

TIDELINES

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New Jersey Makes Public Access a Legal Right

And it only took 1,500 plus years to do it!

By Michele Langa

After years of litigation, work-group collaboration, and legislative review and voting, the Public Access Bill (S1074) passed through both Houses of the NJ Legislature and was signed into law by Governor Murphy on May 3, 2019.

Generally, when one thinks of the rights associated with public access to the shoreline, images of walking along sandy beaches and swimming among the rolling

waves often come to mind. However, of the approximately 130 miles of shoreline in the State of New Jersey, about a third are along the northern shores of the state, in urban areas like Newark, Hoboken, and Edgewater. The right of public access to these shorelines extends to all tidal waters, whether it's the Atlantic Ocean or the Hackensack River, and is vested in every citizen of the state.

The concept of public access

to water as a common right goes back to the Ancient Romans. Emperor Justinian codified the concept of public access in Roman law as the Public Trust Doctrine around 500 AD. Over centuries, the Public Trust Doctrine's tenet of public access to tidal waters was carried on through English Common Law and eventually in the laws governing the United States upon its incorporation. The basic principle of the Public Trust Doctrine is that the right to the

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Errand Leads to Pollution Bust

Unlike Chuck Berry once sang, "It goes to show you really CAN tell"

By Hugh M. Carola

Just before I left my house on April 4 to join our jolly crew of volunteers and fellow staffers at Laurel Hill Park for the annual ritual of preparing our boats for the season, Capt. Bill called and asked me to stop at the West Marine store on Route 17 in Lodi for some additional supplies.

As you may know, West Marine is the only full-service boating supply store in our area

and as such, they know Bill and me pretty well. I always enjoy stopping in.

However, as I pulled into the lot I noticed something unexpected: a contingent of trucks and asphalt paving machines belonging to Macadam Company, Inc. of Malvern, PA. This was not an unusual site to see in a Route 17 parking lot; but what was unusual – and illegal – was the fact that



Detergent washing from West Marine parking lot in April.

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photo © Jonathan Green

At the Helm

Captain Bill Sheehan

Politics: the Good, the Bad, & the Ugly

First the good. On July 22, the Meadowlands Conservation Trust – on which I serve as Chair – announced that \$1.5 million of the \$3 million taken from its land conservation account by the Christie Administration in 2017 and diverted to the General Fund was returned! Thanks to Senator Paul Sarlo (D-36), the funds were included in the fiscal year 2020 budget, which Governor Murphy signed on June 30. I fully expect the other half to be returned in the following budget. Now the Trust can *finally* get back to its job of protecting habitats in our watershed.

The Trust was established in 1999 by the New Jersey State Legislature and empowered to acquire, hold and manage wetlands, waterways, woodlands and other environmentally sensitive habitats in the Hackensack River Watershed in New Jersey. Make no mistake; the Senator and the Governor did a great service to the people *and* the environment. I'm proud to be represented by those who hold the importance of land and water conservation in such high esteem. And like many of you, I've been thinking a lot lately about politics – both present *and* past.

For example, back in the “Good Old Days” when we were winning the battle over the future of the Meadowlands, one major victory was when Acting Governor Donald DeFrancesco directed the NJDEP to deny state permits for the proposed “Meadowlands Mills” mall. Afterward, the US Army Corps of Engineers denied the federal permit applications and the project that would have destroyed 600 acres of wetlands was dead. Soon after, those wetlands – a true gem of the northern Meadowlands – were acquired by the Trust and became the Richard Kane Natural Area.

I thought about those heady times on July 9 while addressing about 100 protesters in Ridgefield Park. We'd gathered to express our opposition to recent proposals for new fossil fuel developments within the Meadowlands District and to protest the continued transport of explosive Bakken crude oil through New Jersey. It was the explosion of just such a “bomb train” in Lac Megantic, Quebec in 2013 that took the lives of 47 people

But it was the now *two* regional powerplant proposals that

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Public Access

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shoreline is as common to humankind as the right to breathe the air and warm in the sun.

Through the Public Trust Doctrine, it is the duty of the state to protect the public's right to access the shoreline. While much of focus tends to fall on New Jersey's shore towns, the right to public access is equally important to the cities north of the Raritan River. It is no happy coincidence that many shore towns offer parking and restroom facilities along their beach avenues; it is a result of the State's Public Trust Doctrine. Towns are required to allow shoreline access, provide parking, and install restroom facilities at pre-determined intervals along the shoreline. Additionally, towns with public beaches are not permitted to charge unreasonable beach access fees, or charge exorbitantly higher fees to out-of-town residents. All of this stems from the pursuit of protecting the public's right to access New Jersey's tidal waters and shorelines.

In some aspects, the right of public access is at greater risk to North Jersey residents, many of whom do not or cannot make regular trips "down the Shore" and can only access the waters along the rockier and less accessible shores of the Hackensack, Hudson, or Passaic Rivers. For those residents, access to the shoreline is often in the form of river walks, fishing piers, or small-craft launch sites. Physical access to shorelines in many urban areas is sometimes restricted by private industrial properties, at ports protected by Homeland Security, and by large condominium complexes. However, even where private property



Students participating in our Urban Watershed Education Program take full advantage of their right to access their local waters.

Left: Students from Elizabeth enjoy a fishing day at Carteret Waterfront Park on the Arthur Kill.

Middle: Jersey City students caught and released White perch and American eel from the promenade at Laurel Hill County Park in Secaucus.

Right: A student at Mill Creek Point in Secaucus, another beautiful urban access area for catch-and-release fishing.

exists, the public's right to access the shoreline is still protected. The only true restrictions exist where the public right to access conflicts with National Security interests; otherwise, access must be granted to the public up to the mean high water line and generally includes a reasonable portion of dry sand areas as well.

In more densely developed cities and towns, there is a delicate and often imperfect balance between granting public access and protecting private property rights. It takes a strong commitment to protecting the right of public access and a genuine understanding of the value and benefits associated with it to achieve parity. Access to the water can provide a sense of peace, a profession, a sense of community, sources of food or recreation, and even transportation. However, for any of these values and benefits to be realized, the public must first be able to access the water; and that is where the state (through the NJDEP)

must be relied upon to protect our interests under the Public Trust Doctrine.

The Public Access Bill codifies the Public Trust Doctrine into law; making the right to public access a NJ law rather than simply a doctrine to follow. Finally achieving official codification is largely the result of a legal battle with the NJDEP and a series of compromises between stakeholders during the drafting process. While the bill is not perfect, it is certainly a serious step in the right direction and should be celebrated. Going forward, now that public access is law, it will be easier for the public to exercise their right to access their natural resources and for groups like Hackensack Riverkeeper to defend that right.

The newly adopted Public Access Bill (P.L. 2019, c. 081) took effect on July 1, 2019.

To report public access violations, please contact NJDEP at (609) 777-DEP3. 🐟

Pollution Bust

Continued from page 1

company employees were using the lot to wash down their equipment, most likely with commercial-grade degreasing detergents. And all of it was washing into the small ditch running between the lot and neighboring Extra Space Storage.

This was an obvious violation, but not just of state anti-pollution laws. To explain: that entire area of Lodi along Route 17 was once wetlands but like so many other such places in our area, it was filled & developed. While there's still one sizable remnant left – the nearby WABC-AM radio property along Gregg Avenue – most of what remains is a series of drainage ditches along property boundaries. But of course the water in them *goes someplace*, right? And where it goes is to your Hackensack River.

For all intents and purposes, legal and otherwise, those ditches and remnant wetlands are the headwaters of Coles Brook. They drain into a culvert that goes underneath Route 17, the Home Depot parking lot and Essex Street where the waters resurface behind Jax Car Wash as Coles Brook proper. From there the Hackensack River tributary flows between Hackensack and Maywood, then Hackensack and Paramus before combining with Van Saun Mill Brook and joining the river at

New Bridge Landing in River Edge. So...

I took out the Environmentalist's "Secret" Weapon – my smart phone – and took a dozen photos to document what was happening. Next, I called the Department of Environmental Protection Hotline (1-877-WARN DEP), described the situation, gave the operator an accurate street address and was given a Case Number. She told me the agency would dispatch an enforcement agent as soon as possible. I texted Captain Bill the photos and called him to describe the situation. He made a follow-up call to DEP and afterward met the agent onsite. It was probably less than an hour between my report and the agent's arrival.


Until that time, the paving crew went about its business and never once asked why I was taking pictures of their gear. Nor did I approach them. That changed once the cavalry arrived. Those in law enforcement are trained to quickly assess a situation and determine a course of action. Most often, DEP enforcement involves an investigating agent issuing a Notice of Violation (NOV) to the party(s) responsible for an incident or ongoing problem. It's a straightforward process that requires those responsible to immediately stop what they're doing, assesses an on-the-spot fine, and generally gets the job done quickly.

Sometimes there are additional

factors that lead to the enforcement action being "kicked upstairs" to a different DEP division. That's what happened here. The Waterways Enforcement agent noted the presence of fish in the ditch and he knew where its waters ultimately went, so he turned the case over to the Division of Fish and Wildlife. As of this writing, there has not yet been a disposition to the case but one thing is certain: Macadam Pavers of Malvern, PA isn't polluting Coles Brook anymore.

Which leads to this final point: How many people drove past the situation before I did, oblivious to what was going on? And how many times do similar things happen in other parking lots – in our watershed and beyond? In fact when I questioned a store employee, the response was, "Yeah, they were here at 8AM when we got in." Needless to say I provided the following short, friendly primer on what to do in such a situation.

1. Just like Homeland Security says: If you see something, say something.
2. Say it to DEP; add 1-877-927-6337 to your phone contacts.
3. DO NOT engage. Allow the pros to handle everything.
4. Feel good knowing you've done the environment a good turn.

Now get out there and get looking! 



Alliance for New Jersey
Environmental Education

For more information, visit
www.ANJEE.org

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For info, including full conference schedule and registration link, go to:
www.anjee.org/autumn-conference.html

WMA 5 Ambassador Update Benthic Macros and so much more...



By Christine Favorito

The spring has just flown by! I can hardly believe it. Just like ambassadors before me, my spring was jam-packed with projects and presentations. On March 23 I kicked off a string of cleanups on the river in Teaneck with the *Friends of the Hackensack River Greenway*. We did three cleanups all together and picked up over 60 bags of trash. I also did an Earth Day cleanup with Hackensack High School students, and a rain barrel workshop with the Bayonne Water Guardians in May. And of course I worked with Captain Hugh on Combo programs and with Jodi on UWEP throughout May and June.

In addition to those projects, I also conducted several Environmental Stewardship Trainings. Those were probably my favorite workshops to lead because I was given the opportunity to teach community members how to collect benthic macroinvertebrates in local streams. Benthic macros are small animals that live in the sediment and under rocks in streams. Some of them are juvenile stages of insects, such as dragonfly nymphs, that spend part of their life cycle in the water and part on land. Others, such as crayfish, spend their whole lives in the water. These little critters are important tools that help volunteer monitors gauge how polluted (or not) a stream is. This is because some types of macros can live in polluted waters while others can't. If you find a good mix of both tolerant and intolerant species then you have a healthy stream community, but if you find only pollution-tolerant species there may be a problem.

Collecting macros is an easy and inexpensive way

to monitor stream health. This is why it is perfect for volunteer monitoring. It's also lots of fun! My favorite experience as an ambassador this spring was at a workshop I did at Tenafly Nature Center in June. The workshop was well attended by many families with children who came to learn about the bugs in the stream. There was one little boy in particular who stood out. He wanted to see everything and was so curious to learn about all the little critters. His mom said that he had trouble paying attention in school, but at the workshop, he stayed engaged for the *full three hours*. His parents practically had to drag him out of the stream at the end. It was really an inspiring experience to see that little boy find his passion. I hope to have more experiences like this over the course of my career in this field.

As my term of service as an ambassador wraps up, I am very grateful for the experiences I had this year. Thank you very much if you attended one of my events or presentations or helped me along in some way. I think I made many great friends and connections to my home watershed community. I look forward to continuing to do this kind of work - here in the Hackensack River Watershed and elsewhere. If you had a project idea or wanted a presentation this year and didn't get a chance to contact me, please don't hesitate to contact next year's ambassador in September. I'm sure whoever it may be will be very passionate and dedicated to the cause. The contact information is the same: ambassador@hackensack-riverkeeper.org and 201-968-0808. 🐟



Bayonne rain barrel workshop participants.



Looking for macros at Tenafly workshop.



Christine with her favorite macros.

Learning Outside the Box

Hands-on and at-the-ready-to-learn, Junior Stewards explore their watershed.

By Jodi Jamieson

From our first fishing trip on a bone chilling January afternoon to our last fishing excursion this summer in the Atlantic Highlands, our Junior Stewards were fully engaged in learning more about the importance of clean water resources for life and their community.

This was the second year of our Junior Stewardship after-school program, working with seventh graders at Hackensack Middle School. It was a very busy semester with plenty of hands-on activities and field trips all designed to encourage their interest in science and water resources. The photos on these pages will give you a glimpse of our activities. All opportunities were only possible because of our generous partners and supporters (p.7). 🐟



Proving their mettle, new and returning Junior Stewards brave the frigid temps in January to fish on the Hackensack River with NJDEP scientists and the Hudson River Fishermen.



NJDEP Marine Biologist, Harold Nebling starts his Ichthyology lesson encouraging students to handle the fish.



Jr. Stewards at their first over-night field trip, Sharks in the Dark, at Adventure Aquarium.



Students map their river and its tributaries utilizing 20 large USGS topo maps.



Junior Stewards conduct a trash survey at Coles Brook which feeds into the Hackensack River in their city.



Jr. Stewards look for macros in Coles Brook to evaluate its water quality.



HOFNOD sponsored our charter trip aboard the Mi-Jo, in the Atlantic Highlands. Amanda's catch of the day is a beautiful Bonito.



Righteous landed a large Bluegill in Stokes State Forrest. Junior Stewards helped collect data on the fish at the School of Conservation.



Super-agile Cariq dances over the rocks of a pristine stream at Stokes State Forrest while looking for macro invertebrates. Our stewards find an array of bugs not found in their local urban waters.

Saturday, September 21, 2019



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Junior Stewards thank our partners and funders for making our second program year such a success.



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We've Got Something to Float Your Boat

The Recycled Regatta splashes off EarthFest in a memorable way.



By Jodi Jamieson

This year's Recycled Regatta started off with a splash! There were seven entries this year, comprised of various recycled floatables. As usual, it's always fun to see which boats will cross the finish line intact. The Leaky Bucket award went to Team Seven Seas; despite being totally swamped, they still managed to cross the finish line. This is a must see event, so no excuses for next year!

This year's EarthFest had a record attendance of over 5,000 people. There were green vendors, food-trucks, musicians, a mad scientist, fancy kites, drone races, a fishing derby and children's educational activity booths (which our Junior Stewards ran).

We can not do this without our sponsors' support! Thank you to: PSE&G, Inserra ShopRite, SUEZ, Hackensack Meridian Health, Investor's Bank, Orange & Rockland, Ramsey Outdoor, Xchange at Secaucus Junction, Concrete Washout Systems, and Donald Nuckel & Company.

This year's Recycled Regatta was a hit for Bergen County middle school students. The competition is a fun STEM project and team-building exercise.

2019 Recycled Regatta Teams

1st Place: Team *Little Boat* built and piloted by West Brook Middle School.

2nd Place: Team *Camp Can't* built and piloted by Hackensack Junior Stewards.

3rd Place: Team *Plastic Beach* built and piloted by Hackensack Junior Stewards.

4th Place: Team *S.S. Big Body* built and piloted by West Brook Middle School.

5th Place and Leaky Bucket Award: Team *Seven Seas* built and piloted by Hackensack Junior Stewards.

6th Place: Team *HAMJAR* built and piloted by Hackensack Junior Stewards.

Floating Van Gogh Award: Team HARP built and piloted by Hackensack Meridian Health.

Lily, a Sulcata tortoise, enjoys a snack of melon at EarthFest. Batman Joe D'Angeli always brings interesting animals from near and far to pique your curiosity.



Watershed Ambassador Christine Favorito and Junior Steward Arlenny utilize the Enviroscape and demonstrate to fair-goers how land pollution becomes water pollution.

Anyone who stopped by Bergen County Clean Communities booth learned a thing or two about recycling, whether it be e-waste, composting, or hazardous waste.

The Reservoir Paddle Series

Making waves — for a worthy cause!

By Caitlin Doran

Each year, Hackensack Riverkeeper partners with SUEZ Water and brings the art/sport of kayaking and canoeing to the Oradell, Lake DeForest, and Lake Tappan Reservoirs as part of the Reservoir Paddle Series. Not only do these fun, family-friendly days make a splash on otherwise restricted bodies of water (your drinking water supply), but they are also important, mission-fulfilling days for our organization as it seeks to expand public access and reconnect people to their local water resources. Through passive on-water recreation, our friends and neighbors enjoy the opportunity to experience the watershed from a whole different vantage point. And, it's a great way to build a constituency of people willing to come out and fight, when necessary, to keep those waterways clean, healthy, and protected for future generations.

Throw in some competitive races, landside fishing derbies, a bean bag toss or two, and – new this year – a family walk to support our partner, Keep Rockland Beautiful, and you have the Reservoir Paddle Series! Our next and final stop in the 2019 series is Lake Tappan on August 3, for Lake Tappan Paddle Day. We'll be offering four paddling sessions, where families can rent from us or bring their own kayaks/canoes. As always, proceeds from the series support our work to protect, preserve, and restore the Hackensack River Watershed. More info at www.respaddleseries.com. We'll see you at the reservoir! 🐟

Oradell Reservoir



Watershed mayors pose for a photo before the Mayor's Cup Challenge. This year saw another great turnout from local towns!



Chondra and Linda are ready to win!



Team SUEZ ready to paddle!



Corporate Challenge teams battle for the cup.



It takes a lot of planning to pull off a day at the races along with family paddles, land-side entertainment, lunch for all—and let's not forget a Fishing Derby! Meet the partners in crime who make it all happen: SUEZ's Sonja Clark, Captain Bill Sheehan, and Caitlin Doran, all essential ingredients for a fun-filled day!

Lake DeForrest



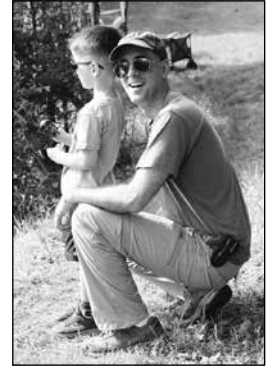
A day at the races in Lake DeForrest proves to be fun, collegial, and beautiful.



Keep Rockland Beautiful Executive Director Sonia Cairo, SUEZ NY Director of External Affairs Bill Madden with Capt Bill.



SUEZ NY General Manager, Chris Graziano and Bill Maddon present the Challenge Cup to Stony Point Supervisor Jim Monaghan.



Spending time with dad at the derby.



Bailey the Beaver makes his debut with friends from Keep Rockland Beautiful.

Res Challenge Derby

2019 NJ Free Fishing Day prompts a derby!

Remember those carefree childhood days when you could take your fishing pole, meander over to your favorite fishing spot and cast a line?

Life doesn't seem so casual these days, with the exception of the NJ Fish and Wildlife's *Free Fishing Day* on June 8th. Upon finding out that the state's free fishing day coincided with our annual Reservoir Challenge we decided to add another venue to the day. SUEZ, the Hudson River Fisherman's Association, and the Hooked on Fishing Not on Drugs Program (HOFNOD) were happy to assist in our first fishing derby at Oradell Reservoir. HOFNOD sponsored many derbies around New Jersey that day and provided us with great fishing swag for participants as well as prizes for the top four place holders.

For forty contestants, it was an oasis for the memory book; a carefree day of fishing along the reservoir's beautiful wooded shoreline.



Jodi Jamieson and Captain Bill award First Place Derby winner Kyle Rozano with a medal and a new fishing pole.

1st Place	Kyle Rozario	13" Yellow perch
2nd Place	Vivian Altamura*	10.5" Yellow perch; 8.75" Bluegill; 7" Sunfish
3rd Place	Jacob Swinghammer	8.5" Perch
4th Place	Bryce Larkin	6.75" Sunfish
5th Place	Jayden Altamura	8.5" & 7" Bluegill
		* Most Fish Caught

Reservoir Challenge Race Results

FEMALE 5K CLASS Time Place

Christine Denicola	SK1	48:07:87	1
Karen Sacks	SK1	49:16:21	
Natasha Ioshpa	SK2	42:52:94	1

MALE 5K CLASS Time Place

Christopher MacKinnon	SK1	35:49:03	1
Paul Wagner	SK1	44:43:18	2
Michael DeGennaro	SK1	44:55:21	3
Rob Denicola	SK1	49:49:21	
Igor Ioshpa	SK2	34:44:54	1
David Lewis	SK2	40:27:76	2
Andy Anderson	SK2	41:02:01	3

TANDEM 5K CLASS # Time Place

Alex & John Yarembinsky	TK	46:24:55	1
Janet & Regan-Livingston	TK	46:28:82	2

FEMALE 10K CLASS Time Place

Linda Lensch	C	1:17:07:59	1
Chondrea Richards	SOB	1:23:37:88	2

MALE 10K CLASS Time Place

Akif Zaman	SK1	1:24:28:23	1
Rob Wallace	SK2	1:31:29:72	1
Luke Carigen & Dennis Hassel	TK	1:28:17:86	1
Greg Lowery & John Ponticorvo	SOB	55:42:43	1
James Connolly & Matt Watters	C	1:17:28:41	2

Corporate Cup Relay Race

Place	Entrant	Time
1	United Eventsures	58:15
2	SUEZ	58:35
3	NJ Foot & Ankle Center	58:39
4	HNH Fitness	59:52
5	HNH Fitness (2)	60:00

Res Challenge Mayors Race

Place	Town	Mayor/Time
1	Westwood	Mayor John Birkner 4:16
2	Woodcliff Lake	Councilman Corrado Belgiovine 4:28
3	Bergenfield	Mayor Norman Schmelz 4:46
4	Harrington Park	Councilman Allan Napolitano
5	Rochelle Park	Mayor Michael Kazimir
6	Emerson	Mayor Danielle DiPaola
7	Haworth	Envro Commissioner Andy Anderson
8	Fairlaw	Councilwoman Gail Rottenstich
9	Oradell	Councilman Robert Jannicelli
10	Montvail	Mayor Mike Ghassali

LDF Supervisors Race

Place	Town	Supervisor & Team Member
1	Stony Point	Jim Monaghan & Brendan Sullivan
2	Orangetown	Representatives
3	Haverstraw	Howard Phillips & Bob Masiello
4	Clarkstown	George Hoehmann & Thomas Hoehmann
5	Ramapo	Representatives

Thank you to our *Reservoir Paddle Series* sponsors



Donald Nuckel & Company



RiverCreepers Break Species Record – and Five Figures!

Our World Series of Birding team lists 131 species, raises \$11,000 for conservation

By Captain Hugh M. Carola

Well, it took much longer than any of us thought it would but we finally broke our longstanding WSB record of 129 species by listing 131 on May 11, 2019. We tied the record with Great Horned Owl at Schmidt's Woods in Secaucus, broke it with Clapper Rail calling from the Sawmill Creek WMA in Lyndhurst, and added Common Nighthawk as an "insurance listing" in North Arlington at 9PM.

But the day certainly didn't start out promising. Although Ray Duffy, Dave Kaplan and I picked up about twenty species in the Meadowlands between 4-6AM, by the time we reached Lake Tappan (usually a *major* warbler hotspot) we were met with either silence or the deafening, repetitive calls of Gray Catbirds & American Robins. Not good. No, not good at all. So we packed it in and headed to Oradell Reservoir where the drizzle ended, the sun came out and the warblers (and lots more) began to sing.

By the time the day was done we'd listed eighteen



Cape May Warbler

© BigStock

warblers – including first-timers Cape May and Palm Warblers – plus fourteen sparrows/related species, thirteen duck and goose species, eleven shorebirds, and LOTS more. Be sure to check out the results list.

As most *Tidelines* readers know, the WSB is more than just an intense day of birding, although it certainly is that. It's a fundraising event in which supporters either make per-species pledges (the largest of which was an astounding \$10/per) or WSB-earmarked donations. Even before all outstanding pledges were fulfilled, we cracked the long-elusive \$10,000 barrier and by the time all was said and done, we'd raised just over \$11K to support the ongoing work of Hackensack Riverkeeper.

Super kudos are in order to Ray and Dave for their solid commitment and the stellar job they did. Dave has near-encyclopedic knowledge of birds, their songs and calls; and Ray's WSB scouting certainly made the difference. I'm in awe of their talents and thankful they've chosen to put them in the service of our mission. The only downside to an otherwise perfect day was that we missed the talents of founding 'Creeper Kerul Kassel, who sat out this year in order to take care of her ailing mother, Miriam. We wish them well and hope to welcome Kerul back in 2020.


Big thanks are also in order to our longtime WSB sponsor **ShopRite Supermarkets** and our corporate partner **Toyota of Hackensack**, who loaned us a brand-new Highlander SUV in which we traveled in comfort & safety. We also appreciate the assistance of **SUEZ Water New Jersey** and the **NJ Sports & Exposition Authority** for providing us access to some of the most productive bird habitats in our watershed. And we always greatly appreciate the hard work done by **NJ Audubon's WSB team** led by René Buccinna and Lillian Armstrong.

Thanks to ALL!



Freedom Bank proudly supports the
Hackensack Riverkeeper
 as it works to provide environmental advocacy,
 education and conservative programs
 to the local community.


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NJ Audubon Society's 36th Annual World Series of Birding

May 11, 2019



Hackensack RiverCreepers • Tally: 131 species New Record

Brant	Dunlin	Black-capped Chickadee	Scarlet Tanager
Canada Goose	Least Sandpiper	Tufted Titmouse	Northern Cardinal
Mute Swan	Semipalmated Sandpiper	White-breasted Nuthatch	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Wood Duck	Short-billed Dowitcher	House Wren	Indigo Bunting
Gadwall	Laughing Gull	Marsh Wren	Red-winged Blackbird
American Wigeon	Ring-billed Gull	Carolina Wren	Common Grackle
American Black Duck	Herring Gull	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Boat-tailed Grackle
Mallard	Great Black-backed Gull	Veery	Brown-headed Cowbird
Northern Shoveler	Least Tern	Swainson's Thrush	Orchard Oriole
Northern Pintail	Common Tern	Wood Thrush	Baltimore Oriole
Green-winged Teal	Forster's Tern	American Robin	House Finch
Common Merganser	Rock Pigeon	Gray Catbird	American Goldfinch
Ruddy Duck	Mourning Dove	Northern Mockingbird	House Sparrow
Wild Turkey	Great Horned Owl	European Starling	
Red-throated Loon	Common Nighthawk	Ovenbird	"Big Three" results:
Common Loon	Chimney Swift	Northern Waterthrush	18 Warblers (+2 from 2018)
Double-crested Cormorant	Belted Kingfisher	Black-and-white Warbler	13 Waterfowl (+2 from 2018)
Least Bittern	Red-bellied Woodpecker	Common Yellowthroat	11 Shorebirds (same as 2018)
Great Blue Heron	Downy Woodpecker	American Redstart	
Great Egret	Hairy Woodpecker	* Cape May Warbler	* 1st Timers:
Snowy Egret	Northern Flicker	Northern Parula	Palm Warbler
Green Heron	Pileated Woodpecker	Magnolia Warbler	Cape May Warbler
Black-crowned Night-Heron	Peregrine Falcon	Bay-breasted Warbler	
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	Monk Parakeet	Yellow Warbler	Welcome back!
Glossy Ibis	Eastern Wood-Pewee	Chestnut-sided Warbler	Indigo Bunting
Black Vulture	Eastern Phoebe	Blackpoll Warbler	Purple Martin
Turkey Vulture	Great Crested Flycatcher	Black-throated Blue Warbler	
Osprey	Eastern Kingbird	* Palm Warbler	Your 2019 Hackensack RiverCreepers are:
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Warbling Vireo	Pine Warbler	Ray Duffy
Cooper's Hawk	Red-eyed Vireo	Yellow-rumped Warbler	Dave Kaplan
Bald Eagle	Blue Jay	Black-throated Green Warbler	Hugh Carola, captain
Red-tailed Hawk	American Crow	Wilson's Warbler	
Clapper Rail	Fish Crow	Chipping Sparrow	Our Corporate Sponsor:
American Oystercatcher	Common Raven	White-crowned Sparrow	Shop Rite Supermarkets
Semipalmated Plover	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	White-throated Sparrow	Suzanne Forbes,
Killdeer	Swallow	Savannah Sparrow	Environmental Affairs Manager
Spotted Sandpiper	Purple Martin	Song Sparrow	
Solitary Sandpiper	Tree Swallow	Swamp Sparrow	Our Corporate Partner:
Greater Yellowlegs	Barn Swallow	Eastern Towhee	Toyota of Hackensack
Lesser Yellowlegs	Cliff Swallow		Mario Puentes, General Sales Manager

Next WSB: May 9, 2020

HACKENSACK WATERSHED FIELD NOTES

By Hugh M. Carola

Two news stories in early July caught my attention. First was the report of a bobcat sighting near Cranford Park in Cresskill, NJ on 7/3. If true, it would be a real stroke of luck for the observer since unlike the rugged forested terrain in western Bergen and Rockland counties, there is little suitable habitat for them in our watershed region. Cranford Park is a city-block sized area of trees surrounded by subdivisions – not exactly the species' preferred habitats. As a result of the sighting, NIXLE text alerts went out from the borough's Office of Emergency Management calling for citizens to "remain vigilant while outdoors".

As of our printing date, no further reports were made, despite the assumed vigilance. That's not surprising since bobcats are inherently shy and are rarely seen by humans except in the most fleeting instances. It's enough to make one wonder if the animal in question was actually a domestic crossbreed like a Bengal or Savannah cat. It also makes me question the response. I'd understand if it was a bear (see the fifth listing below), but it seems like an overreaction for a creature that prefers to be well out of the sight of humans.

The second was in a 7/8 *Record* article entitled, "Experts believe wildlife moving closer to people". Near the end of the piece was the following: *Many animals are nocturnal and afraid of people, so if you see an animal such as a fox, raccoon or coyote during the day, keep your distance and*

resist the urge to take a photo. The animal could be rabid (emphasis mine). Well, it *could* be, but is it likely? No. According to current research on raccoons, it turns out that females are often active during the day, especially with young in the den. One might also observe an entire litter of raccoon kits ambling about once they've outgrown the den but have yet to go their separate ways.

Of course one should always keep wildlife at a smart and respectful distance but by all means, enjoy the experience. Like bobcats, coyotes also do not seek human attention. The ones I've seen all skulked away with barely a glance once they knew I was onto them. And foxes too, seem to prefer living their lives and raising their young without causing a fuss for humans. As I've written many times before, wild creatures deserve a chance to adapt to the many ways we humans have changed things. After all, they're as American as we are.

A while back I met a member of the Penobscot Nation in Maine. We discussed the differences between how Euro-Americans and Native Americans view wildlife. Something she said has stayed with me ever since: "I believe that you only see an animal if that animal wants to be seen. And when you do see it, rejoice."

And whether they wanted to be seen or not, here's what some of our naturalists have reported:

American Bittern – We received several springtime sightings of this uncommon heron, including one from Mill Creek Point in Secaucus, NJ on 4/21.

American Woodcock – The first noted in our watershed region in 2019 were heard calling at Mill Creek Point on 3/18.

Bald Eagle – 2019 has turned out to be a great year for eagles. Al and Alice II – the Ridgefield Park, NJ-nesting eagles – finally reproduced! Two eaglets were reported in their nest on 3/20. The Kearny Point pair also successfully fledged two chicks, as did the Palisades Interstate Park pair up in Alpine, NJ. Many Eco-Cruise participants have enjoyed seeing both adult and young eagles in the air and in trees along the river. More to come!

Black bear – In late May in Woodcliff lake, NJ and on June 5 in Montvale, NJ, a single bear (the same?) was observed by residents and municipal animal control specialists over those few weeks. Beyond a couple of knocked over garbage cans, no real problems were noted and a much-welcome "live and let live" approach was taken, which allowed the bear to move off on its own.

Black Skimmer – It wasn't until late June that we began seeing small groups of no more than five birds at a time. After last year's massive breeding failure in New York, this is not a good sign.

Bobcat – A single animal was reported in the area of the borough's Cranford Park on 7/3.

Cattle Egret – It's been a very long time since one of these birds was seen in the Harbor Estuary region but we received a report on 4/15 of a bird in breeding plumage at Edison, NJ boat ramp on the Raritan River, located at the end of Meadow Road in Edison.

Common Raven – A pair was discovered on Laurel Hill in Secaucus on 3/18, reestablishing a breeding presence that had been absent for nearly ten years. However by early May all three chicks had been taken by Peregrine Falcons. On 7/8 a falcon was seen mobbing a raven over Main Street in Hackensack.

Cedar Waxwing – More common in winter when it forms large foraging flocks, a pair was seen and heard over River Barge Park in Carlstadt, NJ on 6/30.

Cooper's Hawk – Always a great bird to see, your Hackensack RiverCreeper listed one of these accipiters at Lake Tappan in River Vale, NJ during the World Series of Birding on 5/11.

Dunlin – RiverCreeper IDed one at Harrier Meadow in North Arlington on 5/11.

Eastern Meadowlark – Always a great find, a pair were seen on one of the main lawns at the Leonia, NJ section of Overpeck County Park on 3/22.

Forster's Tern – We had great numbers of pre-breeding terns all up and down the river within the Meadowlands District; throughout May and into early June flocks of 20+ were common.

Great Egret – The Meadowlands' harbinger of spring, the first was seen roosting on 3/15 at a small pond adjacent to the new Hudson County School of Technology in Secaucus.

Great Horned Owl – On 3/20 breeding owls were rediscovered at Schmidt's Woods in Secaucus. A pair of owlets was produced, but only one survived to fledge.

Hooded Merganser – A most unusual sighting was on 5/30 when a pair of young "mergs" was observed in Mill Creek



Eastern Bobcat (Lynx Rufus)

photo © Bigstock

Marsh in Secaucus. As the birds were unable to fly, one can only assume they were hatched and raised there. Hooded Mergansers are cavity-nesters and more often breed in woodlands rather than saltmarshes.

Least Bittern – Always a great bird to spot, a pair was seen in breeding plumage at DeKorte Park in Lyndhurst during the World Series of Birding on 5/11.

Osprey – The first reported in our area was at the Teaneck and Ridgefield Park, NJ sections of Overpeck County Park on 3/18. This year an astounding fifteen active Osprey nests were reported and/or observed in our watershed region; nine in the Meadowlands District alone. More to come!

Peregrine Falcon – "Big Mama" was first observed on territory at the Route 3 westbound bridge over the Hackensack River on 4/14. By 7/1 her three chicks – two females and one male – had fledged. During the season single falcons were seen at the NJ Turnpike bridge Western Spur between Carlstadt and Ridgefield and the Eastern Spur bridge between Secaucus and Kearny.

Purple Finch – Although this species is now a rarity in our

watershed region, on 3/25 a keen-eyed observer noted a single male foraging at Fairleigh Dickinson University in Hackensack.

Red-breasted Nuthatch – One was heard calling near Briarcliff Avenue in Maywood, NJ on 7/1.

Red Fox – An adult was observed along Franklin Avenue in Hasbrouck Heights on 4/14. Another was seen near Oak Grove Avenue in the same town on 4/18.

Tundra Swan – We received this unusual report from a naturalist in Norwood, NJ on 5/14. While very common in winter at places like Jamaica Bay and Edwin B. Forsythe Wildlife Refuges, by spring most have migrated well north of New Jersey. As Chuck Berry once sang, "It goes to show you never can tell."

White-tailed deer – In the ongoing saga of "You saw deer WHERE?" reports came in from a white-knuckled driver at the NJ Turnpike Exit 16W, who saw three deer there on 4/12; and three others (the same?) observed by NJSEA personnel in the middle of the Sawmill Creek marsh on 5/6.

Yellow-crowned Night Heron – The colony at Harmon Cove in Secaucus was officially surveyed in June during the triennial full-region Harbor Herons survey. Fifteen nesting pairs were found. Stay tuned because there's MUCH more to come!

Thanks to our contributors and a tip o' the naturalist's hat to: Anonymous, Joe Augeri, Jay Auslander, Daniel Carola, Ray Duffy, Sue Foster, Ivan Kossak, Lynn Kramer, Joe Labriola, Stephanie McClure, Ernie Nieves, Bill Schultz, Bill Sheehan, Anna Tracz, Brian Wlodowski, and Mary Ellen Woods. 🐟

VOLUNTEER CORNER

By Caitlin Doran



March 27, Bayonne: We kicked off the 2019 cleanup season right, at a big Rutkowski Park Cleanup with steadfast River Cleanup Partners, Ralph Lauren!



March 31, Palisades Park: We proudly welcome J. Crew to the River Cleanup Partner list, and they had a great debut on the Palisades Park side of Overpeck County Park on March 31! Welcome, J. Crew!



April 22, Teaneck: Apple sent us another can-do crew from its Tice's Corner and Willbrook stores, for a big Earth-Day cleanup of Overpeck Creek, organized cooperatively with the Englewood Environmental Commission and local students.



April 23, Leonia: Come April, the weather warmed and we were able to get Ralph Lauren out on the water at Overpeck Park, for "round two" of taking out the trash!



April 24, Teaneck: Under the direction of Professor Kent Fairfield, FDU's Leading Teams Class organized another successful campus-wide cleanup of the Hackensack River, which runs right through their campus.



April 25, Jersey City: A big thank you to J.P. Morgan Chase and the staff at Liberty State Park for collaborating on a truly awesome cleanup of the Caven Point Natural Area this spring!



April 26, Secaucus: We proudly hosted another tenacious team from PSEG at Laurel Hill County Park on April 26, as part of EarthShare NJ's Corporate Green Day Challenge! Look at all that stuff!



April 27, New City, NY: This April marked our second year organizing a Bi-State Watershed Cleanup site up at Lake DeForest and, we're happy to report that it's getting cleaner each year!



April 27, Woodcliff Lake: Back in New Jersey, we organized a second Bi-State Watershed Cleanup site, in partnership with SUEZ Water and the Borough of Woodcliff Lake. Even with a huge crowds of cleaners, there is always work to be done at WCL!



April 27, Hackensack: On the same day in Hackensack, we proved it was possible to be in three places at once, with a huge haul at Hackensack River County Park, for the City of Hackensack's Slam Dunk the Junk Cleanup.



May 2, Newark: Panasonic, true to form, pulled tons of garbage out of the Passaic River in Newark this Spring, including their best find yet: the side of a moving van!



May 5, Teaneck: In May, we partnered with Friends of the Hackensack River Greenway through Teaneck for a rainy but productive cleanup of The Greenway. Come explore this local gem! More info at TeaneckGreenway.org.

Volunteer Corner *continued*



May 10, Old Tappan: We welcomed another new River Cleanup Partner this year, Takasago, at a cleanup of Lake Tappan in Old Tappan, NJ. It's amazing what volunteers collect from even the cleanest-looking of sites!



May 11, River Edge: It isn't officially Spring until our partnered river cleanup with the River Edge Environmental Commission. Here, current commissioner Laura Hoogstraight and former commissioner Jim Miller, lead the charge!



May 20, Leonia: Young adults from around the country come to Moonachie to practice seamanship, stewardship, and faith! We were happy to harness Ocean Tribe's spirit and work ethic at not one but two cleanups the week of May 20th!



May 22, Secaucus: May also marked our first official cleanup with Hudson County School of Technology students. We are excited to partner with them on many future programs at Laurel Hill County Park – their backyard!



June 5, Leonia: Through a partnership with EarthShare NJ, we welcomed back PVH Corporation this spring, for another great cleanup at Overpeck – and another rescued model airplane!



June 23, Elmwood Park: Say hello to one of our newest River Cleanup Partners, Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation in Saddle Brook! They dove right in at Elmwood Park Marina, and we can't wait to work with them again!



March 13 & June 14, Hackensack: *The Skills USA Club at Bergen Academies in Hackensack wasn't satisfied with one cleanup in 2019, so they organized two! With the river right in their backyard and their "friendly neighborhood Riverkeeper" just a few streets away, this partnership came naturally! We look forward to keeping this Bergen Academies campus cleanup tradition going, under the leadership of some fabulous young people!*



June 22, Secaucus: *It's a Hackensack Riverkeeper tradition! The annual Summer Solstice Cleanup takes place at Laurel Hill County Park, in the heart of The Meadowlands, and this year's cleanup saw some great surprise guests – including Miss New Jersey Earth! We are very grateful to all the volunteers, especially Cassandra Worthington and the March For Our Lungs student leaders, who helped us with set-up, and we are equally grateful to everyone who contributed a dish to the post-cleanup BBQ! Thank you!*



June 27, Newark: *Prudential has officially joined the River Cleanup family, with a great cleanup of Newark Riverfront Park, including 65 bags of trash (and one coconut)!*

June 28, Leonia: *Hackensack Meridian Health interns boarded the "Litter Patrol" canoe, among others, to do a full sweep of the Overpeck Creek this summer. We love this "seaworthy" group!*

Captain's Circle Reception Brings Everyone Together

This year's gathering recognizes long-time supporters & volunteers

Our 2019 Captain's Circle Reception took place on June 19 at the historic Blauvelt Art Museum in Oradell, NJ. In addition to the updates shared by each staff member, one very special highlight of the annual event was the award ceremony, recognizing current Board President Rob Gillies and his wife, Michele; and Lynn Kramer and her husband, former Trustee Frank Massaro. Each person received awards for their

collective decades of service to the mission of Hackensack Riverkeeper; and each was very much surprised when their names were called. Captain's Circle members include our corporate sponsors, foundation representatives and individuals who donate a minimum of \$1,000 during the calendar year. To them, and to all our supporters, we owe a debt of gratitude for keeping us on the job. 🐟



Pin recipients Michele and Rob Gillies with Captain Bill.



Lynn Kramer and husband Frank Massaro with Captain Bill.



Noel Sheehan, Cork Harbor (Ireland) Waterkeeper and Christine O'Neill.

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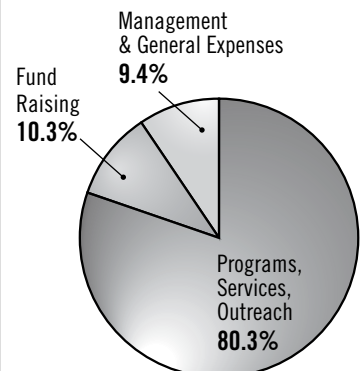
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WHERE YOUR DOLLARS GO



Source: Hackensack Riverkeeper Inc. 2017 Year End Tax Filing

Presenting our 2019 Vellekamp Scholar: Casey Dunbar

Clarkstown South High School graduate is our third NY recipient

At an informal ceremony on June 20 at her soon-to-be Alma Mater, Ms. Casey Dunbar received Hackensack Riverkeeper's 2019 **Ron Vellekamp Environmental Scholarship**. Casey was joined by her mother, Tricia and CSHS Guidance Department Chairperson Carolyn McKenna (who nominated her) as Captains Bill Sheehan and Hugh Carola presented her with the \$1000 award.

The program helps support college-bound graduates who excel academically and who have a strong commitment environmental protection. Out of the nine applications received through Earth Day, April 22, 2019 Dunbar's stood out among the rest.

"We always have a tough time choosing a winner but we had an even tougher time this year," explained Captain Hugh, who oversees the scholarship program. "Once we narrowed it down to three finalists it got even more difficult but Casey's application was clearly the winner."

A resident of West Nyack, NY, Dunbar will be attending Roger Williams University in Rhode Island this coming September where

she has already chosen to major in Marine Biology in the RWU Honors Program.

Over the past two years she participated in A Day in the Life of the Hudson River – an intensive program sponsored by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation with assistance from Columbia University's Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory. Ms. Dunbar also participated in fish studies at the 147-acre Marshlands Conservancy in Rye, NY.

In addition to extracurricular research, she also volunteered with United Way of Rockland County for its Repurposing Shoe Drive. Over four months Casey collected over 3,000 pairs of gently used shoes, which were shipped to Third World countries as part of global health and sustainability initiatives.

Captain Bill offered Casey some sage advice regarding her post-university career, "Something that troubles me is that far too often, talented scholars like you graduate with massive debt along



Casey with Captains Bill Sheehan and Hugh Carola.

with their well-earned degree. As a result many wind up working for fossil fuel companies and other polluters as 'Environmental Compliance Specialists' in order to pay down that debt. Please do all you can to avoid that trap because we need you, your talent and dedication on the 'A Team'."

Casey Dunbar is the third Rockland County recipient of the scholarship, which is open to all graduating seniors who reside and/or attend high school within the 215 square mile Hackensack River Watershed. In addition to a large swath of southeast Rockland County, NY, the watershed also includes most of eastern Bergen and western Hudson Counties in New Jersey. 🐟

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photo © Jonathan Green

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At the helm

continued from page 2

drew most of the crowd's ire. Tidelines readers already know about the North Bergen Liberty Generating (NBLG) proposal by the California-based subsidiary of the Japanese transnational corporation Mitsubishi Heavy Industries. If built, NBLG would be the largest discharger of carbon in New Jersey while transmitting 100% of its power to New York City; power the city says it *does not need*.

If that scam wasn't bad enough, the latest is even worse. Late this spring under the ever-useful excuse of "storm resiliency" New Jersey Transit, the same agency that in the face of Superstorm Sandy parked scores of locomotives and railcars directly in the path of the storm surge, has come up with a real doozy. They want to build a gas-fired powerplant on the former Koppers Coke site in Kearny to supply power to its fleet of aging electric-powered locomotives in the event of a Sandy-similar storm. Never mind that all the electricity they need is currently (no pun intended) supplied quite nicely by PSEG – whose post-Sandy upgrades were completed years ago.

There are many reasons why the proposal is a stupid idea, not the least of which is the fact that the site is massively contaminated with tar-like residue from decades of coke production. The underground contamination is held in place by a long, rusting steel bulkhead and covered over by thousands of tons of harbor dredge spoils from Newark Bay. What could possibly go wrong?

But it wasn't any of those things that forced my voice louder



Just some of the protesters gathered near the CSX tracks on July 9.

and betrayed the anger I was feeling. As I kept it up, my mind kept asking me, "Where is Governor Murphy in all this?" He's *clearly* on the side of the environment, so where is he? True, in April he finally announced his personal opposition to the NBLG proposal while also stating, "there are processes in place that must be left to play out." And I get it. After all, I've gotten grief from some of our more strident friends when I've explained that some things just have to play out – things like the golf course expansion and marina proposed for Liberty State Park. They played out and were denied.

But this Kearny thing is different. It's a completely self-contained, intragovernmental proposal that Governor Murphy can kill with a phone call, same as Governor DeFrancesco did with Meadowlands Mills. And that's what got me mad.

Hackensack Riverkeeper – and I personally – have great relationships with mayors of every political stripe: Democrats like John Birkner in Westwood, Republicans like Norman Schmelz in Bergenfield and Independents like George Fosdick in Ridgefield Park. The same is true of county officials

we work with, especially Bergen County Executive Jim Tedesco and Hudson County Improvement Authority CEO Norman Guerra. Those relationships work because they get real, positive results for both people and the environment.

In the not-too-distant past, we had many similar relationships further up the political food chain but lately it's gotten harder to maintain them at the State House or (dare I say it?) in Washington. I think the change started during Governor Christie's time in office and since Senator Stephen Sweeney became Senate President. There seems to me to be far too much playing to respective bases or passing safe "Mom and apple pie" legislation and nowhere near enough bold initiatives being taken – initiatives like saving the wetlands of the Meadowlands which DeFrancesco started and Governor McGreevey finished. But boldness is *exactly* what's needed now.

So Governor Murphy, please pick up the phone, call NJ Transit and tell them "NO".

Carl Bill

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