

This broken glass removed from the Fall Kill will be turned into an art project.



MAJOR HUDSON RIVER TRIBUTARY GETS SOME TLC

Spring Cleaning on the Fall Kill

Community art project involves community members and turns trash into treasure

By Jennifer Rubbo, Fall Kill Watershed Coordinator (Photos by Tom Staudter)



Some may remember the last weekend in April for the early heat wave that hit the Hudson Valley, but for over 50 volunteers in the City of Poughkeepsie, April 25, 2009 will be remembered as the day community members came together and the Fall Kill received a much needed spring cleaning. Participants cleaned over three tons of trash out of five sections of this major Hudson tributary as part of Clearwater and the Fall Kill Watershed Committee's community art project "Reviving the Fall Kill – Creating Treasure from Trash."

Community Spirit Grows in Watershed

Local business owners, residents from Poughkeepsie and neighboring communities and city council members all joined the five students from Poughkeepsie High School who helped start this project last year. The students led the way once again by eagerly donning waders, and keeping everyone's spirits high. Everyone involved gained a new perspective of the creek- the problems it's facing and its potential to be a thriving connection to nature for city residents. Most importantly, was the feeling of community that resulted as people worked hard toward a common goal, shared stories, and compared notes about what interesting item they retrieved from the creek. As a result of their efforts over three tons of garbage was removed. People headed home at the end of the day hot, tired, and dirty, yet with smiles on their faces and plans being made for the next Fall Kill Clean up.

New Meaning for Reuse and Recycle

In addition to cleaning trash out of the creek, volunteers collected glass and helped sort, clean and prepare it for use in a public piece

of artwork. The idea of using salvaged glass from the creek to grow out of a Rapid Trash Assessment completed during last summer's Fall Kill Creek Week that found that 1/3 of all the trash collected was broken glass, primarily from bottles thrown in the creek through the years.

Thanks to a grant Clearwater obtained from the Dutchess County Arts Council we hired Rachel Collet, a Tivoli based artist, to create a sculpture from the glass. When completed it will be installed in the Mid-Hudson Children's Museum.

Special Thanks to all the volunteers that came out and helped! You can join us for the next Fall Kill clean up – taking place during the 2009 Fall Kill Creek Week July 5-12. Go to www.clearwater.org for more information.

This project is made possible (in part) through a grant from the Dutchess County Arts Council, administrator of public funds through NYSCA's Decentralization Program and through the support of our sponsors: Hudson Valley Federal Credit Union, Mid-Hudson Children's Museum, M.T. Abraham, M.D., F.A.C.S. Facial Plastic, Reconstructive & Laser Surgery, P.L.L.C., Mother Earth's Storehouse, NYS DEC Hudson River Estuary Program, Home Depot, and the City of Poughkeepsie Department of Public Works.

Food and snacks for the day were provided by: Andy's Place, Rossi's Deli, Babycake's Café, Silver Spoon Café, Mahoney's Irish Pub, Hannaford and Stop and Shop.

Watershed Tool Kit

In each issue of the *Navigator*, we'll include information on different tools you can use to protect your watershed and ultimately, your Hudson.

“Adopt-a-Spot” in your Watershed

With global environmental issues usually grabbing the environmental spotlight, the abundant amounts of garbage littering our streets and waterways often gets overlooked. Local community clean-ups are the perfect opportunity to engage your friends and neighbors in caring for the land and water resources in their neighborhoods throughout the Hudson Valley. Since a watershed is the land that drains into a specific body of water and not just the water itself, community groups can assist and encourage residents to “Adopt-a-Spot” in their watershed, whether it's a segment of a creek, a local park or the side of the road.

- Organize the clean ups within a specific time frame (all during one week or over one specific weekend).
- Invite other existing community groups (boy scouts, town volunteer committees, neighborhood associations) to participate.
- Encourage each participating group to organize themselves – let them pick what time works for them and the spot they want to clean up; this fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility.
- If the cleanup will take place on public land (town park, county road, state park, etc) get permission from the appropriate entity. Often Public Works departments will welcome the help and also provide garbage bags, gloves and bag pick up at no cost.
- Make it fun! If possible, provide snacks and refreshments to each group, take pictures and invite the local media.



Volunteers from all walks of life came out to clean up the Fall Kill this spring.



thank you!

