

**Lower Passaic & Saddle River Alliance
Education/Outreach Committee
June 13, 2005**

Present: Tom Pietrykoski, Chair, PVSC; Ashley Pengitore, PVSC; Jerry Willis, NPS; Barbara O'Brien, Evelyn Meier and Ellie Gruber, LWV Ridgewood; Nancy Zimmerman, Friend of Clarks Pond; Paul Russo, FOCP/Third River; Gray Russell, Twp. Monclair.

Meeting called to order at 6:30; minutes approved. Tom will send out to entire WMA list.

Passaic Relay

All agreed it was a huge success, in spite of last minute withdrawal of promised equipment/financial help. Jerry W. arranged for trailers/canoes, ACA insured us, food donations arranged; but mostly from this committee. Cara/Carolyn will be writing a "Legacy Book", which is a requirement of Americorps. Tom sent out thank you notes to donors.

There were 65 paddlers in all; winners were a brokerage firm; second Newark Academy; third, Sierra; details of winning teams, etc will be in Legacy Book, and will be in Fall Newsletter. 15 very large trees were planted (5 Willow Oak, 5 Black Gum, 5 Hawthorne); and they were watered. Good prizes: \$400-\$500 gift card from EMS; Dry Sacks ; Camelback backpack. Jerry suggested we make sure to contact the teams for support of LP&SR Education/Outreach. We need more members. Paul R. suggested we send pictures and articles to those who were invited but didn't attend. Paul took great shots, will email to editor of newsletter.

Should set a date as soon as possible; either May 6 or 13th for the next event. May 6 is Household Hazardous Waste Day for Essex and politicians usually show up; they can be at both events, though.

Jerry presented the subcommittee report "PLUS and DELTA"; listing those things that went well; and those that did not. Long discussion by committee. On the plus side: times were padded, kept us on schedule even with mis-measurement of length of first segment; was actually 3 miles longer. May date was good, officials showed up, food worked out well, lots of water for paddlers.

On the "delta" side: need a coordinator, a person in charge of getting all information. We only met once a month, didn't have ability to talk about promises not kept by vendors/friends. Everything was last minute crisis, and took focus from a very important part: publicity. We had many officials at the opening, but no

papers there, no publicity after the event, or even during the event. This was a big problem. We can't get officials without publicity.

Gray suggested we not call it a Watershed Festival, because it was at the end, only the finishing racers and friends showed up. Could improve two ways: either have a "loop" so that you don't need to divide efforts between two points; or call it a Paddle and Project Wet; combine the service project of Ambassadors with the race. Paul R. suggested more of a Festival; with rides etc. but too hard to combine with a race. Would have to be a separate event. Have to figure out location; this year we combined WMA 4 and 6 so route had to incorporate both; next year just WMA4, which makes it simpler. Nancy Z suggested different location; Jerry feels we should be in Newark, best way to do education/outreach.

All agreed no more vehicular portages; made it too complicated. Again, took attention away from PR efforts. Need event timeline, checklist, more "day of" roles needed to be assigned; maybe should charge participants to defray insurance costs. Could have hats printed up with logo, and give to participants.

ACA was good to work with, but all insurance is expensive; cost was \$1060, including membership. Jerry suggested we look for other funding sources for the Festival/Workshop. Home Depot has environmental grants program, Toms of Maine, or even apply for HEP mini grant; depending on how much money comes in we can plan appropriate event.

Committee agreed that we were sidetracked with last minute crises; can do better next year. Tom will put the committee together in September.

Ellie suggested we not spend all our time on this one event; there is so much going on and one area doesn't know what another is doing. We have to improve communication, reach out to schools, etc. to see what they are doing; that's the way to raise awareness. For example, in Ridgewood the junior high schools science curriculum has the kids in the water sampling; the teacher and principal had no idea anyone was doing anything in the HoHoKus. Jerry agreed but the event itself raises awareness. We need to do both.

Twp of Montclair: Town Engineer asked Gray to find out where to get best information about the conditions of the Passaic downstream from Montclair; printed material would be best. Tom said USGS covers suspended sediments, extended study. Also Passaic River Institute. Paul suggested website www.ourpassaic.org which gives details of restoration.

Friends of Clarks Pond: Nancy Z reported that this years fishing derby had to be cancelled; have their nature preserve tour the 25th. Dredging project stalled again, will be in the Fall.

PVSC: Tom reported he and Ashley helped with the PRI Ramble at the Rahway River last weekend; was a success. Ashley ran a water chemistry table, while Tom ran a benthic macroinvertebrate table

Meeting adjourned at 8:30PM

Respectfully submitted,

Ellie Gruber