

FIRST ANNUAL PASSAIC RIVER PADDLE RELAY!

The Lower Passaic & Saddle River Alliance celebrated National Watershed Awareness Month on May 14 by hosting teams of canoe and kayak racers on a 12 mile stretch of the Passaic River. Over 60 canoeists and kayakers came out to compete for the bragging rights of winning the **First Annual Passaic River Paddle Relay**.

Participants were able to enjoy a beautiful day canoeing and kayaking on a portion of the Passaic River that many would not normally think to explore. The event's purpose was to reconnect local communities to an ignored and forgotten urban treasure, the Passaic River. We believe we were successful and hopefully we will continue to connect communities to the River for years to come. The tentative date for next year's Relay will be **May 13, 2006**.

Racers launched from the new Essex County Environmental Center in Roseland where there was a Watershed Festival celebrating the future of the Passaic River as a treasured resource for local communities. The finish line was at West Side Park in Paterson where volunteers helped spruce up the park and plant large shade trees.

This event was made successful by the efforts of many dedicated partners: NJDEP Watershed Ambassadors, NJDEP Division of Watershed Mgmt , NJ Community Water Watch, NJ Tree Foundation, League of Women Voters, Friends of Clarks Pond, City of Montclair, Passaic Valley Sewerage Commissioners, Ramapo College, William Paterson University, Bloomfield College, PSE&G, National Park Service, Passaic River Institute, Montclair State University, Sierra Club, Essex County Environmental Affairs, City of Paterson, Newark Youth Corps, Paterson Youth Corps, Lower Passaic Cooperating Parties, Bronx River Alliance, GSE, LLC.



Paddlers at starting line in Roseland, New Jersey.



Mayor Michael A. Pacio, Jr. of Roseland and Essex County Executive Joseph DiVincenzo speaking at the event kick-off.



Paddlers receiving safety talk from Essex County Sierra Club member.



Alliance partners at the finish line. Thanks for a successful event!!