NEW LIFE FOR THE LOWER PASSAIC RIVER

THE URBAN WATERS FEDERAL PARTNERSHIP

ABOUT THE URBAN WATERS FEDERAL PARTNERSHIP

The Passaic River is one of **NUMBER** locations selected for help from the nation's new Urban Waters Federal Partnership. This partnership will reconnect urban communities, particularly those that are overburdened or economically distressed, with their waterways by improving coordination among federal agencies and collaborating with community-led revitalization efforts to improve our Nation's water systems and promote their economic, environmental and social benefits. Specifically, the Urban Waters Federal Partnership will:

- Break down federal program silos to promote more efficient and effective use of federal resources through better coordination and targeting of federal investments.
- Recognize and build on local efforts and leadership, by engaging and serving community partners.
- Work with local officials and effective community-based organizations to leverage area resources and stimulate local economies to create local jobs.
- Learn from early and visible victories to fuel long-term action.

Led by these federal agencies and coordinated by the White House Domestic Policy Council, the Urban Waters Federal Partnership closely aligns with and advances the work of the White House's place-based efforts, including the **Partnership for Sustainable Communities**, to revitalize communities, create jobs and improve the quality of life in cities and towns across the nation. The Urban Waters Federal Partnership also advances the work of the **America's Great Outdoors** Initiative (http://americasgreatoutdoors.gov/).

For more information, visit www.urbanwaters.gov

ABOUT THE PASSAIC RIVER PARTNERSHIP

The Lower Passaic River Urban Waters Federal Partnership strives to support watershed revitalization through sediment cleanups, water quality improvements, ecological restoration, economic development, environmental education and an increase in recreation and navigation opportunities. The Federal partner agencies, led by EPA and USACE, will work with the City of Newark, other interested municipalities, State of New Jersey agencies (including NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP)), Ironbound Community Corporation (ICC) and other local non-governmental organizations.

WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW

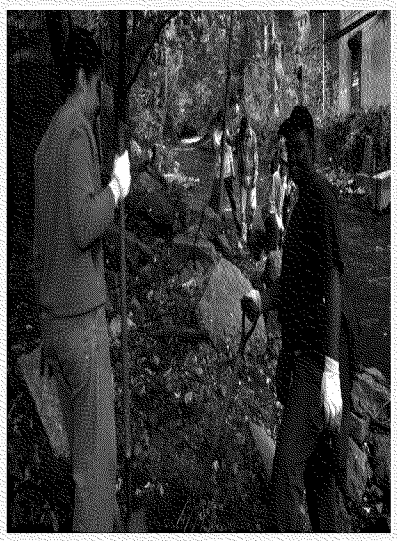
In an effort to improve water quality, make public access safe, and restore the watershed's ecosystem, here are some federal and/or local projects the Partnership is currently engaged in:

Sediment Cleanup – Under Superfund and the Water Resources Development Act, EPA, USACE, NOAA, USFWS, NJDOT and NJDEP formed a partnership to produce a comprehensive cleanup and restoration study of the river. This study is ongoing. The first phase of cleanup was recently completed in Newark, where 40,000 cubic yards of the most concentrated inventory of dioxin-contaminated sediment were dredged, processed and disposed of. Under EPA's Superfund Job Training Initiative (SuperJTI), 15 Newark residents were trained to do hazardous waste cleanups and employed on site.

Ecological Restoration Planning – Ecological restoration planning efforts for the river and its tributaries are ongoing and have focused on identifying opportunities to restore valuable habitat including wetlands, riparian shorelines, fish and benthic communities and tributary connections, while improving water quality and public access. The goal is to develop a plan that integrates agencies' and stakeholders' visions for a restored ecosystem.

Public Participation – A Community Advisory Group (CAG), established 3 years ago, meets monthly and is an important resource for soliciting feedback and enhancing the actions of individual CAG members and the group as a whole. The CAG enabled several improvements to the first sediment cleanup, including the use of SuperJTI.

Public Access/Education – ICC is an Urban Waters grant recipient. ICC is creating plans for free River Tours and Walkshops to introduce Newark residents and others to the history and ecosystem; programming on the river's edge to celebrate, learn about and act to improve the river and a *Back to the River* brochure that depicts the history and current state. The City of Newark, County of Essex and Trust for Public Land opened Newark's first segment of public riverfront park with over 12 acres of athletic



ABOUT THE COMMUNITY AND THE LOWER PASSAIC RIVER

The Lower Passaic River, a 17-mile, tidal portion of the river in northeast New Jersey, flows from Dundee Dam to Newark Bay through 13 municipalities. A center of the industrial revolution - the river has been subject to years of industrial, stormwater and CSO discharges contaminating the sediments with dioxin, PCBs, mercury, DDT, pesticides and heavy metals. The river also has a lack of public access points, fish and shellfish consumption advisories and a large amount of debris. The communities have suffered a loss of use and economic viability. Operating and abandoned industrial facilities, an incinerator, landfill and state and federal contaminated sites dot the landscape while a severe lack of open space persists. The area is surrounded by railroad tracks, major highways, ports, transit hubs and an airport. The Ironbound section of the Newark, a highly industrialized and densely populated area, has suffered the longest history of impacts.

fields, playgrounds and walking paths. Newark Riverfront Revival, an initiative of the City of Newark Planning Office, organizes boat and walking tours, hosts outreach events and organizes design education programs for youth, including staging a City Hall exhibition.

WHAT'S NEXT

More Sediment Cleanup – Design plans for dredging the top 2 feet of contaminated sediment in Lyndhurst with capping the remaining sediment are expected to be completed in Spring 2013 with work starting in the summer. EPA will also release cleanup plans in the spring for the lower 8-miles of the river for public comment.

More Ecological Restoration Planning & Implementation - As the consensus restoration plan is completed and remedial decisions are made, restoration activities could be advanced and implemented by our governmental partners, stakeholders or Potentially Responsible Parties. In parallel, USACE will continue its Feasibility Study in order to obtain construction authorization for future restoration actions within the watershed that would bring back critical ecological and economic resources to the region.

More Public Participation – The CAG will continue meeting monthly to provide feedback on design plans for the Lyndhurst sediment cleanup, the proposal for the lower 8-mile cleanup and restoration plans. The CAG will also provide the venue for listening to the local communities, so that the bottom up approach of working with the community can be realized.

More Public Access/Education – In 2013, ICC will host 2 Walkshops in the spring, 3 boat tours in the summer, RiverDay 2013 and 2 seminars about the river. ICC will also develop a *Back to the River* map of access points to be included in the brochure that's currently being developed. The City of Newark will open a second riverfront park segment, containing a walking and biking trail, floating boat dock, riverfront boardwalk, and other settings for relaxation, picnics, exercise and environmental education. In addition, a 3-D computer simulated flyover of the river including existing conditions and specific restoration opportunities will be available on www.ourpassaic.org for stakeholders to interact with and learn about the future collective vision for the Lower Passaic River.

THE URBAN WATERS FEDERAL PARTNERSHIP

The partnership includes: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Department of the Army (Army Corps of Engineers), U.S. Department of Commerce (Economic Development Administration and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration), Corporation for National and Community Service, U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Energy, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences), U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, U.S. Department of the Interior and U.S. Department of Transportation

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