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## NJCCC TAKES TO THE PASSAIC RIVER TO OBSERVE TRASH COLLECTION

It is no secret that the Lower Passaic River, stretching from the Newark Bay up through the Dundee Dam in Paterson, suffers from ongoing litter. The Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission (PVSC) – charged with cleaning the river as much as possible – operates an aggressive River Restoration Program to rake the top of the river of debris.

Award-winning filmmaker Martin Fiedler, whose NJCCC documentary "The Other 47%" was featured in the Asbury Park Film Festival on March 30, joined the PVSC workers to learn more about their anti-littering effort and check out all the technology involved.

The River Restoration Program comprises three elements: skimmer vessels that remove floatables, volunteer shoreline clean-ups and community-requested clean-ups.

PVSC pioneered its River Restoration Program in 1998, when it commissioned its first skimmer vessel, a 50-foot TrashCat, the "SV Newark Bay."

PVSC has since removed more than 13,000 tons of debris from more than 100 miles of area waterways and sponsored nearly 1,200 individual cleanups along area shorelines.

Although the Passaic River is the cleanest it has been in decades, debris continues to wash in with the tide every day.

Last year, PVSC further invested in the program, purchasing a new, state-of-the-art, Aquarius System Trash Hunter Skimmer Vessel. The 50-foot long, 13-foot wide, 27,500-pound vessel was launched into Newark Bay in the spring of 2018.

The innovative vessel features twin catamaran hulls and a water jet propulsion system.



Martin Fiedler, an award-winning videographer for the NJCCC, recently visited the Lower Passaic River for a documentary on the Visual Litter Survey, to be released next year. Here is a photo Fiedler took of the PVSC's skimmer vessel, collecting debris from the river's surface.

"This new Skimmer Vessel is a big investment by PVSC to reclaim our waterways," said PVSC Chairman Thomas Tucci Jr. "It is helping us pull even more debris out of the water as we continue to improve the health of the environment and make our waterways more inviting and appealing for everyone."

The vessel travels up and down the Lower Passaic collecting debris and trash using a conveyor belt on the front of the vessel. The materials travel up the conveyor and are then collected and stored on board until offloaded at

a dock in North Arlington.

The skimmer collects an average of 40,000 pounds of trash per month. Anything from bottles, cans, shoes, trees stumps, clothing and furniture is plucked from the river. The job never ends; each new tide brings in new trash.

Both PVSC and the NJCCC have a message for the public: Stop using the Passaic as a trash can. The key is to continue to educate children before they learn bad habits, a leading mission of the NJCCC.