



Hackensack RIVERKEEPER® is the independent, non-governmental advocate for the Hackensack River.

## Biggest Threat the Hackensack River Has Ever Seen

*And we're NOT "Bakken down" from the bomb train fight.*

By Captain Hugh Carola

You may recall from the spring issue of *Tidelines* – and from multiple news reports – that up to 30 CSX freight trains transport highly unstable Bakken crude oil through the heart of our watershed every week. Each locomotive pulls up to one hundred outmoded DOT-111 and CPC-1232 tank cars carrying the same volatile crude responsible for the deadly explosion in Lac-Mégantic, Québec that killed 47 people on July 5, 2013. Since then, 11 more “bomb trains” have derailed and spilled over 3,000,000 gallons of oil causing

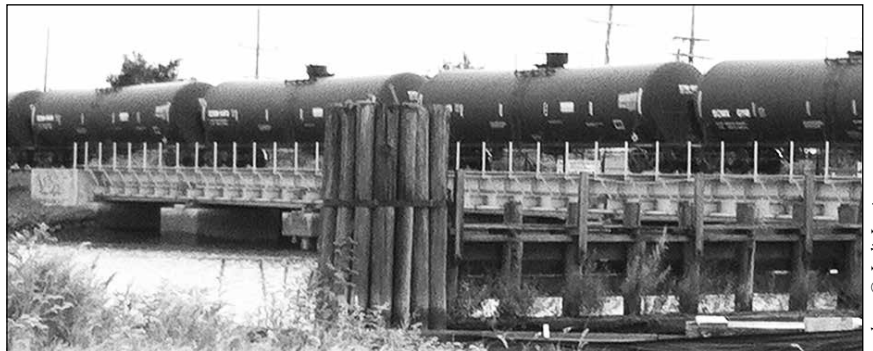


photo © Jodi Jamieson

*Bakken oil traveling by train over Overpeck Creek in Ridgefield Park.*

fires, mass evacuations and horrific contamination of waterways in the US and Canada.

Coming from the Bakken shale deposit in North Dakota on their

way to refineries in Philadelphia, the trains enter the Hackensack River Watershed in Congers, NY and pass right alongside United Water's Lake DeForest reservoir.

*Continued on page 6*

## Hackensack River's Legal Landscape

*New Riverkeeper attorney outlines our legal objectives for a cleaner river.*

By Andrea Leshak

Hello everyone! I'm the brand new staff attorney for Hackensack Riverkeeper and NY/NJ Baykeeper. Having started in this position in August, I am still learning the ropes and the landscape. That said, I am very excited to be a part of the team, and I look forward to continuing the great work of my predecessor, Chris Len. I'll be looking for new opportunities to

restore and protect the Hackensack River and to work toward making it truly fishable and swimmable.

As the new staff attorney, the pressing issues that I see as the most significant opportunities for restoring and protecting the Hackensack River include: tackling combined sewer overflow and storm runoff problems; advocat-

ing for a long-term comprehensive cleanup; and making sure current pollution control laws are enforced.

**Ensuring that NJ effectively tackles its problems of combined sewer overflows and stormwater runoff.**

Throughout New Jersey and within the Hackensack River watershed, there are Combined

*Continued on page 3*



### Inside

At the Helm	2	Letters to Riverkeeper	14
Lake Tappan Day	8	Illegal Dump Discovered	15
Once in a Blue Moon	9	New Hackensack Staff	16
Watershed Field Notes	10	New Transit Van-na	17
Birds of Hackensack	12	Volunteer Corner	18
Real Science	13	Better Know a Colleague	20
		Upcoming Events	24

## A word from Captain Bill



photo © Al Knight

## Where Have All the Boaters Gone?

For pretty much all of the 20th Century, the Hackensack River was horribly polluted with sewage, industrial waste and urban-suburban runoff. There was very little life in the water, and the viewsheds of the lower river were despoiled by thousands of acres of out-of-control garbage dumps. Despite all the negatives, one traditional use that didn't succumb to pollution was recreational boating.

For the past 20 years I've been conducting Eco-Cruises' on the River—from the Court Street Bridge in Hackensack to the mouth of the River in Jersey City—and beyond. In the mid 1990s there was a wealth of marinas and boat clubs and hundreds of boats tied to docks and mooring buoys. But no more. Let's take a memory trip downriver starting in Hackensack. Anyone remember Bergen Boatyard that was located just south of the Anderson Street Bridge where the Nissan dealership is now?

Moving downstream just south of Route 80 is the Hackensack River Yacht Club, one of the oldest – and still active – boat clubs in New Jersey. Club members store their boats on shore there during the winter, take them to marinas on the Hudson River or down the shore for the summer, then return upriver in the fall to haul them once more.

The next area worth mentioning is the Little Ferry waterfront. Until recently, there were several boat docks clustered below the Route 46 Bridge. The only one still "operating" is a dock owned by the Shaffer family that currently has six very old boats moored there. Many tenants at long-gone Luberto's Boatyard, which used to be located next door to Shaffer's, used to keep their boats in the water year-round.

Also in Little Ferry was Sportsplex Park Marina. Sporting a heavy-lift marine crane, Sportsplex was sold 15 years ago

*Continued on page 21*



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## River's Legal Landscape

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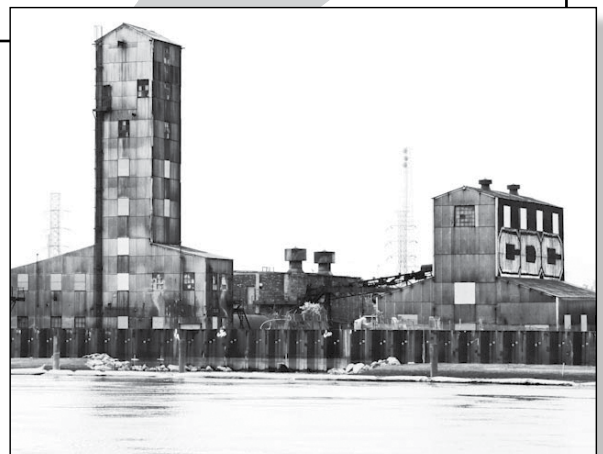
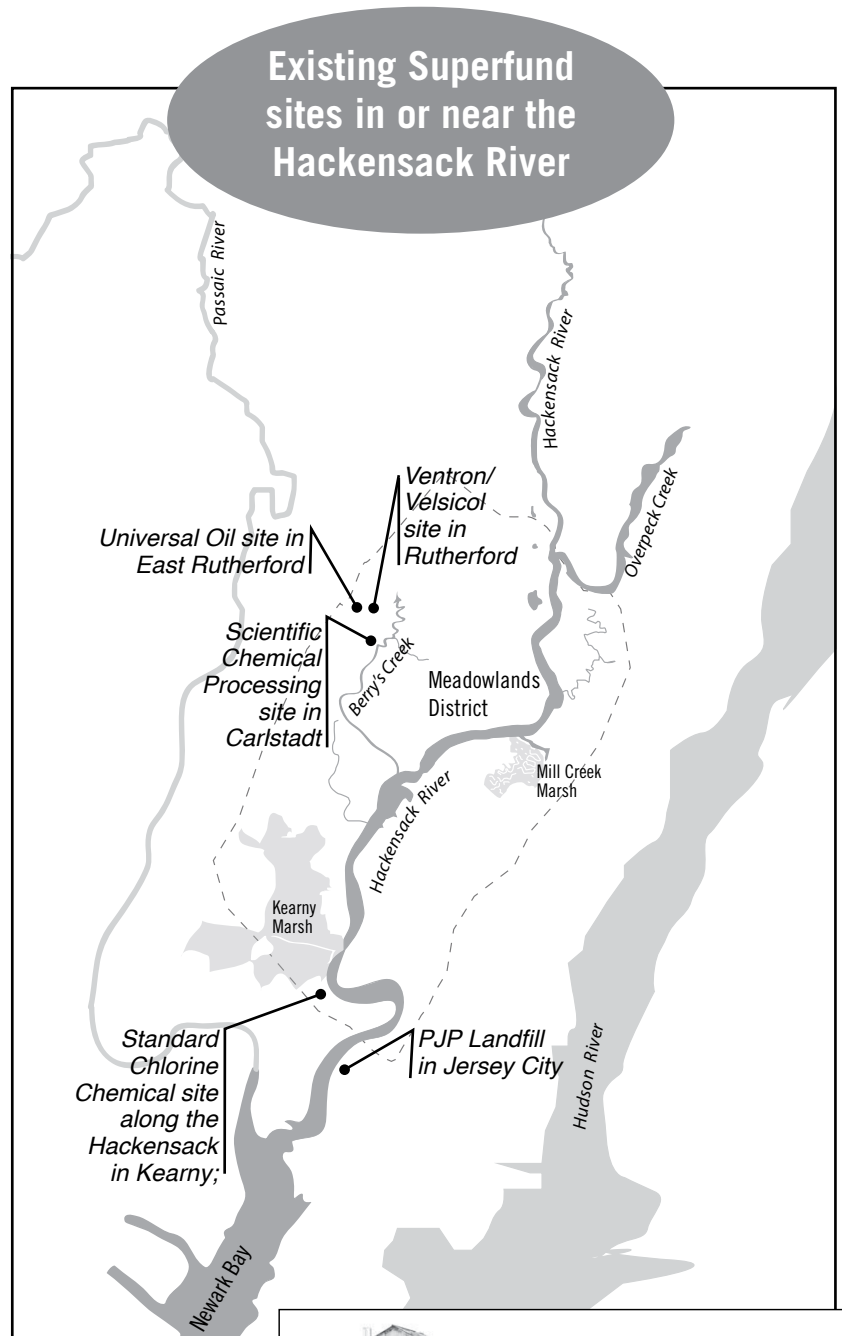
Sewer Overflows (CSOs), which dump a mixture of sewage and stormwater directly into New Jersey's rivers and bays during rain events. Hackensack Riverkeeper, along with NY/NJ Baykeeper, fought hard to get NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) to address the problem of CSOs. These efforts paid off: in March 2015, NJDEP issued 25 CSO permits for the municipalities, utilities, and treatment plants that receive combined sewage. These permits have a series of requirements and deadlines, including the mandatory development of a Long Term Control Plan (LTCP) over the next three to five years. Moving forward, it'll be important for Hackensack Riverkeeper to closely monitor municipalities and utilities to ensure they are meeting their permit requirements and are utilizing effective solutions to address CSOs.

New Jersey communities have also long-struggled with the problem of stormwater runoff, for which NJDEP is currently working on new statewide permits. Hackensack Riverkeeper will play an important role in this ongoing process by putting pressure on NJDEP, advocating for stronger municipal separate storm sewer system (or MS4) permits, and pushing for improved regulations to address stormwater pollution.

### Continuing the efforts to develop and implement a long-term comprehensive cleanup of the Hackensack River.

On February 10, 2015, Hackensack Riverkeeper petitioned the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to perform a preliminary assessment of the Hackensack

*Continued on page 4*



*A 2011 photo of the former Standard Chlorine Chemical site along the Hackensack River in Kearny. Now the site has been remediated and the buildings are replaced with natural grasses and wildlife.*

## River's Legal Landscape

*Continued from page 3*


River to determine if it qualifies as a Superfund site under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (commonly known as the Superfund law). In response to our petition, the EPA decided to study the Hackensack River and determine if it should be added to the National Priorities List of Superfund sites. If the EPA concludes that the Hackensack River should be listed as a Superfund site – as we at Hackensack Riverkeeper believe it should – then the EPA will investigate the extent of contamination and which entities will be responsible for the cleanup. Should EPA decide to list the Hackensack River as a Super-

fund site, there will be opportunities for Hackensack Riverkeeper to be involved in the process and to ensure that an appropriate long-term plan is developed and implemented.

### Enforcing pollution control laws as necessary to clean up the Hackensack River in the near-term.

Finally, Hackensack Riverkeeper will continue to act as the citizen enforcer of pollution control laws in order to eliminate sources of pollution and to clean up the Hackensack River in the near-term. While a long-term comprehensive solution for addressing decades-old pollution and for restoring the Hackensack River appears to be the best avenue, it is also important to stop any ongoing

pollution affecting the Hackensack River and its watershed. Hackensack Riverkeeper has had success in this arena in the past, including notable litigation that held Honeywell International accountable for their chromium pollution of the Hackensack River. Hackensack Riverkeeper will pursue similar efforts as necessary to stop polluters from further damaging the Hackensack River and to hold responsible parties accountable for their illegal actions.

And, on that note, I'll just say that I am very excited to be on board, and I look forward to contributing to Hackensack Riverkeeper's important mission and role in the community! 

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## Bakken Threat to River

*continued from page 1*

Once in New Jersey, they travel past the Hackensack tributaries of Tappan and Dorotockey's Runs before passing directly over Oradell Reservoir – which supplies drinking water to over 800,000 people every single day.

And it's not just water that's endangered. The trains roll past homes, schools, hospitals, parks & businesses in Rockland, Bergen and Hudson Counties. They cross Overpeck Creek and pass close by PSE&G's massive Bergen Generating Station. In Hudson County the trains travel between thousands of acres of protected Meadowlands marshes on one side and busy Routes 1 & 9 on the other. They cross the Passaic River from Kearny into Newark and rumble toward Philly through some of the most densely populated communities in New Jersey. Without question, every train is a potential

environmental disaster that puts hundreds of thousands of people at risk *every single day*.

Earlier this year Hackensack Riverkeeper joined the Coalition to Ban Unsafe Oil Trains to help put an end to this insanity. We also brought the entire Waterkeeper Alliance into the fray. At a coalition rally on a terribly cold March 7, Captain Bill Sheehan personally led the Waterkeeper contingent and addressed over 100 activists, exhorting them to not give up the fight. Our position is simple: the Hackensack River, along with the people, and wildlife that live within its watershed, must be protected. We didn't lead the fight to save the Meadowlands or work like hell to save the remaining woodlands of the upper watershed only to see them, the river, and you placed upon the altar of cheap, fracked oil.

We defeated the trash dumpers, sprawl developers and land speculators of the past, and one

way or another we're going to stop this clear and present danger as well. Our advocacy is already reaping positive results: In July the Federal Railroad Administration ordered the rail bridge over Oradell Reservoir to be replaced and the work was completed on August 31. A good start for sure, but there's still much more to do. To begin with, we demand:

- Every foot of track be inspected and repaired or replaced as necessary; and that all available safety gear and measures – including modern tank cars – be employed immediately.
- All first responders receive advanced training to deal with derailments; and that they receive advance notice of when the trains will be in their communities.
- The Bakken oil be chemically stabilized before leaving North Dakota. Such stabilization re-

## US Coast Guard prepares plans for Bakken disaster

On September 17, United States Coast Guard Sector New York conducted a joint government/industry Preparedness for Response Exercise Program (PREP) Table Top Exercise for regional stakeholders.

The exercise, conducted at Maher Terminals at Port Elizabeth, NJ, focused on potential tactical responses to a Bakken Crude release in our region. According to the USCG, the exercise dealt with four design objectives:

- Assemble a spill response organization identified in the Area Contingency Plan (ACP) and associated Responsible Party Vessel Response Plan (VRP);
- Determine the ability of the spill responders to safely recover, mitigate and remove the discharged crude oil;

- Determine the ability of the responders to protect the environmentally and economically-sensitive area identified in both the ACP and industry VRP; and
- Verify communication procedures between industry and government agencies.

The Coast Guard takes seriously all threats to the integrity and security of the Waters of the United States. We were glad to learn of their plans, especially in light of recently uncovered news that Bakken crude may soon do more than simply pass through our region.

moves volatility and is standard procedure for crude shipped from Texas and Oklahoma oilfields.

Understand that Hackensack Riverkeeper is in this fight for the long haul – just like every battle we’ve ever fought (e.g. SAMP, Mills Corp, Upper Watershed, Category One, Stormwater Rules, CSOs, Public Access, etc.), and we’re not going to quit. While other coalition members are in it for other important environmental, health and safety reasons, we’re in it for the river. Period. As the only fulltime environmental advocate working 100% for your Hackensack River, we will continue to provide our partners with our unequivocal clean water perspective and keep the river front and center in everything we do. Together we’ll ban those bomb trains once and for all.

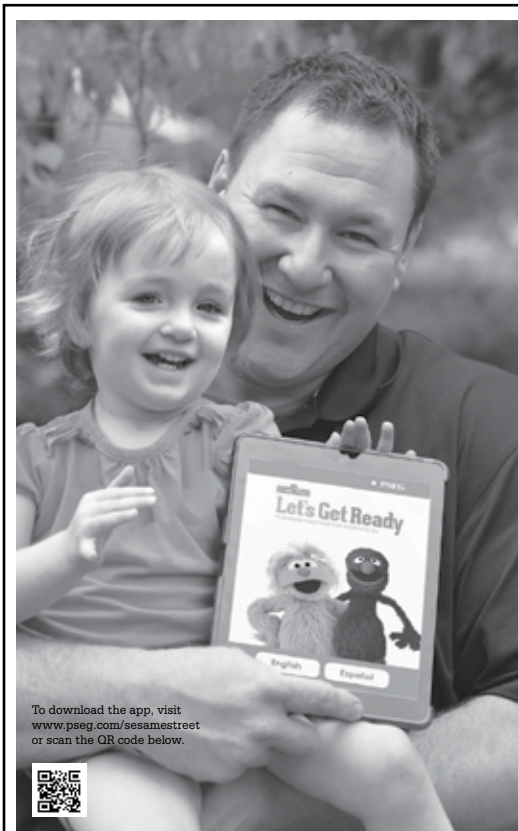
Captain Bill Sheehan has directed me to serve as Hackensack Riverkeeper’s coalition representative, and we’re planning new strategies and tactics as you read this. For updates on this critically

important issue and how you can help, feel free to reach out to me directly at [Hugh@Hackensack-Riverkeeper.org](mailto:Hugh@Hackensack-Riverkeeper.org) or visit [www.banunsafeoiltrains.org](http://www.banunsafeoiltrains.org). 🐟

## TX-based Buckeye Partners prepares to bring Bakken crude to Perth Amboy

On September 3 we found out that Houston, Texas-based **Buckeye Partners** (NYSE: BPL) is planning to retool the former Chevron refinery in Perth Amboy to refine Bakken crude – something the company has talked about since it purchased the 95 year-old facility in 2012. A source also revealed that employees are “discouraged with the new owners” and describe Buckeye as being “very sloppy regarding environmental concerns.”

Founded in 1886 as the Buckeye Pipeline Company, the corporation is best known today for operating fuel terminals and more than 6,000 miles of pipelines across the eastern U.S. One of the main suppliers of aviation fuel to NY/NJ airports, Buckeye listed assets totaling more than \$8 billion in 2014. It appears however, that’s not enough. It also appears that our region – and even more of our waterways – will be soon subjected to an additional Bakken threat. Stay tuned!



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## Lake Tappan Paddle Day: La-Ta-Pa-Da!

*Whole fleet floats under blue skies.*

**By James Malchow and Caitlin Doran**

This year's Reservoir Paddle Series, which began on June 7 with Reservoir Challenge and included the first-ever Lake DeForest Day on June 27, ended on a high note with a sunny Lake Tappan Paddle Day on August 15. Over one hundred enthusiastic paddlers went out on the otherwise off-limits reservoir, and a great time was had by all.

The lake was serene at 6:30AM on the morning of Paddle Day, until a frenzy of activity descended upon the banks. Riverkeeper staff and volunteers worked to stake tents, wash boats, and prepare for the arrival of paddlers. By 8:30AM they were lining up to check-in, and the early birds were allowed onto the water to get a head start on their morning paddle. Safety boats from Old Tappan and River Vale Fire Departments were present in case of an emergency. We can't thank them enough for their help. Their crews provided assistance throughout the day, making sure paddlers remained in the safe areas of the lake and guiding them back to the launch at the designated time. Whole Foods Market in Ridgewood graciously donated breakfast foods, which helped power everyone through the morning rush.



*Erica Mueller, a veteran paddler, always joins us for a fun day that supports clean water.*



*Lake Tappan Paddle Day is a great event for the whole family to enjoy.*

At midday, the lake was a buzz with activity again, as morning paddlers returned to shore and afternoon paddlers waited excitedly to launch. Meanwhile, a complimentary lunch, generously donated by In Serra ShopRite in Northvale, was served to every paddler, volunteer, and EMT. The afternoon paddle also went very smoothly. In addition to Riverkeeper boats, which were sold out ahead of both sessions, lots of people arrived with their own kayaks and canoes to be part of the event.

With the addition of Lake DeForest Day, our Reservoir Paddle Series has grown into a trio of paddling days on the reservoirs, now referred to as the "Triple Crown of Paddling." This series would not be possible without the enduring support of our friends at United Water, who sponsor the event, provide day-of support, and most importantly, grant access to these otherwise restricted water bodies.

Another memorable year of paddling events is complete. Our sincere thanks go out to everyone who helped make the series a success, including our sponsors, safety personnel, volunteers, staff, mayors, and of course, all participants. Until next spring, keep on paddling! 🐟



*Longtime volunteers and paddlers: Bill Meier, HRI Board Secretary Frank Massaro, and Lynn Kramer take a moment to catch up before hitting the water.*



*Thanks Again to our sponsors. We couldn't run these events without your generous support!*



# Once in Blue Moon (Paddle)

*Paddlers gather under a Blue Moon.*

**By Caitlin Doran**

You've heard the expression "once in a blue moon." Well, on Friday July 31, Hackensack Riverkeeper held a *first* in a blue moon. For several years now, Riverkeeper has led guided paddles in the Meadowlands under the full moon from May through September. It would take a cosmic event as rare and beautiful as a blue moon, however, for the organization to bring this unique recreational opportunity to the Overpeck Creek and quite successfully one might add!

Blue moons, according to a revised definition, are first and foremost not blue, but rather the occurrence of two full moons in one month. The last blue moon occurred in 2012 and the next won't come around until 2018.

Wanting to take advantage of a unique and rare event, 14 people came to paddle the Overpeck Creek, just as the sun was setting on Friday, July 31. Andrew Pohl, adventure science major and intern extraordinaire, lead the group for this first-ever excursion. Andrew did a fantastic job keeping everyone safe, providing paddling tips, and pointing out an abundance of wildlife – like egrets, herons, and cormorants. The sky was painted orange when the group departed, and by the time all had rounded the Route 46 bridge, a huge moon crested over the horizon. It was high in the sky after everyone had exited the water, necks craned to see it from the dock.

At Laurel Hill County Park in the Meadowlands, another group was finishing up its blue moon paddle that night; it was the night of the dueling moonlight paddles. Each location offers different views and a

different experience, and Riverkeeper is happy to now offer both. The full schedule of 2016 Full Moon paddles will be printed in our spring newsletter and available online in March. However, if you're waiting for the next *blue-mooner*, keep your eyes on the horizon in 2018!

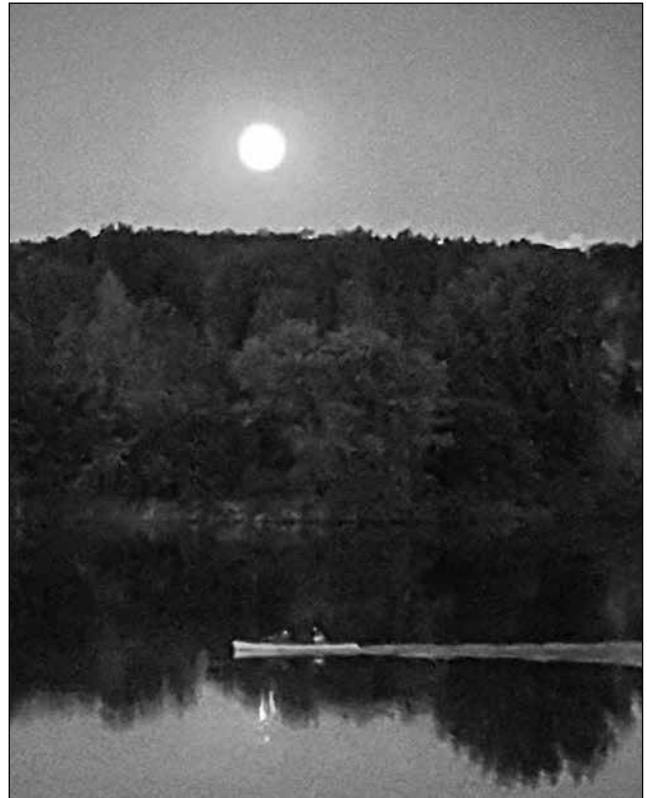


photo © Ivan Perez

*A Blue Moon rises over the treeline at Overpeck Creek as paddlers enjoy a summer evening out on the water. Our guided Moonlight Paddles are a unique and popular way to enjoy our waterways.*



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## HACKENSACK WATERSHED FIELD NOTES

By **Hugh M. Carola**

During my summer vacation in Ontario I was reminded time and again of our region's importance as a stopover and overwintering location for migratory birds. For example, the Ring-billed Gull chicks I saw begging from their parents on the shore of Lake Huron are the same birds we'll soon see flocking along the river and in shopping mall parking lots. Likewise, the fledgling Juncos my wife and I watched in Bruce Peninsula National Park will be flocking beneath our feeders in Maywood before long. It's all about connections.

Speaking of, I've said many times that what we do on land affects our waters for good or ill. And the choices we make can often help or hinder wildlife – the latter sometimes with deadly consequences. For example, almost every time I tie the *Robert H. Boyle II* to the dock at Laurel Hill Park, I have to remove a tangled mass of discarded fishing line from a dock cleat, piling or plank and put it in the bin provided for it. Such laziness on the part of some people who fish not only pollutes the river; it places

all manner of wildlife in danger of entanglement and death – a bad connection for sure.

I know I'm preaching to the choir here but sometimes it isn't enough to simply not do the wrong thing. We need to be proactive in order to help the non-human creatures that share our watershed with us, especially where the scourge of plastics in our environment is concerned. That's a big part of our River Cleanup program and it's what Dr. Beth Ravit's Real Science column is all about on page 13. We can all enjoy seeing more of the species listed below by cleaning up our environment

**American Avocet** – One of these striking shorebirds was observed on 8/1 at Richard W. DeKorte Park in Lyndhurst.

**American Kestrel** – In spring, a pair of these small falcons was discovered nesting in an opening under an eave of a building on South Street in Jersey City. On 7/20 the pair was observed feeding on the carcass of a Catbird.

**Bald Eagle** – It's official: the Kearny Point pair in Hudson County produced two fledglings, which were observed in the southern Meadowlands region during the summer. On 8/18 one bird was photographed

atop the Keegan Landfill in Kearny. Further upriver in Ridgefield Park, both chicks raised by "Al & Alice" fledged successfully and have been seen on numerous occasions. The Palisades Interstate Park pair in Alpine also produced a pair but the Oradell Reservoir nest produced only one fledgling. That's a total of seven eagle chicks! Sadly neither the Woodcliff Lake nor the Lake Tappan pair returned to breed.

**Barn Owl** – Once again owls successfully nested inside the eastbound Route 3 bridge between East Rutherford and Secaucus, NJ. Another successful pair was discovered on 8/29 nesting inside a similar box girder on the NJ Transit Upper Hack Bridge between Secaucus and Lyndhurst.

**Boat-tailed Grackle** – A pair of these large blackbirds was observed along the river near the PSE&G Hudson Generating Station in Jersey City on 8/30.

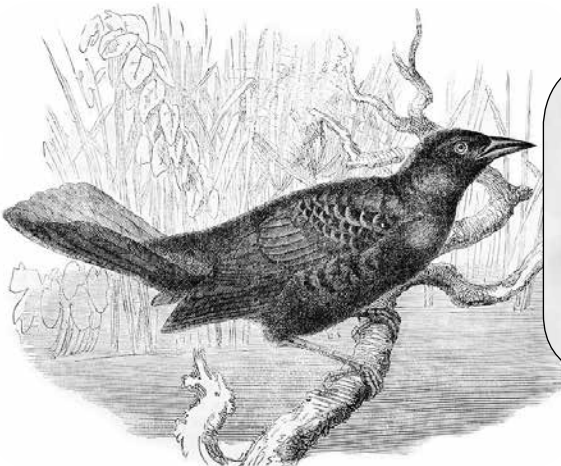
**Caspian Tern** – Two individuals of this large tern species were noted near the Ocean Terminal in Bayonne, NJ on 8/15.

**Fluke** (Summer Flounder) – On 8/6 an angler fishing from the Bayonne shore of Newark Bay landed an 8-pound "doormat" of a fish.

**Glossy Ibis** – Once fairly common in the Meadowlands, a single bird was seen in the Sawmill Creek Wildlife Management Area on 7/21. Another was observed in the same area on 8/17.

**Least Bittern** – North America's smallest heron was fleetingly seen on 7/23 during an Eco-Cruise through the Sawmill WMA.

**Little Brown Bat** – In light of the terrible losses suffered by bat



*Boat-tailed Grackle*

photo & illustration © BigStock

photo © BigStock



Glossy Ibis

species due to White-nose Syndrome, any bat reports are reasons to celebrate. Three animals were seen flying near Schauble Park in Closter, NJ on 7/30. A single bat was observed near Abbott Boulevard in Fort Lee, NJ on 8/2 and again on 8/14.

**Northern Harrier** – Incontrovertible evidence of this Endangered raptor species nesting in the Meadowlands was confirmed on 8/16 when a young fledgling was spotted in the Sawmill WMA during an Eco-Cruise.

**Northern Rough-winged Swallow** – Not uncommon but often not easy to spot; nonetheless a single bird was noticed on 8/13 by a keen observer along the river in Hackensack.

**Osprey** – As previously reported, eight pairs of Osprey nested within our watershed in 2015. Six pairs successfully fledged young. Here's the report: Jersey City (PSE&G Hudson Generating Station): two chicks; Kearny I (by the decommissioned NJ Transit Boonton Line bridge): one chick; Kearny II (on the former Standard Chlorine site): two chicks; Lyndhurst I (along Berry's Creek): two chicks; Lyndhurst II (on the NJ Transit Upper Hack Bridge): no breeding; Carlstadt I (on the radio tower near Doctor's Creek): two chicks; Carlstadt II (in a tree on the Richard P. Kane Natural Area): no chicks; and Teaneck (on the relay tower at Overpeck Park): one chick.

**Peregrine Falcon** – “Big

Mama” and her mate successfully fledged three chicks from their nest site on the westbound Route 3 Bridge this year – two females and a male. We were unable to determine the nesting success of either the pair on the former Bank of America building in Hackensack or on Laurel Hill. However, a previously unknown pair appears to have nested and fledged at least one chick on the NJ Turnpike Western Spur bridge between Carlstadt and Ridgefield, NJ. The big news in our area is that the Palisades cliffs finally had a successful year: four pairs raised a total of seven fledglings!

**Pileated Woodpecker** – The unmistakable call of NJ's largest woodpecker was heard in Hackensack near Borg's Woods on 7/14.

**Red-necked Phalarope** – Extremely rare in our watershed region, one of these shorebirds was observed on the mudflats of Saw Mill Creek at DeKorte Park on 8/17.

**Ruddy Turnstone** – Almost, but not quite as rare, one of these southbound migrant shorebirds was noted on the same mudflats at the same place on the same date.


**Semipalmated Sandpiper** – By late July, large southbound flocks were being seen along the river and in the Meadowlands. On 7/23 over 1,000 birds were noted during an evening Eco-Cruise roosting on unused docks in Little Ferry, NJ. In mid-August smaller flocks were seen along the river at low tide in Hackensack and Teaneck.

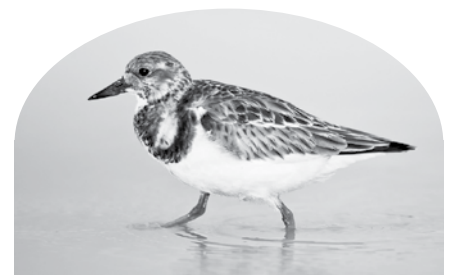
**Snow Goose** – First noted last year, the single “snow” continues to be seen in the company of resident Canada Geese. Most recently, the bird (which can fly) was observed on 7/25 in the river just south of Route 3 in Secaucus, on 8/13 on FDU's Metropolitan campus in Hackensack; and on 8/16 on the grounds of Holy Trinity Church in Hackensack.

**White-rumped Sandpiper** – A keen-eyed birder picked this bird out from a large flock of similar-sized Semipalmated Sandpipers on 8/11.

**White-tailed deer** – In the continuing saga of deer in unexpected places, on 7/29 a doe was seen on the east bank of the river in a clearing amid the Phragmites in Ridgefield, NJ.

**Wilson's Phalarope** – Mid-August was great for rare shorebirds at DeKorte with one of these birds (more at home in large flocks on the open sea) observed on 8/17.

Thanks to all our spotters and as always, a tip o' the naturalist's hat (from A to Z) to: Anonymous, Pete Bacinski, Al Barrera, Scott Barnes, Lidia Borzemsky, Mike Britt, Gerry Byrne, Harry Byrne, Dan Carola, Kathy Clark, Ray Cywinski, Ray Duffy, Mira Jaffrey, Iqram Khalil, Mary Knight, Joseph Labriola, Eric Nelson, Mike Panos, Laura Scanlan, Chris Takacs, Don Torino and Kate Wade. 



Ruddy Turnstone

photo © BigStock

## Birds of the Hackensack: Common Loon

By Ivan Kossak

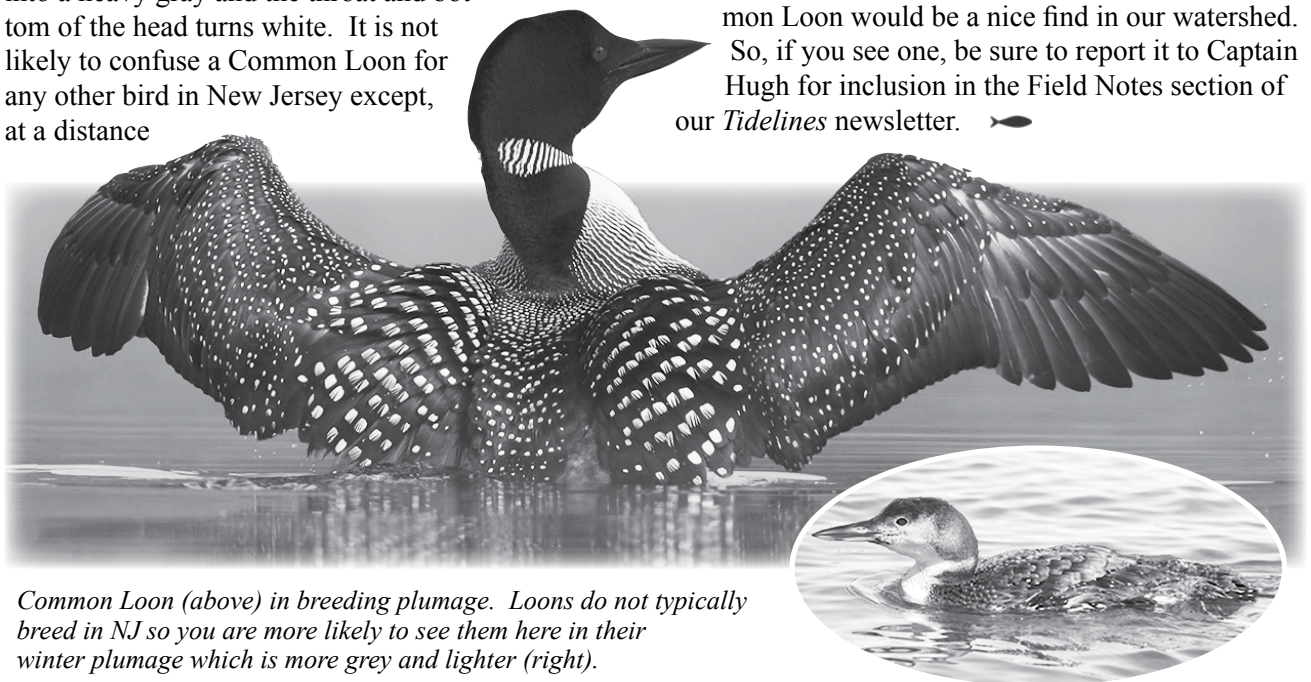
In writing this article, I have tried to avoid using frequently used birding humor about the birders being “Loons” rather than the birds. Actually, the word “Loon” is derived from the Scandinavian word for clumsy. This less-than-charitable description of a bird that is majestic on water is due to the fact that a loon’s feet are positioned far back on its body making walking on land rather awkward. It is believed that the term “loony” (used to describe an insane person) is at least partially derived from the avian loon’s call: a quavering tremolo that contains more than a passing resemblance to maniacal laughter. The Common Loon (*Gavia immer*) must be crazy like a fox. It is an accomplished diver, inhabiting larger lakes with sufficient fish population to satisfy its appetite which can consist of as much as two pounds of fish each day. It is also high on the food chain. At 32 inches in length and weighing in at nine pounds, the Common Loon’s predators are limited to Osprey, Bald Eagle, otters and the like.

While swimming, Common Loons are usually lower in the water than most ducks or other waterfowl. Breeding plumage Common Loons have black heads and bills broken only by a red eye. The back is white with a checkerboard design in black. During the winter, the black of the head and back fades out into a heavy gray and the throat and bottom of the head turns white. It is not likely to confuse a Common Loon for any other bird in New Jersey except, at a distance

in winter plumage when they can resemble another winter resident, the Red-throated Loon. Red-throated typically have a more slender bill and a straight line differentiating the dark nape from the light throat. Such demarcation on the neck of a winter plumage Common Loon will be more diffuse; sometimes looking like a zig-zag pattern.

Common Loons breed throughout Canada and Alaska with that range extending only into the northernmost fringes of the continental United States. They can also be found eastward as far as Iceland and Greenland. During the winter, when the waters of their breeding territories typically freeze, they can be found along both coasts of North America, even into Mexico. In the colder months of the year they are quite common along the New Jersey Coast where salinity keeps the water unfrozen. Most northbound Common Loons pass through New Jersey from early April through mid-May. We Garden Staters can see them moving south as early as late August but most pass through New Jersey from mid-October to mid-November.

In the Hackensack River Watershed, Common Loons can be found during migration on the river, or in some of the larger lakes and reservoirs. I have found that a chance to see birds that have come down to New Jersey for the winter makes the colder months so much more bearable and a wintering Common Loon would be a nice find in our watershed. So, if you see one, be sure to report it to Captain Hugh for inclusion in the Field Notes section of our *Tidelines* newsletter. 🐟



Common Loon (above) in breeding plumage. Loons do not typically breed in NJ so you are more likely to see them here in their winter plumage which is more grey and lighter (right).

*Real Science for Real People*

## Plastic in our Waters: Newest Environmental Threat

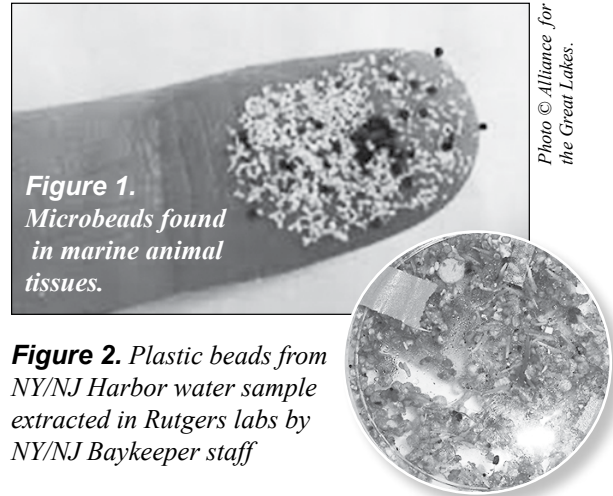
By Dr. Beth Ravit

While we continue to clean up historic Hudson-Raritan Estuary contamination released by the processing and storage of fossil fuels and pollution discharges into surface waters, there is a new emerging threat that originates from fossil fuel products. Plastic compounds made from oil are cheap, durable, and do not easily decompose, and so plastic substances have come to dominate many products we humans use daily. Anyone who has participated in a Hackensack River cleanup has encountered numerous plastic items in assorted shapes, sizes, and colors.

The newest plastic threat—"microbeads"—are microscopic pieces of plastic that are smaller than 5 millimeters, about the size of a grain of sand. You need a microscope to distinctly see these perfectly round, multicolored, and floatable particles. Scientific research documenting the presence of microbeads in surface waters is relatively recent, beginning with a 2012 study in the Great Lakes (Eriksen et al., 2013; see link to State of New York Microbead Report).<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately every one of us who uses toothpaste, facial scrubs, soaps or other personal care products are releasing these plastic microbeads into our surface waters every day.

Microbeads came into widespread use during the 1990s. Since most waste water treatment plants were built decades ago, they were not designed to remove microbead particles from waste water. When the treatment plants legally discharge clean effluent into a surface water body, the effluent carries microbeads that were flushed down our drains out into the environment. Scientists estimate that we may be releasing as many as 8 TRILLION microbeads a day into aquatic environments (Rochman et al., 2015)<sup>2</sup> – enough plastic to cover over 300 tennis courts. Van Cauwenberghe & Janssen (2014) have recently documented these plastic spheres in the tissues of commercially cultured shellfish (Fig. 1), although human dietary exposure hasn't been calculated yet.<sup>3</sup>

There are multiple environmental concerns associated with microplastics in surface waters. In addition to the plastic itself, there is a tendency for other compounds, particularly those that do not like water (hydrophobic), such as Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), and metals to attach themselves to the



**Figure 1.**  
*Microbeads found in marine animal tissues.*

Photo © Alliance for the Great Lakes.

**Figure 2.** *Plastic beads from NY/NJ Harbor water sample extracted in Rutgers labs by NY/NJ Baykeeper staff*

plastic particles, just as they might attach to sediment particles. When wildlife consume the plastic thinking it is food, the contaminants and the plastic accumulate in animal tissues, potentially affecting the health of wildlife, as well as presenting a possibility of the plastic moving up the food chain and ending up in the human food supply.

Waterkeeper Alliance has taken a strong stand against all forms of plastic that are entering U.S. waterways. NGOs from over 30 countries are working to ban microbeads from personal care products and there are companies that have pledged to stop using microbeads in their products. Waterkeeper Alliance is participating in new research attempting to quantify the presence and effect of microbeads in the Hudson River. This research is now expanding into the NY/NJ Harbor through the efforts of our colleagues at NY/NJ Baykeeper which is collecting and analyzing water samples from various locations in the harbor, including Newark Bay. To support the research needed to understand what next steps are needed, volunteers came to the Rutgers Environmental Science laboratories this summer and separated the plastics found in New Jersey waters into different size classes (Fig. 2). We are in the process of analyzing this data now and further research will elucidate contaminants that may be associated with these particles.

Illinois was the first state to ban microbeads. In March of this year, Governor Christie signed a bill prohibiting the production or sale of personal care products in New Jersey that contain microbeads, making ours the second state to enact such a ban.

*Continued on page 14*

## Real Science

continued from page 13

Hackensack Riverkeeper has led the effort to clean up historic contamination residing in the Hackensack River Estuary for decades. The unseen modern microbead contamination can be stopped now, before it becomes a 21<sup>st</sup> Century environmental issue. It is up to consumers and our choice of personal care products. For a list of tested products that DO or DO NOT contain microbeads, check out this website:

<http://onepercentfortheplanet.org/2014/10/a-list-of-products-that-contain-plastic-microbeads/>

### Footnotes:

1. Erikson, E., Mason, S., Wilson, S., Box, C., Zellers, A., Edwards, W., Farley, H., Amato, S., 2013. Microplastic pollution in the surface waters of the Laurentian Great Lakes. *Marine Pollution Bulletin* 77:177-182. <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0025326X13006097>. Accessed 17 September, 2015.
2. Rochman, C.M., Kross, S.M., Armstrong, J.B., Bogan, M.T., Darling, E.S., Green, S.J., Smyth, A. R., Verissimo, D. 2015.

Scientific evidence supports a ban on microbeads. *Environmental Science & Technology*. <http://pubs.acs.org/doi/pdfplus/10.1021/acs.est.5b03909>. Accessed 16 September, 2015.

3. Van Cauwenberghe, L. & Janssen, C.R. 2014. Microplastics in bivalves cultured for human consumption. *Environmental Pollution* 193:65-70. <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0269749114002425>. Accessed 16 September, 20

New York State Microbead Report: [https://ag.ny.gov/pdfs/Microbeads\\_Report\\_5\\_14\\_14.pdf](https://ag.ny.gov/pdfs/Microbeads_Report_5_14_14.pdf). Accessed 16 September, 2015.

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## Letters to Hackensack RIVERKEEPER

Dear Captain Bill:

Back in the 40s, I and 3 or 4 friends used to rent a row boat. The boat rental was by the Berry's creek bridge in East Rutherford. We would row the creek south into the Hacky to crab. Many days we could catch a bushel. The river was clean but things were happening. Towns were dumping garbage in the meadows. As the piles of garbage got bigger and bigger they started falling into Berry's creek. Then floating into the Hacky. There were other things happening to. We used to trap muskrats in most of the creeks that fed the Hacky. Berry's creek and Catfish creek. There were dikes created by the Bergen county mosquito commission. As we walked in the creeks we could smell the sulfur like smell of rotting garbage. There was one shallow ditch that lead from a factory to Berry's creek it had all this whitish blue and green water in it and strings of the same color all along the ditch, but there were hundreds of muskrat hole on both sides of the ditch. So we walked all along the ditch setting our traps and kicking the water with our hip boots as we walked. Much of this whitish blue water entering our mouths to be spit out. Many years later we find out that that water was waste from a factory producing radium for wristwatches. But we did catch and sell about 700 muskrats each year. I'm 81 years old now and I bet I walked every inch of the Meadows from Little Ferry to Kearny from 12 years old till I was married at 20 years old. I even took my new wife duck hunting where Berry's creek enters the Hacky. I'm glad that its being cleaned up but sad that N.J. let them build the track, stadium and arena on what had been meadows that I walked on as a kid. But

the state gets their way with things that they keep the average person from doing. Back then you could buy meadow land for 25 dollars an acre but who wanted mud that smelled like garbage. When I retired from the USPS IN 1987 on a disability, my wife and I moved to Pennsylvania. We moved here because it is what New Jersey once looked like. While we were building I wanted to build a pond near a 5 acre grove of 200 year old Hemlock trees that I own. When we applied for the permit we were turned down because it was a seasonal wetland. It had mud for a month a year and raised a few toads and snakes. So we put a 450 foot long by 150 feet wide by 30 feet deep. That pond raised hundreds of ducks and geese for years till the Large Mouth bass became big enough to eat the baby ducks and geese. I sometimes use Google Earth the see where I had walked 70 years ago. To me the changes have not been for the better. There are now hundreds of factories and part of Teterboro airport covering the footsteps where I walked. But some think that's progress. But money talks as the meadows shrinks.

Herb Flavell

Dear Jodi,

We are writing this letter to thank you so much for all the wonderful learning activities we had while participating in the "UWEP". We were told by our teachers that we would be learning a lot about our Hackensack River and its biodiversity. Our event at the Johnson Public Library educated us on the role of the watershed and focused our attention on the pollution we add to the

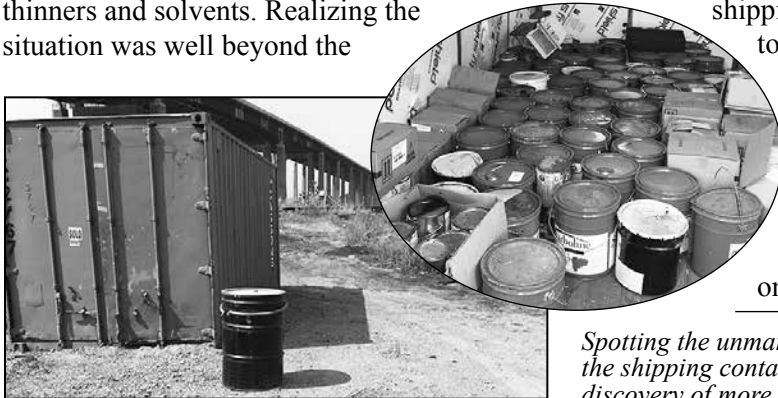
## Staff Discovers Illegal Dump by River

While scouting for river cleanup sites on September 2, Captain Bill and Outreach Coordinator Caitlin Doran made a chilling discovery: a shipping container full of hazardous waste not far from the river in Secaucus. Left behind by contractors working on the nearby NJ Turnpike bridge, the discarded waste included highly-toxic industrial paints, thinners and solvents. Realizing the situation was well beyond the

scope of a typical cleanup, Capt. Bill contacted the NJDEP Hot Line (1-877-WARN DEP). A HazMat team from the Hudson County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) was dispatched and Bill showed them the site.

In a scene reminiscent of the classic Arlo Guthrie song “Alice’s Restaurant”, the team discovered shipping labels and packing lists with the contractor’s name and contact info clearly displayed.

Armed with that critical intel, OEM got the responsible parties back to the scene to clean up their mess and dispose of it properly *and legally*. And it was all done without the need for “8 x 10 color glossy photos with a paragraph on the back of each one explaining what each one was...”



*Spotting the unmarked drum with toxic sludge outside the shipping container prompted a closer look and the discovery of more hazardous waste.*



*Students of Hackensack Five Six Middle School enjoy the UWEP fishing in Hacknesack.*

system from point and non-point sources. We learned how our city has the old “Combined Sewer Overflow” system which allows raw sewage to flow into the river during extreme rainfalls contaminating the water... yucky! The “Saving Energy” game made us realize how our everyday actions add to the wasteful use of our energy and increases our carbon footprint which affects climate change.

The day at Laurel Hill Park in Secaucus was so amazing! the new pontoon boats were so fancy and the tour of the Meadowlands allowed us to see the birds and discuss the fish that live in this brackish estuary environment. Collecting data about the rivers salinity, turbidity, temperature, pH and dissolved oxygen allowed us to act like environmental scientists and appreciate how important it is to monitor and protect a water environment. It was so much fun!

Of course the fishing expedition was the most exciting day. For many of us this was our first experience fishing and we learned

how to bait a hook, cast a line and identify the fish that were caught. We are now all “catch and release” anglers! Also, Mr. Howie’s fish dissection had us squealing as we learned about fish anatomy and made us realize how amazing the organs of living things are.

We all now have “new eyes” when it comes to enjoying the beauty and importance fo our Hackensack River. It provides drinking water to local communities and is a vibrant habitat for many animal and plant species. Thank you for this life changing experience which has made us environmentally aware of the role of our local river.

A million thanks from:

The 5th grade science students of Hackensack Middle School and their teachers Linda Flynn, Fran Stierle and Chris Melia.

P.S. Our donation is in appreciation and support for the important work the Hackensack Riverkeeper does to protect our waterways.



## New Staff Attorney, Andrea Leshak

Andrea Leshak is the joint staff attorney for Hackensack Riverkeeper and NY/NJ Baykeeper. Previously, she was a Ford Foundation legal fellow at the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), and has held internships with the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Andrea is a graduate of New York University School of Law and Penn State

University, where she studied Environmental Resource Management and Philosophy. Originally from Hershey, PA, Andrea grew up on her family's dairy and crop farm, which is where she first developed her appreciation for nature and a desire to protect and conserve her natural surroundings. When she's not working to protect the environment, Andrea enjoys running (including 2 marathons), attending concerts, and listening to podcasts.

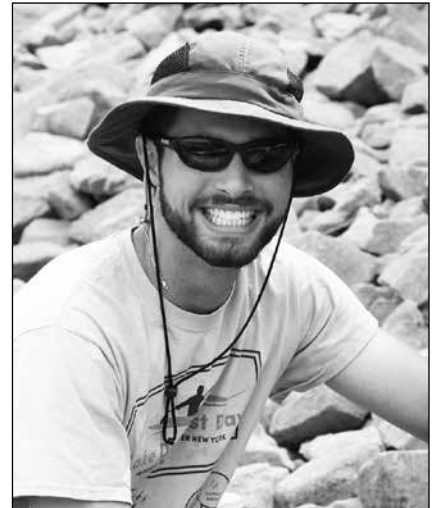
## A Great Adventure

This past summer, Hackensack Riverkeeper was fortunate to welcome aboard our summer intern, Andrew Pohl, a senior at Plymouth State University majoring in Adventure Education (yes, Adventure Education!). Committed to completing the required 270 hours of his internship in less than two months, he hit the ground running, and he ended the semester with over 300 hours!

While at Riverkeeper, Andrew was able to lead and organize group paddles and provide basic instruction. He was also instru-

mental in helping to repair and refurbish a lot of our gear for the season. In between patching canoes and kayaks, Andrew also worked with staff and volunteers to enhance their knowledge and safety skills. An incredibly smart, talented young man, constantly smiling and ever so helpful, we will always remember Andrew, and we cannot thank him enough for the help, devotion and passion brought to our mission.

Andrew, we wish you all the best in the adventures life is sure to have in store for you!



*Andrew at Lake Tapan Paddle Day.*



*Hackensack Trustee Rob Gillies, Lorriane Ramppen, Gail Hampson with Captain Bill Sheehan enjoying the festivities at the Captain's Circle banquet.*

## Captain's Circle

This year's Captain Circle banquet was held June 18 at the Blauvelt Art Museum in Oradell. Captain's Circle members are key partners and long term supporters of Hackensack Riverkeeper. Their involvement and passion are critical to the continued success of our mission to protect, preserve, and restore the River. If you'd like to join the Captain's Circle contact Mike Panos at: [donate@hackensackriverkeeper.org](mailto:donate@hackensackriverkeeper.org).



## Introducing the New Transit Van, Van-na White

### By Van-na White herself

Back in April, while Riverkeeper's two new Eco-Cruise vessels, *Geraldine Theresa* and *Robert Boyle II*, were being christened on the Hack, with all the fanfare and ceremony that such a monumental moment deserves, I was quietly awaiting adoption on the lot at the All American Ford dealership, not far from Riverkeeper HQ. Two benefactors, Larry Inserra of Inserra Supermarkets and Donald Nuckel from Little Ferry, donated the funds to cover nearly total the cost of the flagship eco-program vessels, freeing up the remaining capital campaign monies to take me off the lot and deposit me at my new home with Hackensack Riverkeeper.

Since then, I have assisted at 11 cleanups in Hackensack, Palisades Park, Harrington Park,

Ridgefield, River Edge, Woodcliff Lake and New City, New York. I've transported the materials needed to collect 500 bags of trash, 90 tires, and outfit over 457 volunteers. And this is only the beginning! I look forward to many more service hours, safely transporting our grateful outreach coordinator, who spent several days practicing wide turns towing canoes in vacant lots – along with all the boots, bags, sticks,

jugs, crates, tents, and wheelbarrows necessary to get any job done. My middle name is safety and my nickname is stylish. I am the proud result of your collective efforts to take Hackensack Riverkeeper's cleanup program to the next level and proof that, when the need is great, friends of Riverkeeper will always come through to help.

Yours for many more miles,  
Van-na



*Van-na White makes her debut in Hackensack for a Coles Brook cleanup.*

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# Volunteer Corner

By Caitlin Doran



## Summer Solstice Cleanup – Laurel Hill Park, June 20, 2015

*It may have rained on our Summer Solstice cleanup, but a little rain couldn't dampen our spirits! Fifty-three volunteers joined us for this annual Laurel Hill Park tradition and removed 50 bags of trash, eight tires, and debris from the Hackensack River and banks. A tip of the hat to Gene and Rosemary Dunton for towing a huge beam behind their canoe and preventing it from becoming a hazard to boaters and*

*paddlers. At cleanup's end, volunteers huddled under tents to enjoy a potluck lunch; thank you to everyone who brought something to share. Although it rained on our summer kick-off, months of summer sunshine and good weather followed. This cleanup was dedicated to the memory of "Eco" Ed Schwartz, long-time Riverkeeper volunteer who, in the words of Captain Bill, "taught us all how to do it right." Thanks, Ed.*



## Staib Park Cleanup – Hackensack, July 12, 2015

*Sunscreen was a must on July 12. The temperature hit 90 degrees and the sun was out in full force. Luckily, Coles Brook, our targeted tributary, has a lot of tree cover. Luckier still, we had enough volunteer-power that Saturday to remove 31 tires from the steep banks, which*

*we suspect were recently (illegally) dumped. Coles Brook along Paramus and Hackensack has been a problem spot, and while local fast food businesses have made efforts to clean up their act, waste still accumulates and is occasionally dumped along the banks.*

### Goldman Sachs Cleanup – Overpeck Park, July 17, 2015

*We can't say enough about Goldman Sachs interns! Sixty in total descended upon the Palisades Park side of Overpeck Park, which has no shortage of leached trash and debris entering the Overpeck Creek. Canoes came back filled with everything from bottles to buckets (of more bottles). Those working on foot stumbled upon patches of trash left*

*behind by groups of homeless, a situation Riverkeeper and colleagues have brought to the town's attention. We are currently receiving updates on the creation of a task force to deal with the problem, which we hope will mean better living conditions for those suffering homelessness and cleaner banks for the creek and our river.*



### Becton Dickinson Cleanup – Woodcliff Lake, July 31, 2015

*While the levels were low at Woodcliff Lake, there was still enough water for canoeing across and gathering 32 bags of trash. Not bad for 14 interns, left slightly short-handed when one coordinator had to turn around to meet his wife at the hospital and welcome their second child into the*

*world! It may not have happened at our cleanup, but we are still happy to call this our first cleanup baby! Congrats to that BD employee and thank you to the remaining interns. Thanks, also, to Ray Cywinski and United Water for arranging access to the property.*



### Foschini Park Cleanup – Hackensack, August 22, 2015

*Once upon a Foschini Park of old, there was a small beach which provided safe, clear access to the waterway. It was an enjoyable spot for park-goers and was the put-in and out point for our cleanups. After a few years, it disappeared, quickly overwhelmed by Phragmites and overgrowth. That is, until the week of our Foschini Park cleanup. We can't thank Jesse D'Amore and the Hackensack DPW enough for bush-*

*whacking a beautiful path for us. Because of the work they put in, we were able to put in that much more. At Foschini this year, we collected upwards of 40 bags and were able to canoe down to the nearby railroad bridge and dislodge huge sections of an ensnared containment boom. Thanks also go out to Hackensack FDU for keeping us safe on the water. That motor boat came in handy removing that boom too!*



## BETTER KNOW A COLLEAGUE

## Waterkeeper Alliance

*Fastest Growing Worldwide Environmental Network.*



Part fourteen of our 37-part series

### By Hugh M. Carola

One of the things that pretty much everyone learns about during an Eco-Cruise or indoor presentation is that Hackensack Riverkeeper doesn't exist in a vacuum. We're not out here alone. In fact there are over 250 other organizations *around the world* that work to protect, preserve and restore their waterways and watersheds; and all have earned the right to call themselves Waterkeepers.

The story begins in 1966 when commercial and recreational fishermen – and their allies – created the Hudson River Fishermen's Association (HRFA) to fight against the river's legion of polluters. They knew that outspoken, citizen-led advocacy was the only way to ensure that laws were enforced and that their river, livelihood and health were protected. Without question, the fishermen's greatest ally was a sportswriter by the name of Bob Boyle – the same visionary man in whose honor two of our research vessels have been named.

In 1983, the HRFA hired John Cronin as Hudson Riverkeeper – the first Waterkeeper since medieval times – to patrol the river, serve as its citizen-steward and to lead citizen-based enforcement of environ-

mental laws. Hitting the river at full throttle, Hudson Riverkeeper brought hundreds of polluters to justice over the years and continues to do so. Needless to say, such a novel and successful idea is bound to spur others, and that's exactly what happened. From Long Island Sound to Puget Sound and from Casco Bay to San Diego Bay to the Hackensack River (Number 18 on the Waterkeeper Hit Parade), people like our own Captain Bill Sheehan have followed the path blazed by Bob Boyle and Hudson Riverkeeper.

In 1999 Waterkeeper Alliance was founded to support existing programs and help develop new ones. Led by Board President Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. and Executive Director Marc Yaggi, it's the world's fastest growing environmental movement, with Waterkeeper organizations working to protect rivers, bays, sounds, lakes, streams, gulfs, bayous, basins, canals and aquifers on six continents. How can you tell if an organization is a Waterkeeper? It's simple: *only* Alliance members are permitted to use *-keeper* in their names. Just like us.

For more information about the Alliance and the worldwide Waterkeeper movement, visit [www.Waterkeeper.org](http://www.Waterkeeper.org).

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## At the helm

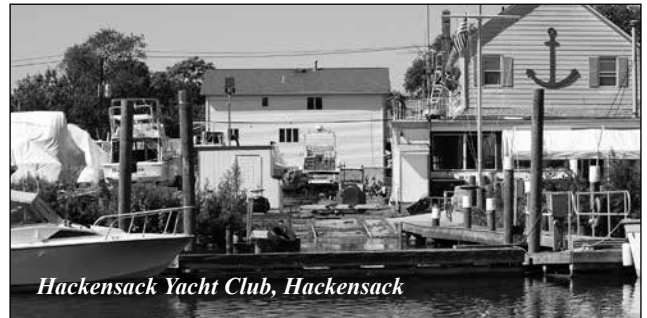
*continued from page 2*

to True World Marine, which set up a boat building facility. I was quite excited at the time, but unfortunately my excitement didn't last as the company – owned by the Unification Church of Rev. Sun Myung Moon – moved their manufacturing facility to North Carolina citing cheaper labor costs there. The facility has been unoccupied for a decade and badly deteriorated due to neglect, siltation, and major storm damage.

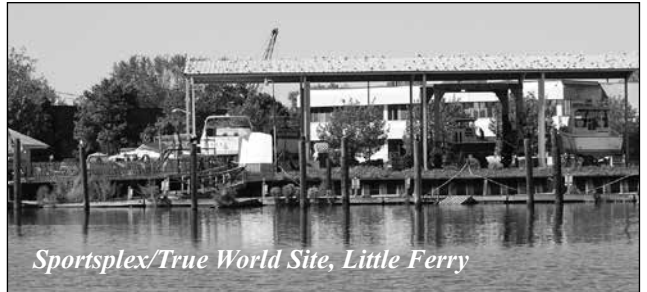
No trip through Little Ferry would be complete without mention of Tracey's Nine Mile House. This property has been in some form of use since colonial times when it was an important stopover for folks traveling between Weehawken and Hackensack. In the mid-20th Century the site was home to a float-plane base for pilots who used the river as a runway. Upon landing, a pilot would taxi the aircraft to the dock to purchase fuel and visit the restaurant. For we who remember those days, it was always cool to watch the planes skimming across the surface of the river, gaining speed and becoming airborne. But as the popularity of floatplanes diminished, so did the need for facilities to service them. The last plane took off from the River more than a quarter century ago and all that remains at Tracey's is one abandoned and rapidly-decaying cabin cruiser.

The next stop as we head downriver is in Secaucus at the mouth of Mill Creek. This site was developed in the late 1940s as a local sportsmen's paradise with a boat ramp, travel lift, and lots of dockage. There was also a shooting range onsite. These amenities were supported by a popular bar/restaurant known far and wide as Tony's Old Mill. But by the mid 1990s the marina was gone, the restaurant in steep decline, the range struggling and the site inhabited by squatters living in campers and old wooden boats. In response, the Mayor and Council acquired the property, cleaned it up and redeveloped it as a riverfront park. Today, Mill Creek Point Park is a major asset with a small boat launch area, fishing area, dog run, playground and more. It also serves as the northern anchor for the town's Riverwalk, which extends 2½ miles down to Route 3.

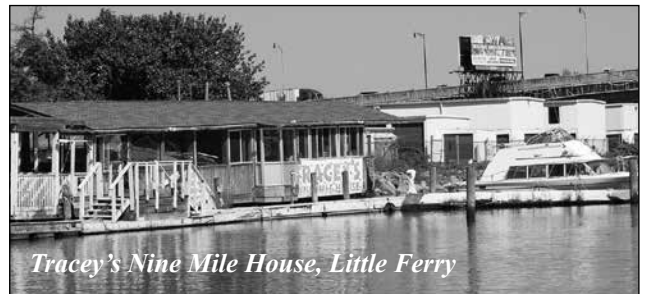
A little further downstream and on the river's west bank in Carlstadt are four waterfront areas – two active and two abandoned. The biggest and best is River Barge Park, currently operated by the New



*Hackensack Yacht Club, Hackensack*



*Sportsplex/True World Site, Little Ferry*



*Tracey's Nine Mile House, Little Ferry*

Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority. The park is the result of a redevelopment project on the site of the former River Barge Club and Marina. Now a public park featuring a day-use public launch ramp, seasonal slips and a specialty rowing/fishing dock, it is the only boating facility on the river that is mostly full during boating season. River Barge Park has been our homeport for the last two years.

Next-door is the Snipe Boat Club, which has been a fixture on the river for longer than I can remember. It was originally located in Secaucus at the foot of Front Street but moved to its current location in the 1970s to make way for the Meadowlands Parkway and all of the development that has taken place since. The odd thing I have noticed is that most of the members' boats are sitting on shore shrink-wrapped with only two boats in the water at a dock that used to be completely full.

Adjacent to Snipes is the Majestic Boat Club. I honestly don't know much about this group but they used to have at least a few boats moored at their

*Continued on page 22*

## At the helm

continued from page 21

dock and this year there are none. There isn't even a floating dock in the water. I suspect lingering damage from Hurricane Sandy is to blame.

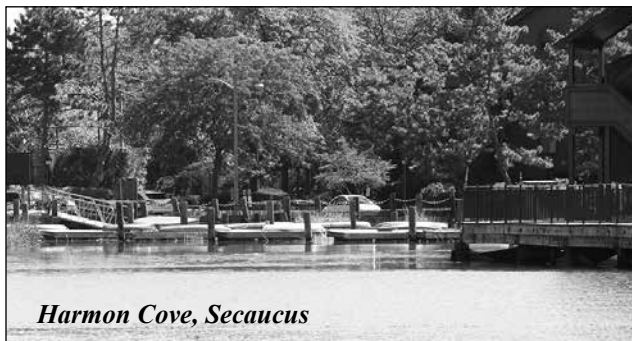
Just over the next fence lies the neglected and decaying facility once known as LT's (as in former NY Giants linebacker Lawrence Taylor) Golf Cen-



*Majestic Boat Club, Carlstadt*



*Red Roof Inn Marina, Secaucus*



*Harmon Cove, Secaucus*



*Passaic River Yacht Club, Kearny*

ter and Marina. But the property has a much longer boating tradition, going all the way back to the early 20th Century when it was the Sky Harbor Marina. During the late 80's the marina was redeveloped by the Porro family to include a driving range, miniature golf course and pro shop. In 1995, when I began our Eco-Cruise program, the Porros donated dock space and allowed me to use the facility for small events. The support I received from them in those early days enabled me to grow into my role as your Riverkeeper.

Unfortunately, these events came to an end when the management changed and the name became the Waterfront Café. This was the beginning of the end for this place. The manager was charged with a criminal violation of the Clean Water Act and abandoned his job. Afterward, the Porros brought in a lessee who changed the name to *The Dragonfly* and ran the place into the ground. Then Sandy hit. Today this once-busy marina has no docks and only a few rotting hulks abandoned on shore.

Crossing back over to the Secaucus side there are three facilities side by side. First is the Extended Stay America hotel, just upriver from the NJ Route 3 Westbound Bridge. Once the berth of the dinner boat *Aratusa*, the property was redeveloped in the mid 90s with a launch ramp and marina to provide public access. Until recent years, the slips were always full with recreational boats, but lately sediment build-up has left most of the slips high and dry at low tide. Only three boats were moored there this year and I fear for the future of this facility.

Just south of the Westbound Route 3 Bridge is the home of US Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 10-15 and the Secaucus Fire Department boat. This is another facility that has been around seemingly forever. For many years, an old railroad barge served as the Flotilla's clubhouse and training center; I actually took my Boating Skills and Seamanship Course aboard her. But time was not kind to the barge and it deteriorated until it became unsafe, necessitating the demolition of its topside cabin several years ago. Since then I have attended meetings and provided Secaucus with letters of support for a plan to revitalize the site, but at present the project is tied up in the permitting process.

Next up is the Red Roof Inn, built in the 1980s. Approvals for this riverfront development were contingent upon the company providing public access and in response, RRI built a marina and day-use launch ramp behind the motel. For 12 years we kept our pontoon boats there but sadly after a few tropical

storms, Hurricanes Irene and Sandy, and two severe winters, the docks were deemed unsafe and closed to boaters. Currently, Red Roof's lawyers are seeking to release it from having to maintain the marina but so far nothing has happened.

One Secaucus "marina" that is no longer suitable for anything larger than a kayak is located at Harmon Cove. The history and problems that have overtaken this site (most notable the accretion of sediments) are compounded by the community's inability to maintain and make necessary repairs.

New on the drawing board is a small marina planned for the Xchange at Secaucus Junction – a transit village next door to Laurel Hill Park. The company plans to start construction on a boat dock this coming spring and once completed, we hope to make it the new homeport of the r/v *Robert H. Boyle II* and *Geraldine Theresa*.

The final boating facility on the Hackensack is the Passaic River Yacht Club, located in Kearny next to the Lincoln Highway Bridge. Yes, you read

that correctly – the Passaic River Yacht Club. And yes, it is on the Hackensack River – moved there from Newark by its members in the early 1950s. It is perhaps the most active boat club on the River with many boats tied to mooring buoys. The owners use dinghies to access their vessels. In true South Kearny fashion, the club is accessed through a truck stop behind a diner just off Truck Route 1&9.

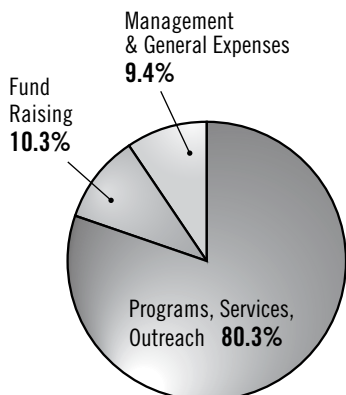
And that's it. The question that remains unanswered is: how can a river that sits in the most densely populated area of our most densely populated state not have a viable boating business? The mouth of the river opens up into Newark Bay and from there it is a short and enjoyable trip to New York Harbor, Raritan Bay, and the Atlantic Ocean. I just don't get it. I realize that Sandy scared off the more fair-weather casual boaters but there are days when we don't see a single boat on the river. Where have they all gone? I'd really like to know.

*CA Bill Sll*



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## Upcoming Events with Riverkeeper

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**November 17-19, 2015**  
**NJ League of Municipalities**  
**Conference**

Atlantic City Convention Center,  
Atlantic City, NJ  
[www.njlm.org](http://www.njlm.org)

**January 6-10, 2016**  
**New York Boat Show**

Jacob K. Javits Convention  
Center, NYC  
[www.nyboatshow.com](http://www.nyboatshow.com)

**January 7-10, 2016**  
**Garden State Outdoor Sports Show**

Raritan Center Expo Hall,  
Edison, NJ  
[www.gsooss.com](http://www.gsooss.com)

**January 22-23**  
**ANJEE Conference**

Crowne Plaza Hotel & Confer-  
ence Center, Plainsboro, NJ  
[www.ANJEE.org](http://www.ANJEE.org)

**April 8-10, 2016**  
**Paddlesport**

Garden State Exhibit Center,  
Somerset, NJ  
[www.jersey paddler.com](http://www.jersey paddler.com)

**Thursday, March 31, 2016**

**Save the Date!**  
**Riverkeeper Beefsteak Dinner**

The Empire Club  
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