. “We're proud to work with Hackensack Riverkeeper staff to make this day a reality for our customers.”

The Challenge saw the debut of Hackensack Riverkeeper's newest vessel – a 16-foot pontoon boat now deployed as the Paddling Center safety boat. Out on the

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HACKENSACK WATERSHED FIELD NOTES

Edited by Hugh M. Carola

Much as I hate to begin this report with bad news, I must: the Jersey City Osprey nest at PSE&G's Hudson Generating Station has failed. During an Eco-Cruise on 6/25, I discovered that one of the parent birds – which had been *breeding at the site for six years* – hanging dead from the nest platform. One of its feet was ensnared in what appeared to be a tangle of discarded fishing line and orange contractor netting. With one parent dead and the survivor unable to both feed and protect the nestlings, the young were left defenseless from the onslaught of flies and the attacks of gulls. We can only hope that their deaths were swift, not slow and lingering as it must have been for the parent.

So what does this tragedy tell us? For one thing it strengthens our resolve to do all we can to clean up our watershed and keep it clean. FYI, our River Cleanups do much more than just beautify parks and riverbanks – they remove potential deathtraps from wildlife habitat. If you're a fisherman, ask yourself: "Am I conservationist or just a jerk with a fishing pole?" Anyone who discards line (or bait cups, or soda cans or anything else) along the riverbank is nothing but a selfish jerk. And if you're a contractor or landscaper who just tosses plastic scraps and debris because "this is what we always do"; then you need to understand that the junk you toss today can kill wildlife tomorrow. So just stop it.

Okay, enough sermonizing; here's the list!

American Coot – Two birds were observed in Kearny Marsh on 4/28.

American White Pelican – On 5/1 a group from Cornell University reported seeing one of

these extremely rare (for New Jersey) birds flying to the west of Laurel Hill Park in Secaucus. Much more common in our state is the **Brown Pelican**, which can be seen throughout the summer along the Shore from Sandy Hook to Cape May.



American White Pelican

Bald Eagle – Overwintering eagles continued to be seen in our watershed through late mid-April with a bird being spotted over the Hackensack River in New Milford on 4/17. The pair nesting at Oradell Reservoir was observed on territory beginning in mid-February. An adult eagle was seen over the river in Secaucus during an Eco-Cruise on 5/4. Oradell UPDATE: In early May, staffers from the NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife discovered that the nest had failed this year. The adults were still on territory and being seen through late June.

Baltimore Oriole – Several pairs of these striking songbirds were reported nesting at Braddock/North Hudson Park in North Bergen on 5/10. It appears to be a good year for Orioles with reports from all across our watershed.

Black Vulture – This once Southern-only species has been greatly expanding its northern range over the past several decades. A single bird was observed flying over Farview Avenue in Paramus on 3/24.

Black Skimmer – During early June, numerous pairs and single birds were observed during Eco-Cruises.

Boat-tailed Grackle – More common down the shore but related to the **Common Grackle**, which is the "common" Grackle found in our watershed, a Boat-tail was observed at Laurel Hill County Park in Secaucus on 3/17. Another was noted upriver at Mill Creek Point on 4/2.

Box Turtle – One of these terrestrial turtles was seen and photographed in Little Ferry on 5/12; and more importantly *it was left alone* – as wildlife should always be.

Clay-colored Sparrow – One was spotted along the Saw Mill Creek trail at DeKorte Park in Lyndhurst on 5/11.

Common Raven – On 3/21 the "Secaucus pair" was officially reported to have returned to their nesting site on Laurel Hill. By early May, four young were confirmed. Two were reported fledged on 5/1; the others a week later. Single birds were seen in the vicinity through early July.

Eastern Coyote – A single animal was observed walking along the Hackensack River in an uninhabited area of the southern Meadowlands on 6/9.

Eastern Meadowlark – Uncommon in our watershed during any season, a single bird was noted at the Xchange at Secaucus on 3/17.

Green-winged Teal – Lingering flocks of ducks were seen at Anderson Creek Marsh and Kearny Marsh on 4/28.

Harbor Seal – A very attentive traveler spotted one on 4/18 in the Hudson River just offshore from the Light Rail station and the NY Waterway ferry slip in Hoboken. He said, "The seal's head could be seen looking around at the surface

Continued on Page 14

2010 Eco-Programs Going Strong

Great weather, lots of wildlife and plenty of things to do at the river

Unbelievably, our 2010 Eco-Program season is already half-over! But don't worry, we still have plenty of Eco-Cruises, Guided Paddles and River Cleanups, ten weekends' worth of canoe and kayak rentals, and more still to come, including...

ECO-CRUISES

Eco-Cruises are 2½ hour tours conducted along the lower Hackensack River and Newark Bay by USCG-licensed Captains Bill Sheehan and Hugh Carola aboard the 28-foot pontoon cruisers *Edward Abbey* and *Robert H. Boyle*. Three itineraries are available:

BOATING THROUGH BERGEN ^(M) Take a trip up the Hackensack River from the southern Meadowlands to the heart of Hackensack. Following the route traveled by coastal schooners that once carried cargo to and from Bergen County, we will discuss the region's maritime history – including a seldom-told tale of the American Revolution.

EXCURSION AROUND THE BAY ^(B) Travel all the way to Staten Island and back! After leaving the Hackensack River, we will motor south on Newark Bay past Port Newark /Port Elizabeth with their array of tugs, barges and cargo ships being loaded and unloaded. On our way back, we'll explore the Bayonne bayshore, home to numerous parks and historic sites.

MEADOWLANDS DISCOVERY ^(M) Come explore the lower Hackensack River and its wildlife-rich estuary, the Meadowlands. The shallow draft of our pontoon boats allows us to explore wetlands and navigate the area's shallow tidal tributaries including the marshes of the Sawmill Creek Wildlife Management Area – home to a staggering array of wildlife.

Open Eco-Cruises depart from Laurel Hill County Park in Secaucus, NJ and are open to individuals, couples, families and the like. We ask a donation of \$25 per person/ \$10 each for children between the ages of 4 and 12. Reservations secured with a credit card are *required*. To reserve your seats, call Capt. Hugh at 201-968-0808. Open Eco-Cruises are not recommended for children under 4; and are *not* available for large group trips.

OPEN ECO-CRUISE SCHEDULE

Sat, 8/21 ^H	5 PM	Sun, 9/19 ^M	3 PM
Sun, 8/22 ^M	5 PM	Sat, 9/25 ^B	3 PM
Sat, 8/28 ^M	5 PM	Sat, 9/26 ^M	Noon
Sun, 8/29 ^B	3 PM	Sat, 10/2 ^M	Noon
Sat, 9/4 ^H	5 PM	Sun, 10/3 ^B	Noon
Sat, 9/18 ^H	5 PM	Sat, 10/9 ^M	Noon
Sun, 9/19 ^M	Noon	Sun, 10/10 ^H	Noon

Group Charter Eco-Cruises can be arranged for up to thirty people. They can be conducted from either Laurel Hill Park or the marina at the Secaucus Red Roof Inn. Adult Charters can be arranged for a donation of \$300 per boat; Youth Charters for \$250 per boat. You choose the itinerary. **Combination Programs** for youth groups of up to 34 individuals can be arranged for a donation of \$300. Call Capt. Hugh at 201-968-0808 for more details.

THE PADDLING CENTER AT LAUREL HILL PARK

Get a close-up view of the Meadowlands and a decent upper-body workout by paddling a canoe or kayak from our Paddling Center. Weather permitting; the Center is open weekends for **CANOE AND KAYAK RENTALS** through Saturday, October 30 (plus Labor Day). **Fees:** \$25 per paddler / \$10 per canoe passenger. Call the Center at 201-920-4746 to check on weather conditions and boat availability. Advance reservations are not required for rentals. **GUIDED PADDLES** are also available. Departing from the Paddling Center, most trips include an exploration of the Sawmill WMA and Kingsland Marsh over a 2-3 hour period.

GUIDED PADDLE SCHEDULE

Sun, 8/15	12:30 PM (High Tide)
Sun, 8/29	3:30 PM (Low Tide)
Sat, 9/4	9 AM (Low Tide Birding)
Sun, 9/5	5 PM (High Tide Sunset)
Sat, 9/18	9 AM (Low Tide Birding)
Sat, 9/18	3 PM (High Tide)
Sun, 9/26	9:30 AM (High Tide)
Sun, 9/26	3:30 PM (Low Tide)

Costs: \$30 per paddler; \$15 per canoe passenger; \$10 per paddler with their own boat(s). Reservations secured with a credit card are *required*. Age restrictions apply; call Capt. Hugh at 201-968-0808 for more info and to reserve your boat(s).

PLEASE NOTE: Guided Paddles are *not* appropriate for large groups. However, **Charter trips** can be arranged for \$200-\$300 depending upon the number of paddlers. For more info, call Capt. Hugh at 201-968-0808.

2010 Eco-Program Schedule

(continued)

RIVER CLEANUPS

This is active conservation. It offers you the ability to give back to your community and the watershed by cleaning up the Hackensack River and its tributaries. You just show up in clothes you don't mind getting dirty in. We'll provide everything else including canoes for working from the water. Just look for our tent and Mobile Cleanup Unit; check in with Operations Director Lisa Ryan and get started. To receive an informational email prior to each cleanup, please sign up on our website or email info@hackensackriverkeeper.org.

PLEASE REMEMBER: Organized groups from Hackensack River Watershed communities are welcome at our Cleanups; BUT we ask they bring *no more than ten people* to any event. Group organizers should join our volunteer email list for updated information.

RIVER CLEANUP SCHEDULE

Sat, 8/14 11 AM-4 PM, Check website for location
Sun, 9/26 10 AM-2 PM, Brett Park, Teaneck, NJ
Sat, 10/9 10 AM-2 PM, Mill Creek Point, Secaucus, NJ

AND THAT'S NOT ALL! We also offer:

- **BIRD-WALKS.** Designed for groups of up to 12 people, guided Bird-Walks can be conducted at many birding hotspots both within and near the Hackensack River Watershed. We'll be happy to plan a field trip that works best for your group. For more information, call Hugh at 201-968-0808. **Costs:** \$150 for a 2-hour walk; \$200 for a 3-hour walk or hawk watch.
- **CORPORATE RIVER STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM.** If you're looking for a corporate or organizational team-building activity that's fun, meaningful and has lasting effect, consider sponsoring a **RIVER CLEANUP**. It's a great way to engage and inspire your employees or members. To learn more about how your company or board can participate in Hackensack Riverkeeper's Corporate River Stewardship Program, give Lisa a call or email her at info@HackensackRiverkeeper.org.
- **INDOOR PRESENTATIONS.** Captain Bill Sheehan and other members of our staff can bring the watershed *to you* with a presentation to your club, school or organization in the comfort of your own space. We can present a PowerPoint slideshow, video presentation or lecture/watershed update with Q&A – all for reasonable honoraria. For more info or to book a presentation, call 201-968-0808 and ask for Hugh or Lisa.

See you at the River (or thereabouts)!

Letters to Riverkeeper

Hey, I just found your site! BRAVO!! I grew up in New Milford, living there from 1965-1990. The "Hacky" has always been among my favorite places in the world. This morning my children replaced "river" with "Hacky" in a closing hymn at church. My Geography students locate it on a map for our final exams, noting the ecology of the river system, and my History students read Thomas Paine's *The Crisis*:

"As I was with the troops at Fort Lee, and marched with them to the edge of Pennsylvania, I am well acquainted with many circumstances, which those who live at a distance know but little or nothing of. Our situation there was exceedingly cramped, the place being a narrow neck of land between the North River and the Hackensack."

My brother married a descendant of the original Demerest who founded our town, so my nieces and nephews all grew up with the connection to their ancestor who first sailed up the river and buried his wife, having died of smallpox, on the shore of what is now New Milford.

I keep a small bottle of Hacky water in my office, my kids remove their hats when we cross over it by car on visits to my dad's house. Now that I see all this in writing I am tempted to think I am a bit silly about the whole thing. But it was on her shores that mother nature spoke to me, that my thirst for adventure was teased to fruition, and from the old iron bridge which used to turn, that my mother, may she rest in peace, swore she saw an Indian in a canoe glide directly beneath her, and glance upward at her before disappearing underneath, and not coming out the other side. She said there was a turtle painted on the side and showed me a picture once of the turtle symbol some New Jersey Indians used for their symbol. I have gone "tubbing", fallen in, been covered in black Hacky silt, mucked around it's banks, rocked her ice floes and have come face to face with the largest prehistoric snappers on the eastern seaboard. I have several times begun "Ode to the Hacky", an epic of sorts in iambic pentameter. But it needs to write itself.

God bless you riverkeeper.

Sincerely
Timothy G. Murphy
La Porte, Indiana

Field Notes

Continued from Page 11

before it submerged and reappeared a few minutes later.”

Hooded Warbler - A male was heard and seen at Flat Rock Brook Nature Center in Englewood on 5/16.

Horned Grebe – Often seen in coastal bays in winter but almost never in spring, a rare individual *in breeding plumage* was observed on Lake Tappan on 5/15.

Iceland Gull – Occasional here in winter, very rare in spring. Nonetheless, an adult bird was noted 5/8 at Rutkowski Park in Bayonne.

Killdeer – One of our favorite harbingers of spring, one of these shorebirds was heard calling while flying over our Hackensack offices on 3/16. By early May, LOTS of breeding birds were seen and heard throughout the Meadowlands area.

Louisiana Waterthrush – A birder/paddler friend of ours noted one of these “skulkers” along the river at the first river bend downstream from the Oradell Avenue Bridge in Oradell on 5/4.

Monk Parakeet – Our region’s biggest colony – on Hendricks Causeway at Overpeck Creek between Ridgefield and Ridgefield Park – was off limits to birders this season due to bridge maintenance. However, the birds were given a boost by the contractors who built nest boxes atop nearby (and unused) utility poles.

Mourning Warbler – Always a great find, a pair was spotted at Flat Rock Brook Nature Center 5/16; a single bird was observed at Schmidt's Woods in Secaucus on 5/22.

Northern Gannet – Rarely seen inland anywhere, a pair of these large seabirds was observed over the Hackensack River near Overpeck Creek on 3/15 thanks to the nor’easter that brought them our way.

Northern Shoveler – Overwintering ducks were at Mehrhof Pond through early May.

Northern Shrike – The “Lyndhurst bird” continued to be seen along Disposal Road near DeKorte Park through late March.

Orchard Oriole – One was noted at DeKorte May 12; several others were seen at Overpeck Preserve in Leonia that same week.

Osprey – The first Osprey reported in our watershed was seen perched on a tree behind a building on Chubb Ave., Lyndhurst on 3/23. On 4/2 the Kearny pair had returned to their riverside nest near the NJ Turnpike’s Eastern spur bridge. It was not until 5/1 that we confirmed that the Jersey City pair was on territory at the PSE&G nest platform. Two weeks later on

5/14 a third pair was discovered nesting in the Meadowlands: in Carlstadt on a radio tower. Osprey UPDATE: At press time three fledglings were confirmed at Kearny, two in Carlstadt and sadly, as reported above, the Jersey City nest failed.

Peregrine Falcon – One was observed perched near the Route 46 Bridge over the river between Little Ferry and Ridgefield Park on 3/8 – a 2009 breeding pair site. A pair was seen perching at the Route 3 bridges on 4/23; a male on 5/2. Two immature females were seen at Route 3 from early June through press time. Unfortunately breeding has not appeared to have occurred at either site.

Red-headed Woodpecker – The “Van Buskirk Island bird” continued to be observed at that Oradell location through late March. Another Red-head showed up and was noted at Bayonne Park on 5/5.

Snapping Turtle – A pair of enormous turtles was seen basking on a log alongside the Oradell Reservoir in Emerson on 5/15. They had shells estimated to be at least two feet long from front to back – making each animal well *over one hundred years old!*

Spotted Sandpiper – The only nesting sandpiper in our region, two birds were seen in the Mill Creek Marsh on 6/15. Others were “spotted” throughout July.

Tree Swallow – First reports of this early arrival came in on St. Patrick’s Day, 3/17 from DeKorte Park.

Warblers (spp.) – A colleague listed a great group (**Black-and-white, Black-throated Blue, Magnolia, Northern Parula, and Yellow Warbler**) on 5/5 at Bayonne Park.

Wilson's Snipe – One of our earlier shorebird migrants, a single individual was flushed from the shore of the Teal Pond near the power lines at DeKorte Park on 3/21.

Wood Duck – Four males were seen and heard calling over Kearny Marsh on 4/28.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker – Hudson County was *the* place for lingering sapsuckers in April; one was discovered at Schmidt’s Woods on 4/2; another on 4/4 on Lincoln Park West in Jersey City.

Yellow-crowned Night Heron – In addition to five nests confirmed at Harmon Cove in Secaucus on 5/23; two additional nests were discovered at Schmidt’s Woods on 6/13 on 7/18, six nestlings were confirmed at Schmidt’s.

Thanks to all our spotters and as always, a tip o’ the naturalist’s hat (from A to W) to: Joe Augeri, Jay Auslander, Pete Bacinski, Rachel Banai, Scott Barnes, Al Barrera, Kevin Burke, Gerry and Harry Byrne, Dan Carola, Stania Cortright, Ray Duffy, Pete Dunne, Gene Dunton, Jon Goodnough, Gil Hawkins, Lynn Kramer, Joe Labriola, Mike Newhouse, Mike Ruscigno, Bill Sheehan, Bernie Sobolewski, Don Torino, Nick Vos-Wein, Kate Wade, and Jim Wright.

NJ League of Conservation Voters

Continued from Page 1

NJLCV will develop and publish a scorecard for state and county legislators on key environmental legislation and actions, and a report card for the governor and his administration. Using the scorecard, NJLCV will track elected officials' voting records to distinguish between those who act to protect and improve the state's environment and those who don't. The Governor's report card will grade the administration based upon how environmental legislation is signed or vetoed, whether environmental regulations are adopted or blocked, and how well the Governor and his administration demonstrate positive leadership to improve New Jersey's health and quality of life.

"In recent years, far too few elected officials have made the environment and our health a priority, said Captain Bill Sheehan. "Many citizens are concerned that our environmental laws, regulations and programs are under attack by those who would roll back the substantial progress that has been made in the last fifty years."

The NJLCV will strengthen environmental advocacy by informing legislators about issues and educating voters regarding legislators' voting records. The organization will alert the public and the media of key actions (or inactions) of public officials; and closely monitor regulatory agencies and executive appointments. Most importantly, the scorecard and report card will provide voters with accessible, understandable information detailing the environmental positions of every serving official and/or candidate for office.

"We will develop a proactive environmental agenda seeking adoption of key policies and laws that are needed to safeguard the environment of every community in New Jersey," said NY/NJ Baykeeper Debbie Mans, NJLCV Chair. "And in so doing, we will work

to empower the entire environmental community to become more engaged and effective in the public policy process."

While the NJLCV will initially serve as a voter education provider, future plans include the establishment of a full-fledged Political Action Committee (PAC). Once established, an LCV PAC will be able to openly endorse or oppose candidates based upon their voting records and/or public positions on environmental issues. Currently, only the NJ Environmental Federation (which endorsed Governor Christie) and the Sierra Club (which endorsed Independent Chris Daggett) and the NJ Outdoor Alliance – a sportsmen's PAC that endorsed Christie – make political endorsements. Obviously there's room for more voices.

"From Washington to Trenton and all across America, it's more important than ever that we advance strong environmental policies that protect the air our children breathe and the water they drink," said Shirin Bidel-Niyat, national LCV campaigns director. "We welcome the New Jersey League of Conservation Voters to the LCV family and we look forward to working with them to build a cleaner, safer, more sustainable future."

In addition to Capt. Bill Sheehan and Debbie Mans, the NJLCV Board of Directors is led by representatives from the Alliance of NJ Environmental Commissions (ANJEC), American Littoral Society, Environmental Justice Advisory Council, NJ Audubon Society, NJ Conservation Foundation, NJ Highlands Coalition, Pinelands Preservation Alliance, Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association and Trust for Public Land.

For more information about the New Jersey League of Conservation Voters, visit www.njlc.org or email information@njlc.org. For more information about the national LCV, go to www.lcv.org

Reservoir Challenge

Continued from Page 10

reservoir it proved itself an able camera platform as well. Providing official security for the event were police, fire and EMS personnel from Haworth and Oradell, NJ.

New this year was a Pre-Challenge reception co-hosted by Hackensack Riverkeeper and our friends at the Teaneck Creek Conservancy (which will soon be featured in an upcoming "Better

Know a Colleague" column). The event took place the evening before at United Water's corporate HQ in Harrington Park, NJ; and featured a selection of fine wines and gourmet specialties from area restaurants. The reception was a benefit fundraiser for Hackensack Riverkeeper and the Teaneck Creek Conservancy; plans are already underway for

next year's reception.

Until then paddlers (and friends) take note: Reservoir Challenge III is scheduled for Saturday, June 4, 2011. See you there!



Thank You Madam President

By Capt. Bill Sheehan

In 1997, I was in the process of founding Hackensack Riverkeeper. At the time, Margaret Utzinger was the head of the Hackensack River Coalition (HRC), a nonprofit organization she had started with some neighbors and friends several years earlier. Out of respect for the work that she did with the HRC, I contacted Margaret to inform her that we were starting a Riverkeeper program on the river, and to ask her how the two organizations could coexist and work toward common goals. At that point, Margaret told me that the coalition was about to be disbanded because her real job was placing more and more responsibility on her shoulders. She wished me well and told me that the HRC would like to make a

donation of several hundred dollars to the new Riverkeeper organization. I then asked Margaret if she would be willing to serve on the Board of Hackensack Riverkeeper, and she agreed. At the very first meeting of the very first Board, Margaret was elected President of the Board, a position that she held until June of this year, when she stepped down and was replaced by our Vice President, Ivan Kossak. During her 13-year tenure as President, the organization has grown from a volunteer Riverkeeper (me) working alone to a professional organization with a staff of six and an enviable record of meeting its mission. Often, the success of Hackensack Riverkeeper is attributed to the work that I've done, but the truth is that without

people like Margaret, I would not be able to do that work. The Board provides guidance and support when necessary and ultimately carries the fiduciary responsibility of the organization. I want to thank Margaret for her years of service as President, her generosity, her hospitality, her unflinching support of me and my staff, and of course, her friendship. I am grateful that Margaret will continue to serve on the Board as a Trustee.



Margaret Utzinger

Earth Share New Jersey Week!

By Diane Saccoccia



Members of Earth Share New Jersey (ESNJ) will be coordinating events throughout the state during the week of September 19th to showcase the many environmental experiences our state has to offer! Locally, please join Flat Rock Brook and Hackensack Riverkeeper on September 25th as we join in the celebration of our state.

Flat Rock Brook Nature Center (Englewood) will be planting native ferns, perennials, and wildflowers as part of a habitat restoration project. These plantings will help compliment work being currently conducted to help restore native woodland on an old gravel road that runs through the park. These plantings will be part of a larger project in which 700 native plants will be planted in the preserve.

After your volunteer effort at FRB, feel free to continue with EarthShare New Jersey Week by taking a 2.5 hour Eco-Cruise with Hackensack Riverkeeper that afternoon. Learn about the area's colorful history, observe wildlife in its natural habitat and have lots of fun.

Flat Rock Brook's volunteer event: Saturday, September 25, 9:30 to 11:00 a.m.

For adults and children ages 8 and older - No need to register and free for all. For questions about Flat Rock Brook's volunteer event, contact Land Manager Ryan Hasko at (201) 567-1265.

Hackensack Riverkeeper's Eco-Cruise: Saturday, September 25, Noon to 2:30 p.m.

Registration is required. Contact Hackensack Riverkeeper at (201) 968-0808 to register. Cost is \$25 per person, \$10 for children 4-10.

For more info on EarthShare and ESNJ week, please visit www.earthsharenj.org.

Oyster Project

Continued from Page 1

and our oysters have consistently produced abnormally thin shells that make the animals undesirable for use in the human food chain. However, these facts were not considered by NJDEP when the research ban was imposed, and many people are asking why the State took such a draconian and chilling action.

Two State Senators from Bergen County (Paul Sarlo and Gerald Cardinale) have drafted a Bill (S-2122) that would stop the NJDEP from banning research and restoration in the Hudson-Raritan Estuary. This bill is now pending before the Senate Environment and Energy Subcommittee. We applaud the actions of these courageous legislators. Thanks in part to their questioning this ban, it has come out

that since a 2008 U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) evaluation, NJDEP has been issued warnings stating that NJDEP has not provided enough oversight of New Jersey's \$790 million shellfish industry - based primarily in southern New Jersey. The FDA is claiming that New Jersey's lack of patrols and inspections of processing facilities are placing human health at risk. The federal agency is threatening to shut down the industry if the state does not come into compliance and meet all prior commitments made to FDA.

As Riverkeeper supporters know, warning people about the dangers of eating Hackensack blue claw crabs contaminated with dioxin is something Riverkeeper has done for years. Those of us working to restore the HRE are fighting for clean waters and the safety of both humans and the species actu-

ally living in the estuary.

We encourage Commissioner Martin to convene his Science Advisory Board to solicit suggestions from experts in the field *outside* of NJDEP. We also hope the NJDEP will rethink its current anti-research position and take the steps necessary to meet FDA regulations - steps that do not need to include ending scientific research in northern waters that have no connection to deficiencies identified in shellfish harvesting waters. While Riverkeeper's research may be a short-term scapegoat, it does not solve the real problem of protecting consumers from an inadequately patrolled shellfish industry.

To read the complete FDA report visit www.Hackensackriverkeeper.org, or go to http://www.peer.org/docs/nj/7_14_10_FDA_evaluation_NJ_Shellfish.pdf.

Crowne Plaza

Continued from Page 4

Materials' dumping of acid-laden wastewater into the river the previous year. Two years earlier, our organization worked very closely with SDAG Bonanno on the Columbia Terminals case. That case ended with the responsible party pleading guilty to illegally receiving, storing and disposing of toxic waste into the river and Newark Bay, paying a fine of over \$1 million to the state, and making a \$100,000 restitution payment to Hackensack Riverkeeper - money that bought our Main Street headquarters.

The DCJ press release concluded with: "By working closely with law enforcement and monitoring suspected problem areas, [Hackensack Riverkeeper] will enhance the ability of the Division of Criminal Justice, DEP and other law enforcement agencies to detect and prosecute environmental violations and potentially avert serious environmental and public health incidents."

"That's our job," says Captain Bill. "It's what we do."

Welcome to a world where pollinators buzz, bite, hum, and drink blood. . .

Do Bats Drink Blood?

or do they?

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Do Hummingbirds Hum?

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Volunteer Corner

by Lisa Ryan

We've done so many cleanups this year, we can't even fit them all on these two pages! Stay tuned to the next issue for more photos of folks from all walks of life gettin' mucky in the Hacky!

Earth Day Cleanup, Overpeck Park, Leonia, April 18



Fairleigh Dickinson University, Teaneck, April 20



Panasonic North America, Laurel Hill Park, Secaucus, April 23



Oradell to River Edge Cleanup, May 2



Oradell to River Edge Cleanup, May 2 (continued)



Passaic River Maritime Festival, Newark, May 15



Oradell Reservoir, Harrington Park, May 22



Mill Creek Marsh, Secaucus, June 12



Special Thanks to our Corporate Cleanup Sponsors who, along with our volunteers, supported the River Cleanup program over the past few months. Panasonic North America United Water New Jersey Wilenta Carting

River Vale

Continued from Page 6

ing to acquire several tracts of critical buffer lands to protect the land and water resources of the County. Former UPG lands that were rescued from imminent destruction at the hands of developers include the area known today as Emerson Woods off Main Street in Emerson, a seven acre parcel in Old Tappan near the Lake Tappan Reservoir and the River Vale property known today as the Poplar Road Sanctuary. Unfortunately there were three parcels still in the hands of River Vale developers who were aggressively seeking permits and approvals from the Borough of River Vale.

Many late nights were spent at Planning Board meetings stretching *over three administrations* in River Vale. At one critical point in the process HRI petitioned the NJDEP for Category One (C-1) status for the waterways that supply our drinking water and the DEP promulgated a rule to achieve the highest level of protection based on our petition. Undeterred, the developer promptly redrew the site plans for all three properties (known as I7C, I6A and I6B) so as to avoid the newly imposed 300-foot buffers required by the C-1 rule. They then went back to the Planning Board seeking (and some might say

demanding) approvals. The quest to save these parcels from development dragged on.

Then two years ago the real estate boom tanked and the compelling need to develop this land took an unexpected dive. Seizing the moment, a meeting was called at the BC Planning Department. It was at this meeting that we perceived a slight difference in the attitude of the developers and decided to redouble our efforts to save the land. Things began to happen and before long TPL became engaged, saying that they were involved in other transactions with the parent company of River Vale Developers and would attempt to broker a deal on behalf of the County.

In the meantime the Borough of River Vale was also negotiating directly with the developer to preserve the tract known as I6A. The town agreed to buy it and work with the developer to cluster their development on I6B, a proposal that HRI and SWAN were not crazy about, but we had little or no leverage to fight it.

Earlier this year, that deal was consummated and I6A was protected. TPL continued to negotiate for the acquisition of I7C and that deal closed on July 3rd, and was funded by \$1.585 million from the County Open Space Trust Fund, \$215,000 from the County Green Acres

Planning Incentive grant, \$200,000 from TPL, two Green Acres grants awarded to SWAN for \$850,000, and \$550,000 from Hackensack Riverkeeper's Green Acres account.

Hundreds of people helped us to get to that point. They include the citizens of River Vale who sacrificed their time to attend and speak out at planning board meetings, Hackensack Riverkeeper and SWAN contributors who provided the resources for us to stay the course, the Bergen County Trust Fund Committee and the Board of Chosen Freeholders, who believed in the project's worth.

This land could not have been saved without the efforts put forth by the following individuals: County Executive Dennis McNerney, Bergen County Director of Planning Farouk Ahmad, Adam Strobel and Robert Abbatomarco of the Bergen County Open Space Trust Fund, Haworth Mayor John Dean DeRienzo, TPL's Terrence Nolan, Lisa Stern and the staff of the Green Acres Program, our staff attorney, Chris Len, who counseled me through the end game of this project with wit and wisdom, and of course Mark Becker and Lori Charkey of SWAN, who have never given up the struggle to protect our precious drinking water supply. Thank you everyone for a job well done.



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A New River Creeper Record!

World Series of Birding team lists 119 species despite missing HOUSE FINCH

By Hugh M. Carola

All I can say is that it must have been some sort of cosmic alignment on May 15: the weather was perfect, the team was reunited, and unlike last year I was 100% healthy. All of that led to our best World Series of Birding ever – a record 119 species listed during NJ Audubon’s premier event. The birding was usually great (got our first-ever Little Blue Heron, Black Vulture and Olive-sided Flycatcher) and sometimes frustrating (no House Finch!), but the entire 18.5 hours went smoother than ever before. It was a great way to celebrate the team’s 10th Anniversary.

As always, we birded an area bounded by the Hudson River in the east, the Hackensack River Watershed in the west, the NJ/NY border in the north and Newark Bay in the south: Watershed Management Area 5. We went to parks, natural areas, industrial zones, subdivisions, United Water properties, and the river itself to list as many species as possible and raise as much money as possible for Hackensack Riverkeeper.

Speaking of money, at press time

we hadn’t yet received every WSB donation pledged but when all is said and done, we expect to surpass last year’s mark and raise over \$8,000, thanks to our ever-growing roster of WSB supporters.

Many thanks also to our sponsor, SHOP RITE SUPERMARKETS and to Suzanne Forbes, Shop Rite’s Environmental Affairs Manager for their support. In addition to sponsoring the Hackensack RiverCreeper, the company also sponsors NJ Audubon’s WSB Finish Line Brunch each year in Cape May. Thanks also to John Perkins and TOYOTA OF HACKENSACK for the loan of very comfortable Toyota 4Runner which allowed us to bird in safety, comfort, and in places where we might not otherwise have ventured. It made a big difference.

But there would be no team at all without the “Special Ks”:

- Kerul Kassel, Personal Life Coach who journeyed from Florida – as she has every year since we started in 2001 – to pilot the team through the maze of habitats and hotspots that is the upper watershed. Much appreciated was her

oft-consulted iBird application.

- Ivan Kossak, Hackensack Riverkeeper Board President and CPA, who barely got time to breathe after this year’s extended tax season before leaving home at 2 AM to meet us at 3. His ever-increasing knowledge of the Meadowlands is an invaluable asset to the team.

- Dave Kaplan, Principal of Bogert Elementary School in Upper Saddle River, whom we happily welcomed back to the team this year. Special thanks go to 8-yr. old Jake Kaplan for letting his daddy come birding with us all day and half the night.

As usual, I did the driving (on-road and on-water) as well as the paperwork; plus I contributed a couple of bird IDs as well). But seriously, Kerul, Ivan and Dave aren’t just great birders; they’re committed environmentalists and great friends, too. And that is a winning combination any way you look at it. For those who missed out on the 2010 WSB, next year’s version takes place May 14, 2011. Stay tuned!

Mute Swan	Bald Eagle	Red-bellied Woodpecker	House Wren	Ovenbird
Brant	Red-tailed hawk	Downy Woodpecker	Marsh Wren	Northern Waterthrush
Canada Goose	Peregrine Falcon	Hairy Woodpecker	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Common Yellowthroat
Wood Duck	Clapper Rail	Northern Flicker	Veery	Wilson’s Warbler
Gadwall	Virginia Rail	Olive-sided Flycatcher*	Swainson’s Thrush	Canada Warbler
American Black Duck	Semipalmated Plover	Eastern Wood-Pewee	Wood Thrush	Chipping Sparrow
Mallard	Killdeer	Willow Flycatcher	American Robin	Song Sparrow
Blue-winged Teal	Greater Yellowlegs	Least Flycatcher	Gray Catbird	Swamp Sparrow
Northern Shoveler	Lesser Yellowlegs	Eastern Phoebe	Northern Mockingbird	Scarlet Tanager
Ruddy Duck	Solitary Sandpiper	Great Crested Flycatcher	European Starling	Northern Cardinal
Ring-necked Pheasant	Spotted Sandpiper	Eastern Kingbird	Cedar Waxwing	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Wild Turkey	Least Sandpiper	Warbling Vireo	Blue-winged Warbler	Indigo Bunting
Horned Grebe	Dunlin	Red-eyed Vireo	Nashville Warbler	Red-winged Blackbird
Double-crested Cormorant	Ring-billed Gull	Tree Swallow	Northern Parula	Common Grackle
Great Blue Heron	Herring Gull	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	Yellow Warbler	Brown-headed Cowbird
Great Egret	Great Black-backed Gull	Cliff Swallow	Chestnut-sided Warbler	Orchard Oriole
Snowy Egret	Least Tern	Barn Swallow	Magnolia Warbler	Baltimore Oriole
Little Blue Heron*	Forster’s Tern	Blue Jay	Black-throated Blue Warbler	American Goldfinch
Green Heron	Mourning Dove	American Crow	Yellow-rumped Warbler	House Sparrow
Black-crowned Night-heron	Rock Pigeon	Fish Crow	Black-throated Green Warbler	Highlights:
Yellow-crowned Night-heron	Monk Parakeet	Common Raven	Blackburnian Warbler	• 19 warblers
Black Vulture*	Barn Owl	Black-capped Chickadee	Pine Warbler	• 7 flycatchers
Turkey Vulture	Easter Screech-owl	Tufted Titmouse	Blackpoll Warbler	• First-ever *Little Blue Heron, Black Vulture & Olive-sided Flycatcher
Osprey	Common Nighthawk	White-breasted Nuthatch	Black-and-white Warbler	• NO House Finch!
	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Carolina Wren	American Redstart	

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each year you will be entitled to another \$500 income tax deduction for the annual premiums you pay, saving \$140 in income taxes. At your death, the full \$50,000 proceeds will be used to support your selected charity’s important programs.

For more information please contact Mary-Jo P. Knight (212) 541-1907 or Bruce Maier (212) 541-1925 at AXA Advisors, LLC.

This article is intended to show only some of the ways you can benefit from making a charitable donation and potentially minimizing your federal tax liability with examples of anticipated federal tax results. The deduction examples are based on IRS tables linked to interest discount rates that change every month. Additionally, in some states, a charity does not have an “insurable interest” in the lives of its donors, which may mean that the charity cannot own the policy. You should always consult with your tax and legal advisors on tax-related matters affecting you, specific to your state and individual situation.

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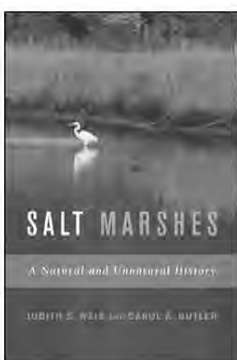
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Ron Vellekamp Scholarship Awarded

By Hugh M. Carola

On June 17, Captain Bill Sheehan had the honor and privilege of presenting the 2010 RON VELLEKAMP ENVIRONMENTAL SCHOLARSHIP to Elaine Gomez of Union City, NJ. Not only did Elaine amass an impressive academic record at the Academy of Enrichment and Achievement at Union City High School, ranking fourth in a graduating class of 606, she spent much of her extracurricular time in environmental pursuits and leadership.

“As we reviewed this year’s applications, we couldn’t help but be singularly impressed by Elaine’s commitment to sustainability and a green lifestyle,” said Captain Bill, himself a graduate of Union City HS. “But it was her proven leadership that truly set her apart from the other, well-deserving applicants.”

Among her extensive list of activities was her founding of UCHS’s Environmental Action Project – an initiative to boost environmental awareness and sustainability by partnering with the Union City Board of Education and Department of Public Works. EAP events and presentations are translated into Spanish and broadcast (in both Spanish and English) on Union City’s Local Access Channel 77.

Elaine spent the summer of 2008 as an intern at the Meadowlands Environmental Research Institute and last summer worked as a student researcher at Montclair State University studying sediment toxicity in New York’s Jamaica Bay – part of the NY/NJ Harbor Estuary. Last summer she also completed course work at New York University studying biodiversity, demographics and energy/water conservation. This past year, Elaine served as president of the school’s Science Club and Eagle Vision – UCHS’s audio/visual arts club.

In September, Elaine will begin her collegiate career at the Albert Dorman Honors College of New Jersey Institute of Technology where she plans to study environmental engineering. Needless to say, all of us at Hackensack Riverkeeper wish her success – and we look forward to working with her as a colleague in the future.

The Ron Vellekamp Environmental Scholarship was founded ten years ago by friends and family of the late Mr. Vellekamp – a dedicated teacher, Scout leader, Palisades Interstate Park ranger and trustee of Hackensack Riverkeeper. Each year the program honors a deserving high school graduate from the Hackensack River Watershed who has both good grades and a strong desire to protect the environment. This year, ten students were nominated from among 63 eligible high schools in NJ & NY.

At the Helm

Continued from Page 2

sors and making an investment for the people of Bergen that will pay dividends in entertainment, recreation, and enjoyment of the outdoors for generations to come.

About 10 miles downriver in Jersey City is Lincoln Park. Lincoln Park is one of the historic open spaces of Hudson County built over a century ago. The Park begins at Kennedy Boulevard and marches west across Jersey City to the banks of the Hackensack. In the early days the western edge of the park had a formal promenade and offered city dwellers the chance to get to the water’s edge and even rent rowboats. Unfortunately, during the mid to late twentieth century the western part of the park fell into a state of disrepair. This was

mainly due to neglect but some enterprising political type actually let illegal dumping take place, really damaging both the ecology and recreational value of this precious park. It was a shame.

But today there is a huge project underway and Lincoln Park West (LPW) will soon be returned to the people as a Class A park and much needed recreation site. On Earth Day we all gathered at LPW to hear the Secretary of Commerce announce that LPW has received the largest single Recovery Act grant, through NOAA (National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration), to restore the wetlands and tidal ponds. This restoration project has been in the works for nearly twenty years, and during that time has received monies from Green Acres and the NJDEP Natural Resources Damages fund.

The Hudson County Parks Dept. were diligent in their planning and designing so when President Obama called for shovel-ready projects that would put Americans back to work, this project went to the head of the class. In addition to the wetlands restoration project, the people of Hudson are going to benefit from a brand new 9-hole *public* golf course. In the last ten years, two new golf courses were built in Hudson County, but both are private clubs with exclusionary membership fees. The new course at LPW will be affordable to the average citizens of the County.

As your Riverkeeper I salute the leadership of Bergen and Hudson Counties for bringing forth these long overdue projects, and I hope that you will make the time to visit and enjoy these fabulous resources!

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