

**Hackensack Riverkeeper** is the leading environmental organization working on Hackensack River issues.

## Empire Tract: Largest Single Block Of Private, Undeveloped Wetlands In The Meadowlands On Brink of Preservation

By **Hugh M. Carola**

Those of you who have followed this incredible story since the mid-1990s are well aware of its many ups and downs and twists and turns. It appears, my friends, that the story of the Empire Tract is finally coming to a conclusion.

Early on the morning of October 5, 2004, Captain Bill Sheehan, in his

role as chairman of the Meadowlands Conservation Trust, convened the trustees in special session to discuss the transfer of the Tract from the Mills Corporation to the Trust. Later that morning, Capt. Bill brought the result of that meeting - a unanimous resolution supporting the transfer - to the offices of the NJ Sports and Exposition

Authority (NJSEA). The resolution was received with thunderous applause.

At press time, the final transfer is not yet complete but it will be executed when one of the following things happens: when Mills receives its final Army Corps of Engineers permit for the Continental Arena site or when Mills completes its financial transaction with NJSEA. At that point, and barring any eleventh-hour legal obstructions, the largest single block of privately owned wetlands in the New Jersey

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## Thousands Drawn To The River In 2004

By **Hugh M. Carola**

Most of them came for an Eco-Cruise, to relax, observe and learn about the marshes of the Meadowlands. Quite a few of them came to paddle canoes and kayaks, some leisurely, others at a workout pace. A decent amount of folks came by just to walk along marsh trails and view the New York skyline through the reeds. Perhaps the most committed of them came to work; they literally picked up tons of trash that marred the beauty of our riverbanks.



Who were all these people? They were folks just like you who took part in Hackensack Riverkeeper's 2004 Eco-Program season.

This past year, nearly 6,000 people came out to recreate on and alongside the Hackensack River and to explore the marshes of the New

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## Meeting The Municipalities *Riverkeeper Exhibits at Annual League of Municipalities Convention in Atlantic City*

By **Hugh M. Carola**

**Atlantic City, NJ** - Here in this city by the sea, the staff of Hackensack Riverkeeper is participating for the second year in a row at the annual conference of the New Jersey State League of Municipalities. Taking place at the world-famous Atlantic City

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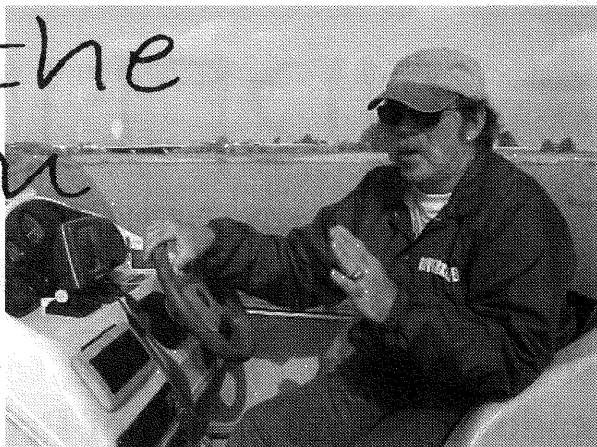
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# At the helm

*A word from  
Captain Bill*



## Where Do We Go From Here? As Far As The Environment Goes, We Are On Our Own

**T**he political fallout from this year's Presidential election is still raining down on us as I write this column. Now, I realize that minds more astute than mine have analyzed the results over and over already and many if not most of you have read or heard enough on this subject. However, please permit me the following few lines to offer my thoughts about where we are and where we're going.

To begin with, the mission of Hackensack Riverkeeper is one that is utterly nonpartisan. We view the protection, preservation and restoration of our watershed as a mission that serves the interest of all citizens regardless of political persuasion. We are about clean water, pollution prevention, protection of the public health, preservation of open space, the guarantee of public access and the achievement of environmental justice. These issues affect all of us whether we call ourselves Republicans, Democrats or independents. This attitude has enabled us to conduct a meaningful and productive dialog with the broad spectrum of both elected and appointed public officials who must make decisions that impact the environment all of the time.

A majority of our fellow

Americans voted to return the Bush administration to power for another four years. From what I've read, most of them voted for the President for reasons other than the administration's environmental record. That's too bad because based upon the record of the previous four years, I fear that our country will continue to witness an erosion of environmental protections and the re-writing of environmental policies to reflect ideological beliefs and corporate philosophies rather than good science and the Public Trust.

Lest anyone think that I'm simply badmouthing Republicans, nothing could be further than the truth. From the beginning of this organization, I have reached out to all elected officials. When Bergen County's government consisted of a Republican County Executive (now a Hackensack Riverkeeper Trustee) and an all-GOP Freeholder board, my colleagues and I got them to approve and implement the Bergen County Open Space Trust Fund. It was Republican Acting Governor Donald DiFrancesco who first appointed me to the Meadowlands Conservation Trust, and it was he who modified the course of state government and steered the state

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## Annual Celebration Honors 4 Friends of the Hackensack River And The Preservation Of The Empire Tract Wetlands

Nearly 200 guests joined the Trustees and staff of Hackensack Riverkeeper at its fifth annual Awards Celebration and Sustainable SeafoodFest. Public officials, business leaders and environmental leaders joined with supporters from



Captain Bill proves you can have your cake and eat it too, thanks to this confection in the shape of the Empire Tract, created by Elegant Desserts of Lyndhurst.

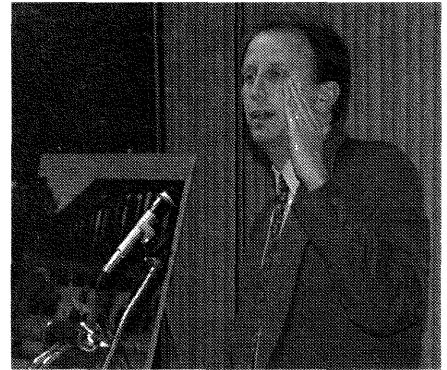
across New Jersey in honoring:

- Robert R. Ceberio, Executive Director of the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission, who was recognized for Excellence in Public Service and for his inspired leadership of the NJMC;

- Dr. Beth Ravit, Rutgers University research scientist, who was honored for Excellence in Philanthropy for her personal support as well as her inspiration to others to support the Hackensack River's restoration;

- George Aronson, professional photographer renowned for his stunning portrayals of New Jersey's natural heritage, who was recognized for Excellence in Media & the Arts;

- Peter Shapiro, a Demarest junior high school student, who is the 2004



Steve Fleischli of the Waterkeeper Alliance praised Hackensack Riverkeeper for being a model that other Keeper organizations can emulate.

recipient of the Lisa G. Ryan Outstanding Volunteer Award for his commitment to the work of Hackensack Riverkeeper that began with his Bar Mitzvah service project.

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### Robert R. Ceberio Excellence in Public Service

Robert R. Ceberio has been the Executive Director of the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission (NJMC) since July 2002. He is responsible for a \$30 million annual budget.

Last year, he led the NJMC's staff in revising the Meadowlands District's Master Plan, Land Use Regulations, and the introducing the Meadowlands Mobility 2030 Transportation Plan. The new Master Plan preserves 8,400 acres of open space and targets polluted and blighted areas for more than \$5.5 billion worth of redevelopment.

Mr. Ceberio was involved in the acquisition of more than 2,000 acres of wetlands for open space preservation, the creation of the Meadowlands Environmental Research Institute, and the development of trails and parks.

Under the NJMC's Smart Growth agenda, he directed the design and implementation of 10 redevelopment projects throughout the Meadowlands region. Mr. Ceberio was also involved in the NJMC's planning for the largest brownfield redevelopment project in New Jersey, converting seven abandoned landfills into green redevelopment areas. The first phase of this redevelopment began this spring.

Mr. Ceberio also assisted the Board of Commissioners in the development of a Municipal Assistance Program, which provides property tax relief for the District's municipalities. Under the program more than \$5.1 million has been granted to Meadowlands municipalities for flood control, the purchase of public works equipment for a regional co-op, passive and active municipal recreational facilities, and police and fire equipment.



### Dr. Beth Ravit, Excellence in Philanthropy

In 1999, she met Captain Bill Sheehan at a public hearing and began volunteering as a fundraiser for Hackensack Riverkeeper. She initiated both the annual awards event and the corporate canoe sponsorship program, raising thousands for Hackensack Riverkeeper.

After 20 years as a successful retail executive, Beth returned to school to earn a graduate degree in environmental science. Her goal was to support grassroots organizations such as Hackensack Riverkeeper with sound scientific research. In June of this year, at Rutgers University, she successfully defended her environmental science Ph.D. thesis, which is largely based on research conducted in the Hackensack Meadowlands.

Prior to her thesis defense, Dr. Ravit secured a grant from Rutgers University to develop the Rutgers Environmental Research Clinic. This Clinic will bring graduate student researchers from multiple scientific disciplines into "real world" environmental projects, allowing them to work with and support NGO groups. Today the Environmental Research Clinic is currently working on two projects in the Hackensack River watershed. After Dr. Ravit's presentation to the NJ Wetlands



Mitigation Council, Rutgers was awarded \$100,000 to support three graduate researchers to work on the 20-acre Teaneck Creek wetlands restoration project. The second project is in the Meadowlands, where Rutgers honors students are working with Riverkeeper and Rutgers Environmental Law Clinic students to achieve the best possible clean up of a Superfund site.



# First Meadowlands Festival Of Birding Takes Flight

*Birders discover Peregrine falcons in Secaucus,  
Bald eagles in North Arlington*

By Hugh M. Carola

The day was raw and windy but like birders everywhere, the folks who took part in the NJ Meadowlands Festival of Birding on October 17 didn't care. The event - a joint venture between Hackensack Riverkeeper, the New Jersey Audubon Society (NJAS) and the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission (NJMC) - offered the 100+ participants numerous opportunities to learn about and observe many of the bird species that can be found in the Meadowlands.

Taking place at the Meadowlands Environment Center at Richard W. DeKorte Park in Lyndhurst, the Festival featured workshops, guided bird walks and other activities designed to teach people about birds and birding. Staffers from Hackensack Riverkeeper and the NJMC also conducted three birding trips aboard pontoon boats with assistance from NJAS naturalists.

Among the birds sighted were a pair of migrating Bald eagles spotted over Harrier Meadow in North Arlington by a group of birders led by Don Freiday of NJAS and Gabrielle Bennett-Meany, the

Environment Center's education director. Earlier in the day, birders aboard the Hackensack Riverkeeper vessel Robert H. Boyle observed Peregrine falcons and Northern harriers hunting over the Mill Creek Marsh in Secaucus. Large numbers of ducks as well as lingering shorebirds and egrets were also seen by many birders from aboard the boats and along the trails.

"Fall is a great time to bird the Meadowlands," said Captain Bill Sheehan, executive director, Hackensack Riverkeeper. "By October, lots of birds have moved through our region and many more are arriving to overwinter in the marshes."

The Festival featured an entertaining keynote address by noted author and NJAS vice president Pete Dunne. During his talk, which was entitled "Musical Chairs," Dunne spoke eloquently about how his love of nature and birds has affected him throughout his life. He bemoaned the fact so many young people -

including his own nieces and nephews - spend much of their time behind locked doors and in front of computer screens. He offered this alternative:

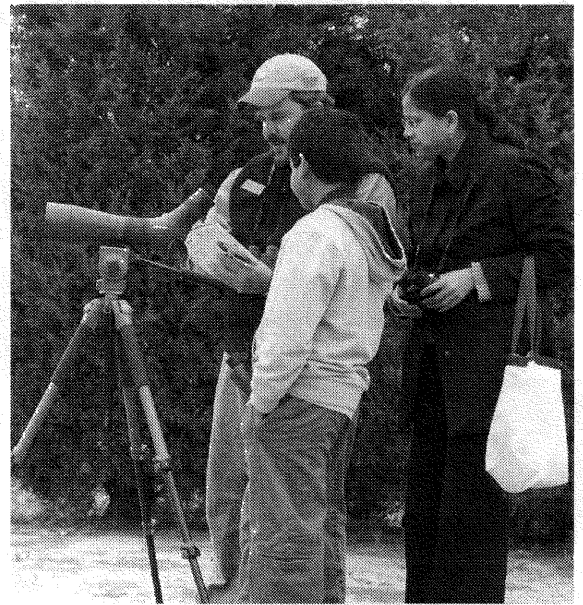
"The next time you go birding, please do all of us a favor and take

someone with you," implored Dunne at the end of his talk. "Take your kids, take a friend, take your boss even; but take someone who will say 'wow!'"

Prior to Dunne's address, plans for a new ecotourism guide to the Meadowlands were unveiled to the audience. The guide, another cooperative venture between the Festival partners along with the Meadowlands Regional Chamber of Commerce, is expected to be published in early 2006 and will feature information on hiking, fishing, boating and paddling as well as birding.

In between field trips, workshops and the keynote address, festivalgoers shopped for binoculars, field guides and other birding-related merchandise from NJ Audubon's Traveling Store and from Festival sponsor Wild Birds Unlimited of Paramus whose associates set up a complete backyard birdfeeding display inside the Environment Center.

Thanks to the success of the first-ever Meadowlands Festival of Birding, the organizing sponsors are already making plans for next year's event.



*NJAS's Don Freiday shows a youngster how to focus a spotting scope during the first-ever NJ Meadowlands Festival of Birding.*



*Large numbers of ducks as well as lingering shorebirds and egrets were seen by many birders from aboard the boats and along the trails.*



## ***Hackensack Riverkeeper Joins NJ Audubon Society In Meadowlands Bird Survey***

**By Hugh M. Carola**

On my desk is a copy of one of the most important reports ever generated about our watershed: *The Hackensack River Migratory Bird Report with Recommendations for Conservation* by Richard P. Kane and David Githens and published by the New Jersey Audubon Society (NJAS) in 1997. Two things made the report special: it was the first comprehensive study done on nesting and migratory bird species within the Hackensack River watershed and, because of its thoroughness, it clearly illustrated the value of the Meadowlands as essential bird habitat.

"Now that we've won the war for the Meadowlands, it's sometimes hard to remember that we once had to fight for every acre," explained Capt. Bill Sheehan, who provided

the authors with the critical assistance they needed to complete the report. "Rich's book was one of the few weapons we had to combat the developers who were saying that it wasn't worth preserving."

It's been a decade since the research for this report began. Fortunately our friends at New Jersey Audubon came up with the perfect way to refresh it: by doing it again. In discussions we had this past spring with Kane's successor, Eric Stiles, the idea of creating a new bird survey began to take shape. In early September Capt. Bill once again took to the river in the role of citizen scientist, this time accompanied by Ken Witkowski, NJAS associate naturalist.

During September and October, the two of them spent a total of 27.5 hours aboard the *Edward Abbey*

between Overpeck Creek and Newark Bay methodically observing and listing every bird they could find. Beginning early in the morning, each trip was designed to cover points along the river as well as predetermined observation areas within several marshes. In addition, Witkowski also surveyed the Mill Creek Marsh and several other hard-to-navigate areas via kayak.

Although covering less area than the earlier work (the NJ Meadowlands District vs. the entire New Jersey portion of the Hackensack watershed), the new one reflects advances in sampling techniques and avian surveying that have been perfected over the past 10 years.

"Nowadays there are right ways and wrong ways to count birds,"

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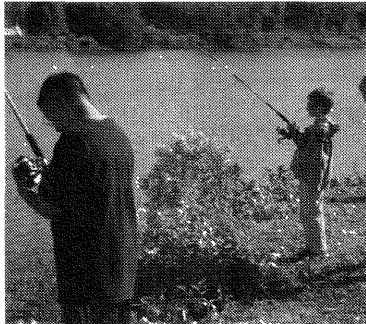
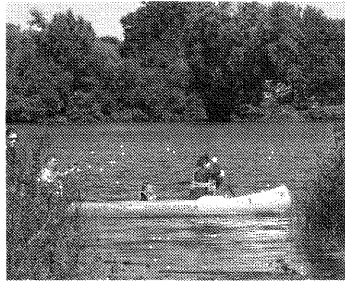
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## Hackensack RiverDay Celebrates Community

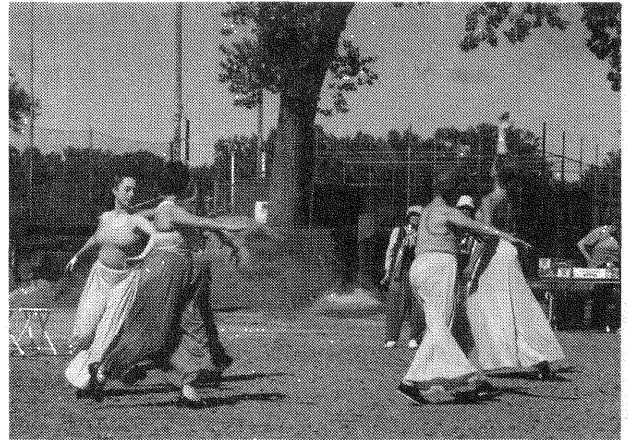
By Jared Eudell

Tropical Storm Ivan was still sporting winds of about 15-25 mph when people started arriving in Foschini Park for Hackensack RiverDay 2004. Despite having to use the rain-date and the less than clement weather, nearly 1,000 people came out to celebrate the Hackensack River and the many communities and activities that have grown up along its banks.

The many activities included live music, games, crafts and giveaways for kids, and lots of info for adults. Hackensack Riverkeeper brought canoes and kayaks again and fishing rods were provided by the NJ Department of Environment Protection. There was also a dunk tank, which Capt Bill had the joy of swimming in (a couple times).



Featured at RiverDay were three performances by the Center for Modern Dance Education of their program entitled "River of Many Bends." The dances were choreographed specifically for the festival and drew loud applause and appreciation from the spectators.



*The Center for Modern Dance Education created a special dance, entitled "River of Many Bends," which premiered at the 2004 Hackensack RiverDay.*



*Mistic Rein, eclectic modern rock/pop band from Hoboken, was one of several bands who entertained the crowd at RiverDay.*

### Thanks to Hackensack RiverDay Sponsors and Supporters!

Hackensack RiverDay 2004 was sponsored in part by the NY-NJ Harbor Estuary Program (HEP) as part of National Estuary Day, Inserra Supermarkets, United Water, JB Offset Printing and the City of Hackensack.

We'd like to thank the vendors, exhibitors and bands that came out to help celebrate our River:

Center for Modern Dance  
Education

Passaic Valley Sewerage  
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Sierra Club - North Jersey Group  
NJ Committee for the East Coast  
Greenway

Bergen County Utilities Authority

Sandy Candy

North Jersey Friends of  
Clearwater

Lisa C. Abbatommarco, Puppeteer

Mystic Rein

Sussex County Rental Center

Here's Johnny

NJ Department of Environmental  
Protection

Evan Toth

United Water

Janeene Teranna with  
Electraluxx



*Puppeteer Lisa Abbatommarco (left) showed dozens of children how to make colorful, creative river puppets out of everyday craft items.*

## Riverkeeper and Municipal Officials Network At Conference

*Continued from page 1*

Convention Center, the conference offers delegates the opportunity to learn from and ask questions of a vast array of exhibitors representing a myriad of products and services available to local governments. Last year, more than 20,000 delegates, participants and guests attended the conference.

"We're here in support of the Phase Two Stormwater Regulations, the expansion of Category One protections to all drinking water resources, and we're here to explain to everyone who will listen that it's in every town's best interest to protect the environment," explained Captain Bill Sheehan, Hackensack Riverkeeper's executive director.

There are 566 municipalities and over 13,000 elected and appointed officials whose job it is to govern them. The demands on their time can be incredible. There is tremendous competition among municipalities for tax ratables and income. Often, this "ratables chase" leads to sprawl development - the loss of open space and other public trust resources resulting not in gains but in net losses for municipalities. Ratable chases often lead towns around and around in a vicious circle that never ends.

Basically what happens is this: "Jerseyville" needs more property tax revenues to keep pace with rising municipal costs so it makes a 30-acre tract of woods available to a developer who builds 100 town-houses on it. Once completed and sold, the units house 200 children (less than the current U.S. average of 2.1 children per household). This influx of school-age children is equal to nearly seven new 30-pupil classrooms, which means more teachers, which means either a property tax hike or a cut in school services. Sooner or later, Jerseyville is

going to need to raise revenues again to keep pace with rising municipal costs so...

"One of the biggest lessons we've learned working in the Meadowlands is that towns can have it both ways," said Capt. Bill. "Every municipality has opportunities for redevelopment if they take the time to look. 'There's no need for them to sacrifice what little open space they have in order to chase ratables - that's what the new Meadowlands Master Plan is all about.'"

Attending the Conference with Hackensack Riverkeeper are staffers from NY/NJ Baykeeper who joined with Hackensack Riverkeeper in unveiling the successful Passaic River Patrol (*see Hackensack Tidelines, Summer 2004*) to the rest of New Jersey. The Patrol recently finished its inaugural season and in

addition to drawing attention to that much-maligned waterway, it is also serving as an example of a public/private partnership that can be emulated around the state.

"Not only are we glad to be here," said Capt. Bill, "we're happy to be a resource for any municipality that's seeking better ways to serve its citizens and their environment."

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Our editorial staff, which garnered two awards in 2004, has dedicated itself to local news with a reporting style that is in-depth, comprehensive and concise.

Beyond the news, issues central to local readers are covered in Bridging the Gap, Street Observers and the newspaper's Opinion page, which includes editorial views and the publisher's column. We've also

grown in 2004 to include a health and lifestyles column, a business analyst and wire services that report the latest restaurant news.

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## Dealing With The Dangers of Mercury

By Jared Eudell

It is well documented that mercury can be dangerous stuff. In fact, the harm that it can do to humans is so great that it is no longer used in medical thermometers and many other consumer products and people are advised against eating too much tuna fish or swordfish because of the high mercury levels. High levels have been linked to autism and attention deficit disorder (ADD) in children and can lead to neurological disorders, cancer, liver or kidney disease or a number of fatal heart diseases in adults. Other symptoms may include impaired speech, deafness, blindness, dyslexia and uncontrollable aggression. Scientists estimate that as many as 60,000 children are born annually with mercury-induced impairments.

ry-induced impairments.

Although mercury also occurs naturally, the leading human-generated source in the nation is emissions from coal-fired power plants that puff about 48 tons of it into the air each year. To understand how much damage 48 tons can do, consider that the contents of one mercury thermometer can contaminate a 20 acre lake. Nationally, more than 12 million acres (30 percent) of our lakes and 453 thousand miles of our rivers have state-issued fish consumption advisories.

All of New Jersey's lakes have mercury advisories. The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection publishes state-wide mercury advisories each year which currently lists largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, chain pickerel, yellow bullhead, brown bullhead and sunfish. There are even more stringent advisories for the Oradell Reservoir and the upper Passaic River including black crappie. (Visit [www.state.nj.us/dep/dsr/njmain-fish.htm](http://www.state.nj.us/dep/dsr/njmain-fish.htm) for other advisories.) The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) have collaborated on national mercury consumption advisories.

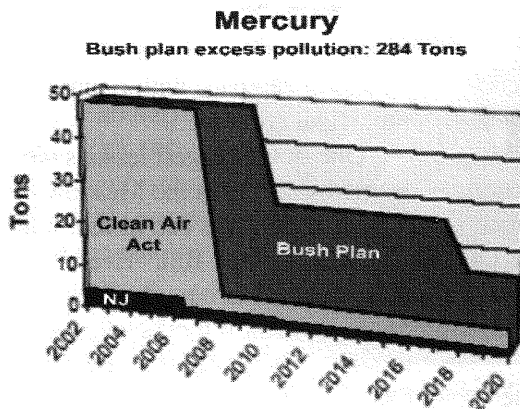
On Nov. 4, 2004, Governor McGreevey announced that the State has adopted the most stringent regulations in the nation. The new rules will reduce the mercury emis-

sions from New Jersey's coal-fired power plants 90% by 2007, iron and steel melters (NJ's largest source) 75% by 2009, solid waste incinerators 95% below 1990 levels by 2011, and medical waste incinerators to one-tenth of the current federal level.

Yet the federal government still

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quarrels about how and when to regulate mercury emissions. The Clean Air Act currently requires national mercury emissions to be reduced by 90% by 2008. Such a reduction is feasible using existing technology. However, the EPA seeks to weaken the Clean Air Act by creating a longer timeline for reduction (to 2018), lowering reduction targets (3 times higher than those of the Clean Air Act), and by establishing mercury pollution credits that can be bought, sold or traded among dischargers, a mechanism that is illegal when hazardous chemicals are involved.



*The Clean Air Act mandates the reduction of mercury emissions from 48 tons to 5 tons by 2008. The EPA will confound the process by establishing market-based credits and drawing out the process to 2018. New Jersey is actively reducing pollution by adopting cleaner standards and a goal of 90% reduction by 2007.*

*Graph adapted from [www.savethecleanairact.org](http://www.savethecleanairact.org)*

### Research Explores Connection Between Coal-Fired Power Plants and Mercury-Laden Fish

Regardless of how the federal government chooses to act, and despite best efforts of New Jersey, mercury is already in our waters, in our fish and in our diet. The Waterkeeper Alliance is currently funding a research project with the University of South Carolina's Asheville Environmental Quality Institute that will study the connection between mercury-laden fish and their proximity to coal-fired power plants.

Hackensack Riverkeeper has agreed to support the study by catching fish above and below the Oradell Dam and recording the distance and direction to the nearest coal-fired power plant. Using our samples and samples from about 60 other sites in the United States and Canada, the UNC scientists can use computer models to associate the mercury levels with power plant emissions.

## Ecotourism Helping to Keep New Jersey Green - And in the Black

### *Latest Figures Show Ecotourism Brings In Over \$1.2 Billion Annually*

New Jersey's 39 state parks and 11 state forests provide economic benefits amounting to at least \$1.2 billion per year, according to a recent study by New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The study, entitled *The Economic Value of New Jersey State Parks and Forests*, highlights that New Jersey's parks and forests create almost 14,000 jobs, positively impact property values and provide enhanced public services like education.

"This study quantifies the importance of New Jersey's state parks and forests as an asset to our economy and underscores the necessity of maintaining our natural open space," said DEP Commissioner Bradley M. Campbell. "We get the best return on our investment by nurturing our parklands and forest resources."

According to the study, New Jersey's parks and forests annually provide \$812 million in benefits from recreation and tourism and \$228 million from the operating and capital expenditures for them. Additionally, the parks and forests produce benefits worth at least \$140 million from ecosystem services - things like

watershed and groundwater protection, flood control, water purification, wildlife conservation and biodiversity preservation.

"And that's really just the half of it here in New Jersey," said Hugh Carola, Hackensack Riverkeeper's program director. "In addition to state parks and forests, there are over 210,000 acres of state Wildlife Management Areas, nearly 140,000 acres of federally-protected lands and thousands more acres of natural open space owned by counties, municipalities and private conservancies - all of it helping the economy as well as the environment."

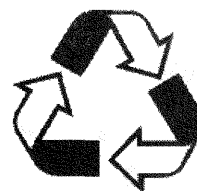
The soon-to-be-created Meadowlands Estuary Preserve is expected to generate a tremendous amount of indirect economic activity from the "ripple effect" that will spread as a result of increased consumer spending related to ecotourism in the region. The effect is pretty simple: when Preserve visitors purchase things like food, lodging and gas, the local businesses that provide those goods make money as do their employees and suppliers. Everybody wins.

### Three Convenient Ways To Donate To Hackensack Riverkeeper!

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## Lisa G. Ryan Joins the Staff

*Long-time Friend, Supporter And Volunteer  
Becomes Newest Operations Director*

Many of you already know Lisa Ryan from her volunteer work with Hackensack Riverkeeper. It all began about five years ago, when she moved back to the area after living for 15 years in New Brunswick, NJ.

Lisa had a defining moment when she tried to take her beloved dog, Thelma, to Leonia for a swim in the Overpeck Creek. She was shocked and disgusted at the filth they found lining the banks. This was not the Hackensack River she came to love growing up in Harrington Park.

Shortly thereafter, Lisa contacted Hackensack Riverkeeper to volunteer for river cleanups, but was told that there was no available staff or funding for river cleanups. For the next four years, Hackensack Riverkeeper supported Lisa's (now) 12 annual volunteer cleanups, providing opportunities for hundreds of people from all areas of the Hackensack River watershed to clean up dumpster loads of debris. Thelma has happily done her part by cleaning up all those pesky pizza crusts!

Lisa graduated from Northern Valley Regional High School in Old Tappan in 1985 as the president of her senior class. At Rutgers University, she completed a double major in French and political science in 1990, using part of that time to study in France, focusing on international relations and underdeveloped countries. Upon returning to the United States, she began volunteering and later became the Rutgers chapter coordinator for the human rights organization CISPES (Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador). Her activities included public education campaigns, fundraising and participation in a fact-finding mission to El Salvador during its civil war, where she met with educational, religious, political and labor groups.

Shortly after graduating Rutgers, Lisa was out jogging when she saw a "Help Wanted" sign in the window



*Lisa Ryan, Hackensack Riverkeeper's newest full-time staffer, is excited to be working to support a cause she strongly believes in.*

of a copy store. Being in dire need of rent money and unsure of her plan to work as a translator for the UN, Lisa stopped in and was hired as the manager, leading to a 10-year career in the printing industry as a graphic designer and production manager. When her brother opened a litigation support company in Bergen County in 2000, Lisa worked there as a bookkeeper and office manager during which time she learned a great deal about the environmentally atrocious legal industry (paper, paper, paper!). From 2002 until October 2004, Lisa worked as a bookkeeper and office manager for the trucking division of an international freight forwarding company based in Port Newark, NJ.

Eventually realizing that, although she was fully qualified and on her way to success in the corporate world, she was ultimately unmotivated by the profiteering that drove all of these industries. A few days after deciding to find a way out of the rat race, she spoke to her good friend Kathy Urffer, who announced that she was moving to Vermont and that Hackensack Riverkeeper was looking for her replacement as operations director.

Having spent the last four years organizing river cleanups for Hackensack Riverkeeper and being peripherally involved in many other programs, there was no doubt in Lisa's mind that this is where she is meant to be. "I actually have a job promoting and protecting something that I grew up with and something that I really care about," said Lisa. "I look forward to contributing to the cause."

In addition to her bookkeeping and administrative responsibilities, Lisa will be coordinating our volunteers, so feel free to give her a call or stop in the office. She and Thelma will happily greet you at the door and put you to work!

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## *Parting Words From A Riverkeeper Staffer:* **Make A Difference With Your Support**

**By Kathy Urffer**

I have been very fortunate to work at Hackensack Riverkeeper Inc. for the past four years and have had the honor of working with an incredible staff and an amazing boss. This has been the most gratifying job I have ever had.

I'm moving to Vermont where I hope to help conservation efforts in the Green Mountain State. I hope to learn my local rivers and mountains in Vermont as intimately as I know the Hackensack River.

For the past four years, I've attended the Waterkeeper Alliance Conference where 125 Waterkeepers from all over the world gather to network. The work done by these folks continually inspires and amazes me. Unlike large corporations and other anonymous environmental organizations where leadership is unclear, Waterkeepers, as individuals, stick their necks out to take care of our waterways. They put their own name, and in some cases their bodies, on the line to protect our waterways.

Hackensack Riverkeeper has not only been an inspiration to me, but also to so many others that live around the River. I've talked to thousands of people at hundreds of events. My heart always beats a little bit happier when a little girl comes up to me after a presentation and says that she wants to start an environmental club at her school. Or when a teenager gets fired up and wants to help us bust polluters. But it breaks my heart when I have to tell carefree anglers that they should throw back the bushel of crabs they just caught from the Hackensack River--because the crabs are full of deadly dioxin.

Our natural areas and our waters are a public resources. They should be safe, clean resources. I look forward to the day when I will bring my future children home to the




*Kathy Urffer contemplates the past and the future on her last Eco-Cruise as an HRI staffer.*

Hackensack River to enjoy the natural abundance found here. To fish and to eat what we catch. To paddle in the hot sun and cool off with a refreshing swim. That day, I know, will someday come.

In the meantime, I encourage you to support the important work of Hackensack Riverkeeper in whatever way you can. This small hardworking staff can do their work only because caring people like you send in \$10, \$25 or \$100 or more. That has been one of the most gratifying aspects of my job at Hackensack Riverkeeper:

the thrill of opening an envelope and finding a donation from someone who believes in our work. It confirms that you appreciate what we do and validates that we are working in the right direction. It also ensures that we can pay our staff, publish *Hackensack Tidelines*, educate watershed residents and advocate for clean water. My parting request is to encourage you to make a real difference and send as generous a donation as you can afford to Hackensack Riverkeeper today.

As always, some time or some place, we will see you on the River!



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Hackensack Riverkeeper is raffling off this unique, graceful Adirondack Packboat, hand-crafted by Adirondack Guideboat, Inc. of Charlotte, Vermont.



Adirondack guideboats date back to the 1830s when they were used to transport hunters into the wilderness of New York's Adirondack Mountains. Although it weighs only 46 pounds, the packboat is no lightweight. It's designed to handle fast-flowing rivers, large, choppy bodies of water and even the open ocean.

It may look like a canoe at first glance, but if you look at it again, you'll notice the graceful oars resting in brass oarlocks, the handmade cane seats and the unique combination of 19th century form with 21st century technology. Canoes are fine,

but this is definitely not a canoe. It's an Adirondack Packboat.

We invite you to try and win the boat for your very own in Hackensack Riverkeeper's Adirondack Packboat Raffle. Chances cost only \$5 each or five tickets for \$20. The winner will be drawn on Earth Day, April 22, 2005 and proceeds will benefit Hackensack Riverkeeper. Just fill out the coupon below, and send it in with your check and we'll send your tickets by return mail.



*Graceful, light (only 46 lbs.), yet tough, this Adirondack Pack Boat is being raffled to raise funds for Hackensack Riverkeeper.*

**Specifications of this  
Adirondack Pack Boat:**

- ♦ Length: 12 feet, 2 inches
- ♦ Beam: 36.5 inches
- ♦ Stem height: 19 inches
- ♦ Depth at center: 12 inches
- ♦ Capacity: 350 pounds
- ♦ Weight: 46 pounds
- ♦ Materials: Kevlar with cherry-wood gunwales and trim

**Retail value: \$2,600**

## ***Meadowlands Bird Survey***

*Continued from page 5*

said Witkowski. "When you're birding for fun, you can do what you like but when you're doing it as part of an official survey, it's all about scientific protocol and collecting your data in an approved way."

Needless to say, it isn't all just work for the two of them. For example, towards the end of this fall's survey period, they discovered a Black-necked stilt foraging on the riverbank in Carlstadt. While quite common along the southern U.S. coast, these strikingly-patterned shorebirds are extremely rare in New Jersey and almost never observed this far north. While kayaking, Witkowski noted another rarity: an American golden plover - a bird that's more common on the onion fields of Orange County, NY than in the marshes of the Meadowlands. Until now, that is.

The new Meadowlands Bird Survey is being conducted by the NJAS Office of Citizen Science in cooperation with Hackensack Riverkeeper and should be fully completed by 2007. Until then, *Hackensack Tidelines* will publish survey updates.

**I feel lucky! Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ raffle tickets for the Adirondack Pack Boat (\$5 each or 5 for \$20). I'm enclosing \$ \_\_\_\_\_.**

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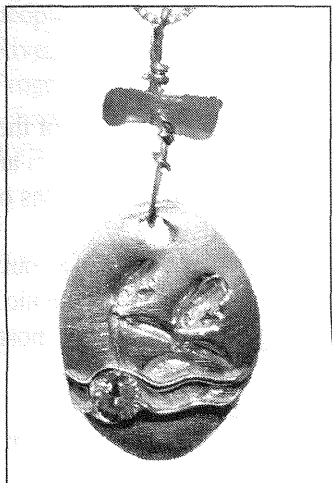
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Your tickets will be mailed to you. Make checks payable to

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## Introducing Hackensack Riverkeeper Jewelry: Capture the Energy and Beauty Of The River



**D**eb D'Andrea of Lark Hill Designs has created this lovely jewelry just for Hackensack Riverkeeper. The design evokes the marshes, the waves and the sun and is a perfect way to show your commitment to the protection of our natural resources.

Each unique piece of art is lovingly hand-sculpted of the finest silver clay and then fired to achieve the beautiful energy and feel of the finished work. This creative process fuses the positive life force into the silver sculpture. Unlike sterling, .999 fine silver resonates at a higher frequency that makes it feel noticeably different. Each piece is reflective of the environmental and ethereal energy that connects us.

The pendant is available with your choice of semi-precious stone: sea jasper, lapis lazuli or rose quartz. It comes on your choice of a 16- or 18-inch silver chain and is packaged in a black velvet pouch with a polishing cloth.

Need Holiday Gifts?

### Think Hackensack Riverkeeper Gift Certificates!



**W**hen you are making out your gift list this holiday season, why not consider a gift of sun, wildlife and wonder? A gift certificate from Hackensack Riverkeeper can be redeemed for


Eco-Cruises, canoe trips or very cool Hackensack Riverkeeper sweatshirts and more!

Gift certificates can be purchased in any denomination (\$20 minimum), can be redeemed for any service or product that Hackensack Riverkeeper provides: narrated Eco-Cruises on our pontoon boats, Eco-Walks, canoe and kayak rentals, guided trips, and an array of "Keeperwear" (Hackensack Riverkeeper branded clothing) plus selected books and videotapes. Keep in mind that all water-based programming runs from April through October. Gift certificates purchased for this holiday season can be redeemed through December 31, 2005.

Besides giving an imaginative gift, you will greatly help the work of Hackensack Riverkeeper. Each purchase helps us continue our education and advocacy work for the health of the watershed.

To order your gift certificates, please call Lisa Ryan at 201-968-0808 or order online by visiting [www.hackensackriverkeeper.org/donate.html](http://www.hackensackriverkeeper.org/donate.html) and clicking on the ClickandPledge icon.

The pendant costs \$40 and can be ordered by calling Hackensack Riverkeeper at 201-968-0808 or emailing [lisak@hackensackriverkeeper.org](mailto:lisak@hackensackriverkeeper.org)


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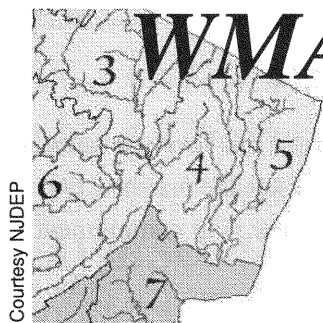
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Courtesy NJDEP

# WMA 5 Ambassador Update

By Michael Guerriero

## New Challenges For New Ambassador

Greetings! My name is Michael Guerriero, and for the next nine months I will be working in the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's AmeriCorps Watershed Ambassador Program. As Ambassador for Watershed Management Area 5, I will be a free resource for individuals and communities in the areas surrounding the Hackensack and Hudson Rivers, from the Newark Bay, extending north to New Jersey's border with New York State.

During my undergraduate career as a biology major at Boston College, my fascination and concern with the living world led me to participate in Duke University Marine Laboratory's Integrated Marine Conservation Program and work as an intern for the New Jersey Conservation Foundation. Now, a year removed from graduation, I hope to bring my education, as well as the training provided to me through this program to the



service of the waterways and the citizens of WMA 5.

Based out of my dynamic and gracious host agency, Hackensack Riverkeeper, I will be a source of information and involvement for those who are interested in

the health of our waterways. If you would like to learn more about this program, or if you would like to arrange a presentation for your school or group, join me in a biological or visual assessment of one of WMA 5's streams, or collaborate with me in developing an event for your community, please contact me at 201-968-0808 or [ambassador@hackensackriverkeeper.org](mailto:ambassador@hackensackriverkeeper.org). I look forward to working with you for the betterment of our watershed and environment.

## *Historic New Bridge Landing Is Our Newest State Park*

On October 21, Historic New Bridge Landing here on the Hackensack River finally received full state park designation from the NJ Department of Environmental Protection. Governor James E. McGreevey made the announcement at a ceremony held at the Great Falls in Paterson, site of another newly designated state park.

Historic New Bridge Landing is co-managed by the Bergen County Historical Society with assistance from Ringwood State Park. It includes four colonial-era buildings, an historic pony-truss swing bridge (believed to be the last one remaining in the U.S.) and a tract of lowland forest along the river. A new visitor's center with museum and classroom space will soon be built at the site on vacant land along New Bridge Road.

"Our parks and open spaces are the pride and joy of New Jersey," said McGreevey. "Parks create a sense of place, provide recreational and educational experiences, protect the environment and boost the economy. A world of opportunities and advantages rests in these new

parks, which benefit not just our urban centers but all of New Jersey."

During the American Revolution, New Bridge Landing was a strategic river crossing that served as a battleground, intelligence-gathering post, encampment and military headquarters. In 1776 during the retreat of the Continental Army from New York, the original bridge was burned after General George Washington successfully led his troops to safety across it. For more than a century after the war, the Landing was a major commercial center where sloops and coastal schooners unloaded manufactured goods and took on cargoes of produce from area farms.

"For hundreds of years, people have been coming to the river on this spot and now they have a great reason to continue," said Captain Bill Sheehan during a recent visit to the park. "This place celebrates the river just by being here."

# Sponsor An Eco-Cruise For The School Group Of Your Choice!

By pontoon boat, canoe and on foot, more than 6,000 people witnessed the ongoing recovery of the Hackensack River in 2004 thanks to Hackensack Riverkeeper's Eco-Programs. A large number of these eco-tourists were schoolchildren; please help us reach even more kids in 2005!

Our Eco-Programs consist of

- Narrated Eco-Cruise on the Hackensack River and the Meadowlands led by a US Coast Guard-licensed captain on a modern, comfortable pontoon boat that launches from Laurel Hill Park in Secaucus.
- Eco-Walks and other age-appropriate riverside presentations by a Hackensack Riverkeeper naturalist and environmental educator.
- Hands-on exploration of the Hackensack River and the Meadowlands wetlands area, including the Saw Mill Creek Wildlife Management Area. This rich ecosystem supports 265 species of birds and 54 species of fish.



*An Eco-Walk and riverside presentation is part of the sponsor package.*



*Students experience the wonder of the marshes first-hand on our pontoon boats.*

## Make It Happen! Your School Group Sponsorship Includes:

- Hackensack Riverkeeper provides a day-long Eco-Program, consisting of an Eco-Cruise in the Meadowlands with an Eco-Walk along the Hackensack River for up to 30 schoolchildren (grades 2 -12).
- You choose the class, the school, the town or leave the selection up to us.
- The sponsored class is officially notified by Hackensack Riverkeeper of your generosity.
- You receive a color photograph of the class enjoying your sponsored program, which you can use in a press release, your company's newsletter or on your website.
- Hackensack Riverkeeper issues a press release to your local community newspaper on your generous sponsorship of an Eco-Program.
- Hackensack Riverkeeper posts your generosity on our special Corporate Sponsorship page on our website.

## Make It Happen!

*All it takes is a \$500 tax-deductible contribution. Call Hugh Carola at 201-968-0808 today.  
Thanks from the kids in your community!*

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## Real Science for Real People: What Happens Next?

**By Dr. Beth Ravit**

Now that I've defended my Ph.D. thesis, a number of people are asking me, "What are you going to do now?" When I went back to school five years ago, it was because Captain Bill and I had a goal - that one day there would be good science available to support the work of non-profit advocacy groups like Hackensack Riverkeeper. We now think that we're very close to achieving this dream.

While doing my research work, I received funding from Rutgers University to develop a plan to start the Rutgers Interdisciplinary Environmental Research Clinic (RIERC). The mission of the Clinic is to give graduate students from multiple academic disciplines the opportunity to work as a team with a non-profit group on an environmental project. In dealing with environmental issues, it's very important to have a number of academic disciplines involved, because complex environmental problems cannot (and should not) be solved by a single discipline. One of the difficulties has been that typical academic departments tend to focus on one limited area of study.

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*We believe that lawyers need to work with good scientists so that environmental rules, regulations, and clean-up strategies are feasible and as effective as possible.*

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We currently have two pilot projects for the RIERC, and both of them are in the Hackensack River watershed. The biggest project is taking place in the Teaneck Creek Conservancy section (Area One) of Overpeck County Park in Bergen

County.

We've raised money to support the work of two graduate students over the next two years. Their research will be focused on how urban wetlands can increase the rate of denitrification---the process of sediment microbes that converts nitrogen in the wetland into inert nitrogen gas that can escape into the atmosphere. This amazing microbial process helps clean up excess nitrogen that comes from fertilizers, animals such as Canada geese, stormwater runoff and airborne depositions from sources like power plants and vehicles. It's important to remove this nitrogen from streams before they drain into the estuary or coastal waters, where excess nitrogen causes eutrophication (excessive nutrient levels) and algal blooms. We're also in the process of raising money to add a third graduate student to this project to measure the atmospheric nitrogen deposition. At the end of this research we will have developed an Urban Hydrologic Model that can link hydrology, atmospheric nitrogen deposition and sediment denitrification, and can be used to improve other degraded urban landscapes.

The second project is focused on a site located in the Hackensack Meadowlands. The Research Clinic



Courtesy Pete Kallin, TRC Omni Environmental

*The project at the Teaneck Creek Conservancy section of Overpeck County Park in Bergen County will focus on how urban wetlands can increase the rate of denitrification---the process of sediment microbes that converts nitrogen in the wetland into inert nitrogen gas that can escape into the atmosphere.*

is working with the Rutgers Environmental Law Clinic to develop a remediation strategy for a highly contaminated 25-acre site. This project includes a graduate student in microbiology studying contaminant degradation, an honors undergraduate in ecology & evolution doing a fish behavior study, a public health chemist analyzing the contaminants, and an honors undergraduate student analyzing microbial DNA, as well as two law students studying possible legal remedies. I'm particularly excited about this collaboration, because we believe that lawyers need to work with good scientists so that environmental rules, regulations, and clean-up strategies are feasible and as effective as possible. We believe that scientists need to work with good lawyers, because many times exciting scientific processes or information remains on the lab bench, rather than out in the "real world" which could be benefiting from this academic knowledge.



## *Birds of the Hackensack:* White-throated Sparrow

**By Ivan Kossak**

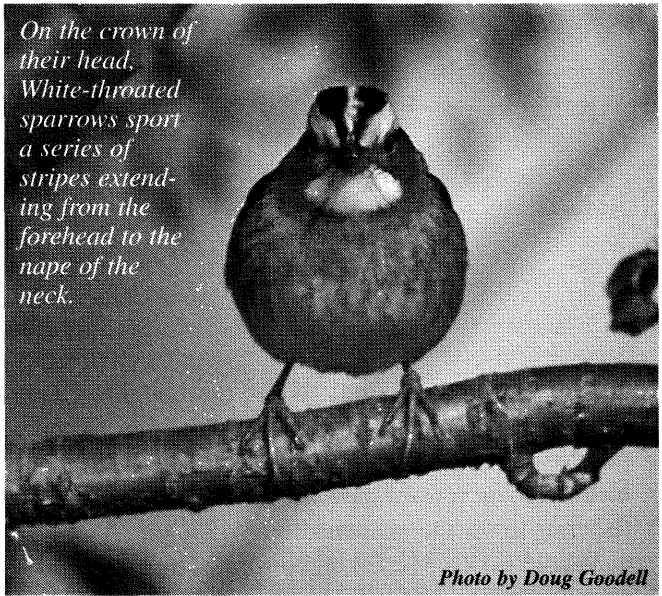
Although common and often overlooked, the White-throated sparrow (*Zonotrichia albicollis*) shows a subtle beauty of both plumage and song that can make local and backyard birding so rewarding. Sparrows, in general, are rather small brown birds that are whimsically referred to in birding circles as "LBJ's" or "Little Brown Jobs." This affectionate term speaks of the difficulty to observe and identify these rather shy, wary birds. These birds frequent grassy or brushy areas, such as fields, where they are in close proximity to shelter from predators.

White-throats are unusual among sparrows in that they are also often found on the brushy floor of woodland areas. By ducking for cover at the slightest provocation, sparrows and other small drab birds can create identification challenges for the observer. White-throats are no exception to this behavior. However there are two variables that help birders to observe and identify them. First, White-throats tend to accumulate in large flocks. Therefore, some individuals will usually be forced onto more prominent perches, making them more easily seen. Second, White-throats tend to frequent feeders, so they will be out in the open for longer periods of time than they would normally be in the wild. White-throats are also fairly large (for sparrows), measuring six and three quarter inches long.

White-throated sparrows are very common in our area most of the year (Mid-September through Mid-May), but very rarely breed in New Jersey. Most White-throats nest in Canada and in the higher elevations of New England. When White-throats start to be seen in large numbers in New Jersey, it usually means that colder weather is right around the corner. As with other sparrows, White-throats are a striped rusty brown and black on the back and wings. The White-throat's belly is a dusky light gray that darkens toward the neck, prominently outlining the namesake white throat. On the crown of their head, White-throats sport a series of stripes extending from the forehead to the nape of the neck. White-throats have two different color patterns (known as "morphs") to their head stripes. Some are a rather dull tan and brown while others are a striking black and white. In both morphs, yellow spots are visible between the bird's bill and eyes.

White-throated sparrows have a plaintive call that is one of the more recognizable bird songs to many people. The song consists of two drawn out whistles followed by three phrases of three shorter whistles each. The song has been described variously as "Old Sam Peabody, Peabody, Peabody" and "Oh, Sweet Canada,

*On the crown of their head, White-throated sparrows sport a series of stripes extending from the forehead to the nape of the neck.*



*Photo by Doug Goodell*

Canada, Canada." The song is heard much more frequently as spring approaches and the birds are preparing to migrate north to their nesting grounds. However, it can be heard occasionally throughout the winter as the birds are "tuning up." By maintaining a feeder filled with sunflower seeds, you can easily lure these gregarious and active members of our avifauna to your yard where you can enjoy their sweet song as the weather warms and our thoughts turn to spring.

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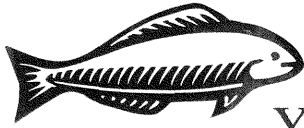
### *Take A Self-Guided Tour of the Teaneck Creek Conservancy's Eco-Art Trail*

The public is invited to take a self-guided outdoor tour of the Eco-Art Trail in the Teaneck Creek Conservancy Area of Overpeck Park.

The Eco-Art Trail features the work of three artists: Valentina DuBasky, Lynne Hull, and Kerry Mills. This trailside eco-art exhibition will run from November 2004 through February 2005. Grants from the Puffin Foundation sponsored the work of Valentine DuBasky and Kerry Mills. A grant from the Nancy H. Gray Foundation sponsored Lynne Hull's work.

Community volunteers helped gather materials, construct, and install these art works with the artists who created them. All the artworks include materials found in Overpeck Park: dumped concrete debris, "floatables" - litter that washed down storm drains in streets during rainstorms -- from Teaneck Creek, native stones, tree branches, colorful autumn leaves.

Maps of the self-guided tour are available at the Conservancy's office at 20 East Oakdene Avenue in Teaneck, NJ or upon request (Please see [www.puffinfoundation.org](http://www.puffinfoundation.org) under "Puffin Cultural Forum" for directions to the Conservancy or call 201-836-2403).



## Seafood Sustainability: You Have The Power To Turn The Tide

**T**he simple fact is our oceans are in trouble. Our world's fish stocks are disappearing from our seas because they have been overfished or harvested using damaging fishing practices. To keep our favorite seafood plentiful for us to enjoy and to keep it around for future generations, we must act now. As a shopper, you have the power to turn the tide. When you purchase seafood from fisheries using ocean-friendly methods, you reward their actions and encourage other fisheries to operate responsibly.

Whole Foods Market demonstrates its long-term commitment to seafood preservation by:

- Supporting fishing practices that ensure the ecological health of the ocean and the abundance of marine life.
- Partnering with groups who encourage responsible practices and provide the public with accurate information about the issue.
- Operating our own well-managed seafood facility and processing plant, Pigeon Cove Seafood, located in Gloucester, Massachusetts.
- Helping educate our customers on the importance of practices that can make a difference now and well into the future.
- Promoting and selling the products of well-managed fisheries.



### *Sustainable Seafood: Frequently Asked Questions*

#### **What is sustainable seafood?**

Sustainable seafood comes from fishing practices that allow a depleted or threatened fish population to recover to healthy levels. It also prevents healthy fish populations from becoming depleted. Sustainable fishing practices help maintain the diversity and health of the oceans and rivers so the fish can live and thrive.

#### **Why do we need sustainable seafood?**

Today, 60 percent of the world's marine stocks are either fully fished, over-exploited, depleted or recovering at a slow rate. With seafood growing in demand, it is critical that sustainable fishing practices are followed. Whole Foods Market is committed to working with

organizations, such as the Marine Stewardship Council, to bring solutions to the public on what they can do to make a difference.

#### **What makes sustainable seafood different from regular seafood?**

Sustainable seafood, such as wild Alaska salmon or farmed catfish, comes from a well-managed source. That means the fishermen follow practices that allow the fish population to grow and thrive rather than be depleted. Some day we'd like to say that all seafood comes from well-managed sources.

#### **Does sustainable seafood taste any different?**

This may depend upon the individual fish. For instance, sustainable wild Alaska salmon has a much better flavor profile than farm-raised salmon.

#### **Who is the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)?**

The MSC is an international non-profit organization, funded primarily with grants from non-governmental organizations, foundations, corporate sponsorships and individuals. The Marine Stewardship Council's globally respected certification program provides its label to fisheries that meet strict, independently reviewed standards of sustainability.

#### **How can MSC change the poor condition of many marine stocks worldwide?**

The MSC has developed a "solution" through its certification program that uses market incentives to influence the way fisheries are managed in favor of environmental standards. By creating a standard, monitoring and accrediting certifiers, rewarding products with the seal of approval, and enlisting partners to purchase certified products, the MSC is encouraging responsible fishing practices that will help restore marine stocks to healthy states. The MSC Label will provide consumers with information and options to influence the process through their purchasing decisions.

#### **What does the MSC Label mean?**

The MSC Label means the seafood has been certified by an independent certification body and that it has met the MSC Standard for sustainability. Consumers know that by buying seafood with the MSC Label, they are supporting healthier oceans and a healthier environment.

## Hackensack Riverkeeper Honors Four Friends For Their Support

*Continued from page 3*

In addition to the honorees, the event celebrated a major conserva-



Trustee Cathe Morrow (right) presents HRI staffer Kathy Urffer with a gift of appreciation from the Board of Trustees. Kathy has moved on to new adventures in Vermont. (See related story on page 11.)

tion milestone - the preservation of the Empire Tract and its 587 acres of undeveloped wetlands - a preservation that was finalized on October 5, 2004. (See related story, page 1.)

This year's theme of Sustainable Seafood was supported by Whole Foods Market of Edgewater, NJ. The entire menu consisted of seafood from sustainable fisheries, thanks to Hackensack Riverkeeper Trustee Ellie Spray, who is the catering manager at Whole Foods. "We are so grateful to Ellie, who helped come up with the theme of Sustainable Seafood, and created a



Captain Bill Sheehan recaps a successful Eco-Program season, during which Hackensack Riverkeeper brought 6,000 to the river.

tremendous menu around it," said Captain Bill Sheehan, executive director of Hackensack Riverkeeper. "She also worked closely with her seafood suppliers and got many of them to donate their specialties." (For related story on sustainable seafood, see page 18.)

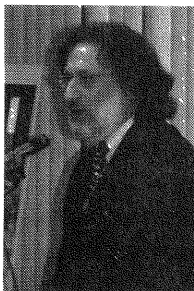
### George Aronson Excellence in Media/Arts

George Aronson enjoyed a successful career in corporate Information Technology before he decided to become a full-time nature photographer, advocate for open space preservation, lecturer on environmental topics and fine-art printer. His photography has put him in the forefront of efforts to preserve Sterling Forest in nearby Orange County, N.Y., and the N.J. Highlands-comprising portions of seven North Jersey counties and containing vast and irreplaceable treasures of drinking water supplies, forests, mountains, and critical wildlife habitat.

His work has appeared in dozens of national, regional, and local magazines, books, newsletters, annual reports and studies. One of the more recent was the 2002 follow-up to the 1992 study (also illustrated by Aronson's images) of the N.Y.-N.J. Highlands Region conducted by the U.S. Forest Service.

His extensive coverage of Sterling Forest has earned him worldwide attention and appearances in major publications including National Geographic (August 1997), Audubon (December 1996), Defenders [of Wildlife] (Fall 1997), Planning (October 1998), and others. His Sterling Forest photos were used to lobby Congress in fund-raising campaigns leading to major land purchases there.

The Eastman Kodak Company published nearly 20 of his images in their Digital Photography-An Introduction to New Technology (2000). Major philanthropic institutions have used his photographs to enhance their annual reports. These include the William Penn, the Victoria, and the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundations.



### Peter Shapiro

#### Lisa G. Ryan Outstanding Volunteer Award

According to his parents, Peter Shapiro always showed an appreciation of the environment, especially the ecology of his community. When he was a little boy, Pete observed the world around him with an almost scientific intensity. Last fall, Pete chose to volunteer at Hackensack Riverkeeper as part of a community service mitzvah project for his Bar Mitzvah at Temple Beth-El in Closter, NJ. He quickly learned that the real value of his efforts was in helping the people of our watershed. After his requirements were met, he continued volunteering simply because he enjoyed it. We not only appreciated his work, we came to look upon him as one of our own - a shipmate.

Pete has lived in Demarest his whole life with his parents, Margaret and Steve. He has a sister, Carolyn, 11, a brother, Cassel, 24, and a dog, Nicky. He is in the eighth grade at Demarest Middle School. Pete enjoys reading and creative writing, history, science, music and ice hockey. Pete is a bantam with the Clarkstown Capitals, an A level travel ice hockey team.

Surprisingly, Pete doesn't much like boats and he probably would not have volunteered if he had to spend time on the river each week instead of in the office. However, his appreciation for the work of Hackensack Riverkeeper - his own work - will surely help him to rise above any "mal de rive" and we look forward to taking Pete and his family to meet the river that he's helped us to keep.





## 2004 Eco-Program Season Reaches More Than 6,000

*Continued from page 1*

Jersey Meadowlands between April (when the cleanups started and the Paddling Center opened) and November (when the last Eco-Walks came in from the field). They came on their own, with their schools and with their nature clubs. We did trips for church groups, garden clubs and Scouts. Whoever they were, every one of them got to see for themselves the vitality, the beauty and the uniqueness of our watershed. It may not be "pristine," but that doesn't detract from the wonder people feel when they see a Great blue heron rising up out of the marsh, a shoal of herring being pursued by hundreds of cormorants and gulls, or 5,000 Ruddy ducks roosting on the waters of Mehrhof Pond.

### ECO-CRUISES

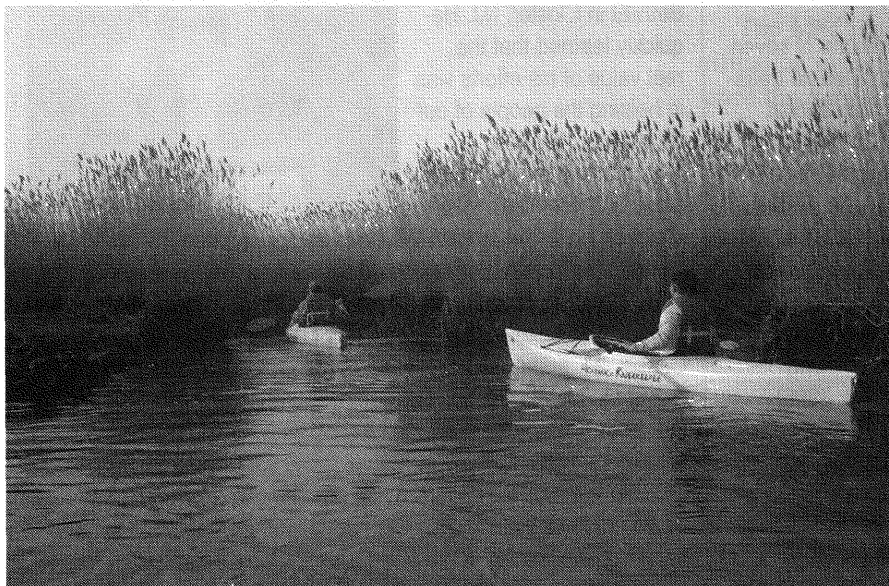
Once again, the vessels *Robert H. Boyle* and *Edward Abbey* hosted more than 3,000 people (3,324 to be exact) who participated in 208 Eco-Cruises this year. Out of those num-



*Seventeen miles of river and streambanks were cleaned and 25 dumpster loads of trash were removed during nearly 1,100 hours of work by our dedicated corps of volunteers.*

bers, 1,190 students ranging in age from 2nd graders to graduate school students took part in 70 trips. We hosted fact-finding missions for the US Fish and Wildlife Service (including a special trip for Northeast Regional Director Marvin Moriarty), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), U.S. Senators Corzine and Lautenberg, Rep. Steve Rothman,

the NJ Department of Health, the NJ Department of Environmental Protection and the Northern Valley Mayors Association. Eco-Cruises were also a cornerstone of the Passaic River Patrol, which we began this year with our colleagues at NY/NJ Baykeeper. A total of 17 trips were conducted for a wide range of stakeholder groups on the Passaic.



*In 2004, a record-breaking 1,551 people paddled with us either on guided tours or by renting boats for independent exploration.*

### THE PADDLING CENTER at LAUREL HILL COUNTY PARK

Hackensack Riverkeeper added a fleet of a dozen kayaks to the canoes we've had in service since 1999. Little did we know at the beginning of the season how popular they would be! By the time the Center closed, a record-breaking 1,551 people paddled with us either on guided tours or by renting boats for independent exploration. We also conducted several trips on the Passaic River this year, offering folks the opportunity to explore that much-maligned waterway. Ours is still the only small boat livery anywhere on the river but with new access points being created in Secaucus at Mill



Creek Point and in Hackensack at Johnson Park, we may soon be adding more.

## ECO-WALKS

The majority of Eco-Walkers were students and teachers who took part in our combination programs at Laurel Hill Park. In addition to nature walks, students are also offered activities such as water testing and working with the EnviroScape® model. Eco-Walks were also conducted at Mill Creek Marsh in Secaucus, DeKorte Park in Lyndhurst, Mehrhof Pond in Little Ferry and the Celery Farm Natural Area in Allendale. On 48 separate occasions, 754 people participated in this program in 2004. For next season we plan to conduct most, if not all, stand-alone Eco-Walks as bird-watching trips. Make sure you all add new binoculars and field guides to your Holiday wish lists!

## RIVER CLEAN-UPS

The success of this program and the sheer energy of those who volunteer never ceases to impress us. Since Lisa Ryan and Kathy Urffer began this program to bring active conservation to our watershed back in 2001, it has become one of our core activities and one of our most visible. This past year, a record 12 clean-ups were conducted including two at Laurel Hill Park and one each

*On 48 separate occasions, 754 people participated in Eco-Walks in 2004.*



at the Oradell and Woodcliff Lake Reservoirs. Seventeen miles of river and streambanks were cleaned and 25 dumpster loads of trash were removed during nearly 1,100 hours of work by our dedicated corps of volunteers. United Water New Jersey and the River Edge Environmental Committee co-sponsored two cleanups apiece and we plan to work with them both again in 2005. How about you?

## BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE...

In addition to our "traditional" outdoor programs, Hackensack Riverkeeper staffers engaged in a number of other outreach activities throughout the watershed in 2004, including:

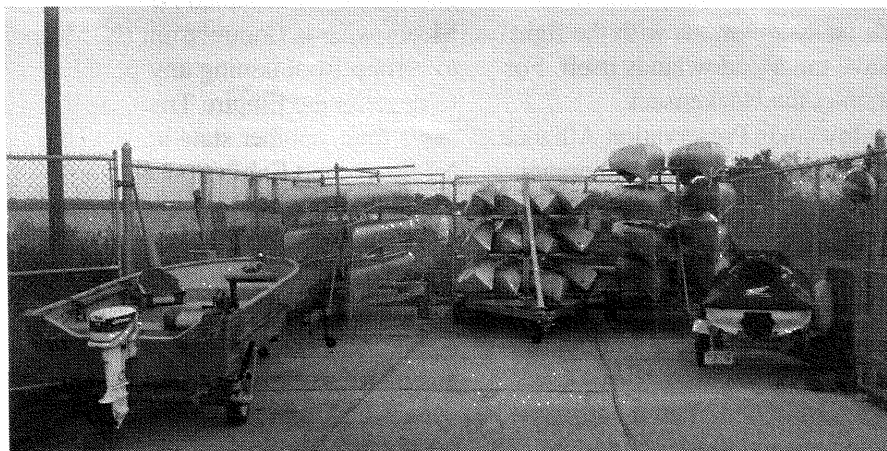
- The Harbor Estuary / Urban Fishing Program which introduced 207 students from urban

communities to their home waters and to the joys of fishing.

- Our WMA5 Watershed Ambassadors (Nick Vos Wein, '03-'04 and Mike Guerriero, '04-'05) conducted in-school watershed education for over 2,500 students.
- Hackensack Riverkeeper staffers had face-to-face encounters with approximately 10,000 people through our many presentations, seminars and other special events in 2004.

A special thank you is in order to all the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts (and their leaders) who came aboard with us this season. All told, 436 Scouts and Scout leaders from 23 troops supported Hackensack Riverkeeper through our programs this year. Way to go Scouts!

Plans are already underway for our 2005 Eco-Program season. Some of the things we're working on are: a more visible presence for the Passaic River Patrol, expanding our guided paddling trips and the aforementioned bird walks. Whatever we might add or do, we'll still be offering plenty of guided paddles, Open Boat Eco-Cruises, Eco-Walks and Clean-ups for thousands of people to take part in. Just keep checking our website and upcoming issues of *Hackensack Tidelines* for scheduling and more info. See you at the river!



*The fleet is at the ready for the 2005 paddling season at Laurel Hill County Park which will open the first week of April.*

## Preservation Of The Empire Tract

*Continued from page 1*

Meadowlands will be transferred to the Trust and preserved forever.

The story of the Empire Tract as we know it today began on July 18, 1949 when the Borough of Carlstadt offered 1,012 acres of "Meadowland" for sale at public auction. That original acreage included the 587 acres we know today as the Empire Tract. At that time, the advertised minimum bid was \$20,861.97, or roughly \$21 per acre.

By the early 1960s, Empire Development Corporation held title to most of the Empire Tract. Between 1966 and 1968, the corporation was granted tidelands rights to adjacent wetlands in South Hackensack by the State of New Jersey, effectively expanding the Empire Tract to include wetlands in that municipality as well as in Moonachie.

In 1972, the first official zoning map of the Hackensack Meadowlands District, created by the then-Hackensack Meadowlands Development Commission (HMDC), zoned the Empire Tract for "island residential" and "light industrial/distribution." Had that original zoning plan been played out, warehouses and other development would have stretched eastward from County Route 503 to the banks of the Hackensack River.

Nearly 25 years later, however, more than half of the Tract's original acreage remained undeveloped while 425 acres were filled during the land rush that swept over the Meadowlands District from the 1960s through the 1990s.

By 1996, the HMDC's proposed Special Area Management Plan (SAMP) called for the remaining wetlands of the Empire Tract to be converted into a mixture of residential, commercial and light industrial

/warehouse development, echoing the 1972 zoning. That same year, the Virginia-based Mills Corporation unveiled a proposal called "Meadowlands Town Center." Had it been built, that proposal (also known as the "Mini-City") would have filled 300 acres of wetlands and included office buildings, hotels, a shopping center and 5,800 units of housing.

One year later, after vociferous opposition to the residential component of their proposal, Mills came up with a new suggestion for the Empire Tract--Meadowlands Mills, a 2.1 million square foot retail megamall that promised to be New Jersey's biggest retail mecca.

By the mid-1990s however, opinions about wetlands in general and the Meadowlands in particular had changed drastically from what they were in the early 1970s. By the time Mills made their mall proposal, a host of environmental groups (including a fledgling organization called Hackensack Riverkeeper) was advocating for the protection of the remaining 8,400 acres of habitat in the Meadowlands. The idea of filling in wetlands for a mall had become unthinkable for many.

It didn't take long for the fight against Meadowlands Mills to become synonymous with the fight to save the Meadowlands itself. For example, the Hackensack Meadowlands Preservation Alliance (HMPA), a coalition of 120 organizations that was co-founded by Capt. Bill Sheehan in 1998, didn't just fight against the Mills proposal, it advocated for the creation of an urban wildlife refuge out of the entire Meadowlands.

The lively and often rancorous debate between those opposed to and those in favor of Meadowlands Mills came to a head in 2001 during

Approximately  
**1,012 ACRES**  
**MEADOWLAND - FOR SALE**  
At Public Auction, by the Borough of Carlstadt, N.J.

on  
**JULY 18, 1949**

at  
**BOROUGH HALL      8:15 P.M.      3rd STREET**

The land lies east of Washington Avenue - west of Hackensack River - south of the Boroughs of Moonachie and Little Ferry - north of the Paterson Plank Road.

This land fronts on Paterson Plank Road in two places (310' and 480') and is appr. 1/4 mile from Rt. 17. It is appr. 10 miles from New York City.

**Minimum Bid: \$20,861.97**

For Map and Further Information  
Inquire  
John K. Goldawer, Borough Clerk

*On July 18, 1949, the Borough of Carlstadt offered 1,012 acres of "Meadowland" for sale at public auction.*

the transitional administration of Acting Governor Donald DiFrancesco. It was under his watch that the state of New Jersey officially came down on the side of preserving the Empire Tract. At a historic press conference at the HMDC, DiFrancesco called upon Mills to "sit down with my administration" and work together with the state to find an appropriate site "where they can become part of our community." The tide had finally turned.

Governor Jim McGreevey continued the trend of his predecessor by directing the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) and the newly renamed NJ Meadowlands Commission (NJMC) to refrain from issuing any permits to develop the Empire Tract. At the same time, another state agency, the NJ Sports and Exhibition Authority (NJSEA) provided an "appropriate site" alluded to by DiFrancesco: the opportunity to redevelop the lands surrounding the Continental Airlines Arena. And you already know the rest of the story...

...Which brings us to where we are today. New Jersey is 587 acres closer to the creation of the Meadowlands Estuary Preserve.

## At The Helm

*Continued from page 1*  
toward the preservation of the Meadowlands.

I am not a "Chicken Little" environmentalist. If I ran around saying the sky's falling every time a decision came out of Washington or Trenton that I didn't like, I wouldn't have time for much else. But this administration is a different kettle of fish. From expanding off-road vehicle use on public lands, to lowering arsenic standards for drinking water, to allowing clear-cuts in national forests, to inviting polluters to re-write clean air regulations, to its insatiable desire to drill in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, it seems as if the Bush administration has declared war on America's environment. Hell, it was only after a full-court press by the national leadership of Ducks Unlimited that the administration refrained from effectively gutting the Clean Water Act.

So where do we go from here? I believe the first thing we need to do is to understand that as far as the environment goes, we are on our own. As we stand here at the mid-

point of the current administration, we cannot depend on the federal government for help. It is we who must take the initiative and safeguard our watershed, our state and ourselves.

It is ironic that during the late nineties it was Federal agencies like the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Environmental Protection Agency whose stewardship supported us in our fight to save the Meadowlands. But now that we have prevailed in the "wetlands wars," those very agencies are being deprived of their ability to assist us as we chart the future of the Meadowlands Preserve.

We New Jerseyans have a profound understanding of environmental issues – an understanding that seems lost on most of the folks who live in those "red states" with their vast open spaces. Because of that, we must stand shoulder to shoulder with the incoming Codey administration and be ready to show the rest of the nation how it's done. We must protect our state's environment and show that New Jersey can serve as the Keeper of the precious and limited natural resources that our awe-

some God has bestowed upon us.

Right now, the best advice I can offer as we continue to move our agenda forward is that we must not allow the federal anchor to drag us down. We must instead take a stand at the windlass, hoist the ground tackle and set a course for the port of environmental excellence. And to those who would say that the USS Environment has foundered, I say fear not because the SS New Jersey has heard its Mayday call and is sailing to the rescue.

### Advertise in Hackensack Tidelines!

Each issue of Hackensack Tidelines is mailed to more than 9,000 people and another 4,000+ are given out at special events.

Place your ad and reach people who care about their communities, the environment and the well-being of generations to come.

For cost-effective rates, design service, contact Lisa at Hackensack Riverkeeper at 201-968-0808, ext. 104.

## Be a Friend of Hackensack Riverkeeper

tide404

Your help is urgently needed. Hackensack Riverkeeper operates with assistance and contributions from concerned citizens such as yourself. Please show your support for environmental health and conservation within the Hackensack River watershed by making a donation today.



*HRI is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Your donation is tax deductible.*

Name .....

Address ..... City, State, Zip .....

Phone (.....)..... Email .....

\_\_\_\_\$250 \_\_\_\_\$100 \_\_\_\_\$50 \_\_\_\_\$35 \_\_\_\_\$20 \$\_\_\_\_(other)

\_\_\_\_Amex \_\_\_\_Visa \_\_\_\_MC Card #\_\_\_\_\_ V code\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Please contact me about volunteering for Hackensack Riverkeeper.

*Make checks payable to Hackensack Riverkeeper, 231 Main Street, Hackensack, NJ 07601*



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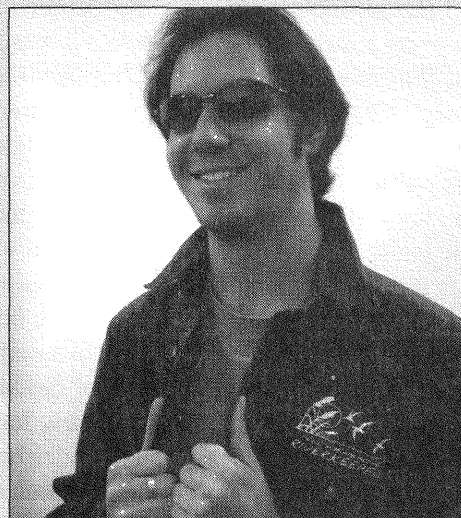
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December 6, 2004

Dear Friend,

*Hackensack Riverkeeper offers the warmest holiday wishes for you and your family. May this season be filled with peace, love, prosperity and happiness.*

Here at Hackensack Riverkeeper, we have much to be thankful for this holiday season. As the year turns and we look ahead to the challenges that still face us, please consider making a generous year-end contribution.

The past 12 months have been filled with unprecedented victories for Hackensack Riverkeeper and all those who believe that clean water is an inalienable right. Each and every one of this year's accomplishments has a direct positive impact on the health of our home here in the Hackensack River watershed:

- 8,400 acres of undeveloped wetlands in the New Jersey Meadowlands were rezoned for conservation.
- The 582-acre Empire Tract, the largest single block of undeveloped land in the Meadowlands, is on the brink of conservation.
- The strongest protection (Category One) in the nation was placed on the entire upper Hackensack River, its reservoirs and tributaries by the State of New Jersey.
- Stormwater regulations were adopted to prevent nonpoint source pollution.
- The Passaic River Patrol began a series of investigative and fact-finding missions along the lower reaches of this much-maligned sister river.

Initiatives like the Passaic River Patrol, modeled after our successful work on the Hackensack, immediately resulted in discovering a blatant corporate polluter--a cement factory in Newark with apparent industrial stormwater violations. After the discovery, Hackensack Riverkeeper's boats shuttled enforcement agents from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection to the site several times, initiating a formal investigation.

*This was all possible because of grassroots support from people like you who put their money where their hearts are!*

As we prepare for 2005 and its many challenges, we ask for your generosity to support our ongoing work. As you read this,

- 29 combined sewer overflows sit ready to dump raw sewage directly into the Hackensack River—yes, this still happens.
- Known corporate polluters are using every resource at their disposal to avoid cleaning up the toxic, cancer-causing Superfund messes they created.
- The Clean Water Act and other environmental protections are being systematically attacked and dismantled to the severe detriment our health and our ecological resources.

Clearly, today more than ever, challenges such as these are most effectively met by a strong, vital, grassroots organization that gets things done its own backyard. Hackensack Riverkeeper needs you and your support; please be as generous as possible so we can continue to do our important work.

Have a safe, healthy and happy Holiday Season!

Yours in Conservation,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Capt Bill Sheehan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Captain Bill Sheehan

P.S. I'd like to share one last thought with you. In 2004, we brought more than 6,000 people to the river via our Eco-Cruises, Eco-Walks, Paddling Center and special events. Those 6,000 people now have a direct relationship with an urban wilderness in our midst that is 10 times larger than Central Park. Your support will make sure we can reach even more people next year and that we can continue to advocate for its environmental recovery! Please send your check today.