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“Protecting Public Health and the Environment”

600 Wilson Avenue, Newark, New Jersey 07105
(973) 817-5700
(973) 817-5738 - fax
www.pvsc.nj.gov

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Contact Information: Doug Scancarella
dscancarella@pvsc.nj.gov
Office: 973-817-5735

Rehabilitation of Stoney Ridge Trail To Be Announced

Newark, NJ –The Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission (PVSC) will join the National Park Service on Friday, October 13 (1 pm) at the Great Falls in Paterson to announce that the rehabilitation of the Stoney Ridge Trail has been completed. The wooded .6 mile walking trail begins near the foot of the Great Falls and meanders its way along the old Morris Canal route and around the city’s historic mill area. It ultimately winds its way through Upper Raceway Park and ends at the Lou Costello swimming pool, which is situated above the falls.

This announcement will also include an official ribbon cutting ceremony. The other partners in this project who will be attending include: the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, the Federal Highway Administration, the Great Falls Youth Corps, the New Jersey Youth Corps, and Paterson’s Department of Public Works.

The trail was a cobblestone road that was constructed in 1796 by the Essex County Road Commissioners (the area which would become Paterson in 1837 was part of Essex County at the time). Throughout the second half of the 19th Century and the first half of the 20th Century, the trail served as the primary route to access the city’s mills, factories, and plants. Since then, the trail has been used to explore the area around the Great Falls and the historic mill area. Over the years, the vegetation along the trail became badly overgrown, rendering it practically un-traversable. The PVSC River Restoration Department cleared the way for a wide nature trail and constructed a handrail along the route.

The Great Falls, which plunge 77 feet over a shelf of basalt, are the second largest falls in the northeast after Niagara Falls. For more than 200 years, the Great Falls have powered manufacturing plants in Paterson and played a major role in the industrial development of New Jersey. They were designated a National Historical Landmark in 1976 and were added to the National Historical Park System in 2009.

Since its creation in 1998, PVSC’s award-winning River Restoration Program has been charged with preserving and protecting over 100 miles of area waterways. PVSC has removed over 12,960 tons of debris from the Newark Bay, the Passaic River and its tributaries. PVSC has also sponsored nearly 1,250 individual cleanups along area shorelines. Rehabilitating the Stoney Brook Trail goes a long way in making sure that the shoreline along the Passaic River and near the falls is protected.

“The Great Falls are not only an important symbol representing the Paterson community, but also a significant national treasure,” said PVSC Chairman Thomas Tucci, Jr. “In addition to playing a vital role in the American Industrial Revolution, they boast natural beauty and are also surrounded by a quiet, forested area. As one of the largest wastewater facilities in the country, it is PVSC’s mission to act as good environmental stewards at all times. Routinely cleaning not just the Great Falls, but also the beautiful surrounding area, is a critical part of that process.”

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