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PVSC, NJDEP, and NJDOC Partner on Extensive Shoreline Cleanup

Newark, NJ – Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission's (PVSC) Executive Director Wayne J. Forrest announced that PVSC partnered today with the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) and the NJ Department of Corrections (NJDOC) for an extensive cleanup of the waterfront at Liberty State Park, Jersey City.

The partnership is part of NJDEP Clean Shores, which is a statewide program that removes debris from tidal shorelines with the use of NJDOC inmate labor. PVSC initially partnered with the Program in 2003, providing a crew from their River Restoration Program to assist a NJDOC crew of 10 inmates. Debris typically includes large timbers and dilapidated docks, which require crews to use heavy machinery including a front end loader and chain saws. On average crews fill between two to three 30-yard containers each day, which are provided by the PVSC.

"A project of this magnitude is made possible by building strong partnerships and the PVSC is pleased to continue to work with the NJDEP and the NJDOC, demonstrating the tremendous improvements that can be made to our environment when departments of the State Government work together," explained PVSC Executive Director Wayne J. Forrest. "This cleanup will create new wildlife habitat in this sensitive ecosystem, along with providing a safer navigation channel for ships in the harbor," said Forrest.

Since its inception in 1989, NJDEP Clean Shores has removed over 130 million pounds of debris covering over 2,400 miles of New Jersey's shorelines. In 2010 alone, the PVSC River Restoration Program removed over 750,000 pounds of debris from the shorelines of Bayonne, Jersey City and Elizabeth in partnership with Clean Shores.

"The Clean Shores Program is a valuable asset in our effort to keep New Jersey's beaches and shorelines clean," said John Plonski, NJDEP Assistant Commissioner for Water Resources Management. "Our partnership with PVSC's River Restoration Program helps us remove hundreds of thousands of pounds of debris from urban shorelines that could eventually impact recreational beaches. We appreciate PVSC's assistance in cleaning the shoreline at Liberty State Park and at other northern New Jersey waterfronts," said Plonski.

"The New Jersey Department of Corrections is proud to be part of such a worthwhile collaborative effort. The Clean Shores Program provides state-sentenced offenders with an opportunity to give back to our communities in a tangible way, while also improving our environment," said NJDOC Commissioner Gary M. Lanigan. "Together, the PVSC, and the NJDEP and NJDOC are making a positive difference in New Jersey," said Lanigan.

"Partnering with the Clean Shores Program is another way that the PVSC continues to carry out our mission of preserving and protecting our local waterways," said PVSC Commissioner Kenneth J. Lucianin. "This partnership complements our existing cleanup efforts, including the deployment of our skimmer vessels, the sponsorship of volunteer cleanups and our educational outreach efforts in local schools," said Lucianin.

In order to protect and preserve local streams and rivers from water pollution, the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission operates one of the country's oldest and largest treatment plants for the wastewaters of northern New Jersey, serving over 1.4 million people in five counties. With many expansions and recent upgrading to secondary treatment, the facility has been striving, since its creation in 1902 and its initial operation in 1924, to improve local water quality in accordance with federal and state water quality standards. Since the creation of the PVSC's River Restoration Program in 1998, which is charged with preserving and protecting over 100 miles of area waterways, the PVSC has removed over 8,000 tons of debris from the Newark Bay, the Passaic River and its tributaries, and sponsored over 700 individual clean-ups along shorelines and in communities, along with educating over 180,000 students on how they can help protect the Passaic River and our environment.

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