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PVSC Partners with Paterson's Alexander Hamilton Academy Elementary School on Great Falls Cleanup

PATERSON, NJ – The Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission's (PVSC) Executive Director Wayne J. Forrest announced today that the PVSC River Restoration Department joined 6th grade student volunteers from Paterson's Alexander Hamilton Academy in a cleanup along the shorelines of the Great Falls in Paterson.

The students, along with personnel from the PVSC River Restoration Program, will continue their work throughout most of the morning to remove fallen trees, litter and other debris that accumulated along the shoreline as a result of last week's heavy rains. PVSC personnel utilized specialized equipment to remove larger debris from the waterway while students walked the shoreline to remove litter and other debris.

"Engaging children in hands-on service projects like you see here today helps reinforce the important lessons they learn in the classroom," explained Forrest. "It is critical to teach our children the importance of engaging in the stewardship of our environment as they are the future leaders within our communities," said Forrest.

According to Forrest, in order to supplement the work done in the classroom through PVSC's Educational Outreach Program, which introduces students to steps they can take to help protect their local waterways, the PVSC also provides opportunities for students to organize their own stream bank cleanups. This enables the students to apply what they learned in class to their own communities. Building on this service learning model, the PVSC partnered with local schools to organize over 50 individual cleanups so far this year.

"The Great Falls are not only an important symbol representing the Paterson community, but also a significant piece of our Nation's history," said PVSC Commissioner Kenneth J. Lucianin. "The continued partnership between the PVSC and Alexander Hamilton Academy ensures that this unique historic site will be enjoyed by future generations," said Lucianin.

PVSC had a larger scale cleanup scheduled for today involving the diversion of the entire flow of the falls through an adjacent hydroelectric plant, allowing PVSC personnel to remove debris accumulated at the top of the falls. Heavy rains from last week forced crews to reschedule this cleanup until a later date when the river recedes.

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. 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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