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## **PVSC Hosts AmeriCorps New Jersey Watershed Ambassadors Meeting**



**Newark, NJ** – The Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission (PVSC) hosted the *AmeriCorps New Jersey Watershed Ambassadors Program*’s February Meeting last week. The program is administered by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection’s (NJDEP) Division of Water Monitoring and Standards. For the past 20 years, Watershed Ambassadors have played an important role in raising awareness of how human activities can affect water quality, particularly in the most densely populated state in the nation.

Each year, a new group of 20 Watershed Ambassadors are assigned to New Jersey’s 20 Watershed Management Areas (WMAs) throughout the state. The Ambassadors are recent college graduates with a wide variety of majors. Their responsibilities include promoting watershed stewardship through education and direct community involvement, and monitoring watershed health through visual and biological assessments. Nina Tabatchick, a graduate of Rutgers University-New Brunswick, is the Ambassador for WMA4 (the Lower Passaic River), which is headquartered at PVSC’s plant in Newark.

Each month, the Watershed Ambassadors hold a meeting in one of the WMAs. According to Amanda Lotto, Environmental Specialist at NJDEP, the meetings consist of two primary parts. First, there is a general career-training topic. Then the Watershed Ambassadors are taken on an extensive tour of the facility they are visiting

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before receiving a presentation from a manager with the host facility. During the Watershed Ambassadors’ visit to PVSC, they learned about PVSC’s award-winning Educational Outreach Program, through which PVSC educates young people about the effects of pollution on our waterways and the various things they can do to help mitigate pollution. They also learned that PVSC’s award-winning River Restoration Program patrols Newark Bay, the lower Passaic River, and its tributaries, collecting debris and trash on its two Skimmer Vessels. PVSC has removed more than 14,000 tons of debris from more than 100 miles of waterways since the program was founded in 1998.

“We were very pleased to host this meeting,” said Executive Director Gregory Tramontozzi. “Our objective was to showcase various careers within wastewater management and to discuss the extensive efforts we take in treating wastewater, and in protecting the local waterways. The feedback we received from the Ambassadors was outstanding. They really enjoyed their plant-wide tour and hearing about PVSC’s treatment of the significant volume of wastewater we receive and treat on a 24/7/365 basis.”

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