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NEWS

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PVSC MARKS EARTH DAY 2013 WITH CLEAN-UP OF THE GREAT FALLS Paterson Kids, Community Groups, National Park Service Celebrate ‘Our Earth, Our Falls’

PATERSON, NJ – Today, the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission (PVSC) marked Earth Day 2013 by partnering with students and staff from Paterson School #7 and community volunteers to clean-up the Paterson Great Falls. The event called, ‘Our Earth, Our Falls’ is being held in conjunction with the National Park Service (NPS) and the New Jersey Community Development Corporation (NJCDC) representing the Great Falls Youth Council (GFYC). The cleanup is a kick-off to a weeklong series of PVSC events for Earth Day, which is celebrated on April 22 every year.

“A Native American proverb says, ‘We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children.’ This event – with the 5th graders of Paterson School #7 - is an appropriate way to observe and mark Earth Day 2013,” said PVSC Executive Director Michael DeFrancisci. “PVSC understands the importance of co-sponsoring clean-ups like this one each year at the Great Falls and is proud to partner with community volunteers to ensure the long-term viability of our environment, especially our waterways.”

More than 200 volunteers were on hand to help with the cleanup, including professional staff from the PVSC’s River Restoration Program. The Program provided assistance to the volunteer effort led by the students and staff of School #7. PVSC personnel used specialized equipment on site to assist in removal of large debris and provided bags and gloves for the volunteers.

“This is National Park Week and the perfect time for volunteers to spend a few hours cleaning up one of America’s newest national parks, the Paterson Great Falls,” said Darren Boch, park superintendent. “We are appreciative of the PVSC’s leadership on the clean-up effort and the cooperation of the Paterson Municipal Utilities Authority and other partners in making it all come together.”

The Earth Day event, which began at 9:30 a.m. with a series of activities at the Paterson Great Falls, including the launch of a new NPS’ Junior Ranger program, got underway at 11 a.m. The Falls were turned off, a spectacular and rare occurrence, to ensure that PVSC crew could clean debris out of these remote and hard to access areas. The day concluded at 1 p.m.

“The Great Falls Youth Council and the Community Development Corporation are always happy to partner with the PVSC and NPS to play in active role in the promotion and development of America’s 397th National Park. It is our continued desire to make this the best National Park that it can be for the citizens of Paterson and beyond,” said Manuel E. Martinez, program director of the NJCDC.

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The PVSC has been conducting cleanups at the Paterson Great Falls since the agency's River Restoration Program inception in 1998.

"The continued partnership between the PVSC, the National Park Service and the Paterson community ensures that this unique historic site will be enjoyed by the residents of our region. PVSC remains committed to regularly conducting clean-ups at the Paterson Great Falls in an effort to protect the Passaic River," said PVSC Commissioner Kenneth J. Lucianin. "We expect to return here several times in the next few months to build on today's volunteer clean-up."

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In order to protect and preserve local streams and rivers from water pollution, the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission operates one of the country's oldest and largest treatment plants for the wastewaters of northern New Jersey, serving over 1.4 million people in five counties.