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July 28, 2013

To the Editor:

The Passaic River has a toxic legacy that is being addressed by state and federal environmental agencies. Urban rivers, once undervalued and now considered major assets to communities, are a priority for the Environmental Protection Agency.

The good news is that we are making significant progress in cleaning up the Passaic. This year, the E.P.A. will propose a plan to clean up the most contaminated lower eight miles of the river. About 40,000 cubic yards of dioxin-laden soil was removed last year, and this summer, work will begin to remove another 20,000 cubic yards of highly contaminated mud from the river in Lyndhurst, N.J.

In the meantime, the study of the entire 17 miles between Newark Bay and the Dundee Dam continues. That's progress worth celebrating for Newark and all communities along the Passaic.

JUDITH A. ENCK
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