FRIENDS OF GARRET MOUNTAIN RESERVATION MAKE A
DIFFERENCE
By Norma Holmes

Garret Mountain Reservation in Passaic County is a cleaner, healthier park, thanks to an organization of dedicated volunteers. The Friends of Garret Mountain Reservation (FOGMR) was founded in May, 2003, by a small group of birders who found their birding experience diminished by the sight of litter and the lack of open restrooms. They were concerned about the resulting impact on water quality as well as other environmental issues which directly affect birds, plants, animals, and humans.

Garret Mountain Reservation and Rifle Camp Park (adjacent to the reservation) constitute approximately 568 acres in Paterson and West Paterson, NJ. The area is composed of deciduous mixed hardwood forest, pond, wetland and extensive lawn/grassland habitats with a variety of plant life.

Because of its position at the end of the First Watchung Mountain, it is a preferred stopping place for birds using the ridges as a pathway during migration. Garret provides an oasis in a sea of industrialization. A place for birds to rest and eat before continuing their journey, it has been characterized as the best spot in the state to see spring migrants. It is a popular location (cont. on page 2)

THIRD ANNUAL PASSAIC RIVER PADDLE RELAY
By Tom Pietrykoski

Paddlers of all skill levels are invited to join The Lower Passaic & Saddle River Alliance in the Third Annual Passaic River Paddle Relay on Saturday, May 12, 2007. The race will start at the Nereid Boat Club in Rutherford at 9:00am and end in Riverbank Park in Newark at approximately 12:00pm. This year’s race will follow the same course as last year with a few small changes. The course will be eight miles long and divided into three legs; teams will consist of six paddlers, with two paddlers per canoe on each leg. There will also be an individual kayak portion of the race. (cont. on page 3)
for sponsored walks to see plants, animals, and bird species.

Designed in 1927 by The Olmsted Brothers firm, premier landscape architects responsible for designing New York’s Central Park and Boston’s Emerald Necklace, the reservation contains the charming Barbour’s Pond. Small streams feed the pond which empties through a spillway into the Passaic River. The surrounding park is heavily used for hiking, picnicking, cross country meets, soccer matches, fishing, birding, photography and the annual Passaic County Fair. The Reservation also provides pedestrian/bike paths, bridle paths, and equestrian facilities.

FOGMR has partnered with other stakeholders, including the Passaic County Sheriff and Director of Parks, to clean up the park and enforce existing regulations governing the park. Working with New Jersey Youth Corporation, Cytec Industries, the Clifton Environmental Commission and the Lower Passaic & Saddle River Alliance, FOGMR is trying to educate park users in order to reduce litter and restore and maintain water quality. Signs have been erected urging the public to pick up dog waste, protect wildlife from harassment, and prevent abandonment of domestic animals. A sign nearer Barbour’s Pond instructs the public that it is illegal to feed ducks and geese. This concerted effort has produced results. Park users report an overall improvement in appearance of the park and the reduction of litter. The rest rooms are now open and functioning on most days of the week from April 15th to November 15th.

FOGMR continues to meet with Parks Director Raymond Wright on a regular basis to discuss issues pertaining to Garret and Rifle Camp Park. Goals include formulating a plan to rid the park of invasive plant species, providing input into the County’s plans to dredge Barbour’s Pond and restore existing buildings and paths, and working with fishermen to ensure proper disposal of mono filament line. FOGMR will continue to encourage enforcement of regulations that protect water quality and the environment of Garret Mountain Reservation and Rifle Camp Park. A web site is being created; email announcements of meetings, minutes and events are posted at: garret-mtn@gselist.org.

It’s hard to believe my term is already half over. It seems I’ve just begun to get to know so many of you. I appreciate all the assistance you have given me so far and I look forward to working with you in the coming months and getting to know you better.

As Watershed Ambassador I am performing assessments on the Hohokus Brook and its tributaries. I have completed 18 visual and 14 biological assessments. The results suggest that the Hohokus Brook is in fair condition, or, in other words, not good enough.

Education is key to the improvement of our waterways. I have done 13 presentations in various towns throughout the watershed including Ridgewood, Clifton, Newark, and East Orange. I am looking forward to the 17 other presentations I have planned and am always looking for an opportunity to do more.

April is a productive month. Dundee Island is due for a cleanup on April 14th and later in the month we will plant 100 native species at the Great Falls. I encourage you to volunteer!

**April 27th and 28th – Tree Planting at the Great Falls, Paterson, NJ**
*Time: 9:00 am until we are done*

For more information, or to volunteer, please contact Carrie Deitz: 973-817-5784, cdeitz@pvsc.com

The revised booklet: "What YOU Can Do To Prevent NonPoint Source Pollution in the Lower Passaic Watershed" with current DEP regulations and information is now available. This booklet is invaluable for classrooms, watershed festivals, Earth Day celebrations, community groups, etc.

For copies, contact: mandegruber@hotmail.com
LOWER PASSAIC CANOE AND KAYAK TRAIL
By Michele Bakacs

Having witnessed the success of the Passaic River Paddle Relay and the public's enthusiasm for paddling the River, the Lower Passaic & Saddle River Alliance plans to establish a 32 mile urban canoe and kayak trail that will begin in Wayne Township and extend to the City of Newark. Similar “water trails” are being established on other rivers in New Jersey, such as the Delaware and Hackensack Rivers (for information about water trails throughout the United States, visit the American Canoe Association's website: www.americancanoe.org).

The purpose of the event is to reintroduce and reconnect local communities to an ignored and forgotten urban treasure, the Passaic River. The Alliance wants to provide opportunities for the public to begin seeing the River in a different way – not as a place to be avoided - but as a resource to be enjoyed. A training day for less experienced paddlers will be held on April 28. All interested paddlers should contact Tom Pierykoski at (973) 817-5735 or tpierykoski@PVSC.com.

PADDOLE RELAY CONTINUED CONT...

The 3rd Annual Passaic River Paddle Relay is sponsored by the Lower Passaic & Saddle River Alliance, in partnership with the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commissioners (PVSC), Essex County Department of Parks, Recreation & Cultural Affairs, Ironbound Community Corporation, SPARK Friends of Riverbank Park, and Whole Foods Market of Edgewater, Montclair & Ridgewood.

The Alliance hopes the Trail will encourage local schools to use the River as an outdoor classroom. Each launch site will have educational resources for teaching lessons that focus on the River. The intention is to get students out on the water to discover the River in a way that can only happen as they paddle.

The importance of the Trail cannot be underestimated. It is a critical factor in the effort to create a new public vision for the River and realize the Alliance’s goal of helping people to experience the River in new ways. If you would like more information about the Lower Passaic Canoe and Kayak Trail, contact Jerry Willis with the National Park Service Rivers Trails & Conservation Assistance Program at jerry_willis@nps.gov or (732) 291-6067.

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Co-sponsored by the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commissioners, Essex County Department of Parks, Recreation & Cultural Affairs, Ironbound Community Corporation, SPARK Friends of Riverbank Park, and Whole Foods Market of Edgewater, Montclair & Ridgewood

**A Race for the River**
**Saturday, May 12th, 2007**
Celebrate the 100th Anniversary of Riverbank Park
**Registration Deadline May 1, 2007**

To register and for more information please contact:
**Tom Pietykoski**
973.817.5735
tpietrykoski@pvsc.com

*Prizes* will be awarded to top finishers

Registration material available at www.wma4.org

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**Public Advisory Committee**
Date: Second Thursday of each month
Location: Various, within WMA 4
Time: 6:30-8:30pm
For More Information: Tom Pietykoski, 973-817-5735, tpietykoski@pvsc.com

**Technical Advisory Committee**
Date: Last Thursday of each month
Location: Oldham Pond Environmental Center, N. Haledon
Time: 6:30pm
For More Information: Russ Furnari 973-430-8848

**Education and Outreach Committee**
Date: Third Wednesday of each month
Location: Clifton Public Library, Allwood Branch, Clifton
Time: 6:30-8:30pm
For More Information: Peyton Baker 973-338-4098, pbaker@passaiccountynj.org

**Open Space Committee**
Date: Second Thursday of each month
Location: Various, within WMA #4
Time: 5:00-6:30pm, immediately prior to PAC
For More Information: Paul Russo 973-748-9000

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**Lower Passaic & Saddle River Alliance**
*(Watershed Management Area 4)*
**www.wma4.org**

c/o New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
Watershed Management
401 State Street
PO Box 418
Trenton, NJ 08625