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PVSC Leads Effort to Clean Passaic River During Great Falls Diversion

PATERSON, NJ – The Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission's (PVSC) Executive Director Wayne J. Forrest announced today that the PVSC River Restoration Department joined student volunteers from the New Jersey Youth Corps (NJYC) in a cleanup on top of the Great Falls in Paterson as the flow of water typically cascading over the seventy-seven foot waterfall was diverted.

The clean-up effort was made possible by diverting the flow of the Passaic River through an adjacent hydroelectric plant owned by Paterson and operated by Algonquin Power, LTD. The students, along with personnel from the PVSC River Restoration Program, will continue their work throughout most of the day to remove fallen trees, litter and other debris that accumulated along the shores and in the rocks above the falls. This diversion is part of PVSC's long-term focus and commitment to the Passaic River in Paterson. This is the seventh clean-up at the Great Falls co-sponsored by the PVSC this spring alone.

"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 Executive Director Wayne J. Forrest. "The continued partnership between the PVSC and the Paterson community ensures that this unique historic site will be enjoyed by future generations," said Forrest.

NJ Youth Corps is one of the largest youth service and conservation corps in the United States. Guided by staff who serve as mentors and role models, teams of youth called "crews" carry out a wide range of service projects. Many of these projects include service at the Great Falls in Paterson in which the NJYC of Paterson and other Youth Corps throughout New Jersey have volunteered their efforts in clean-up, restoration and beautification projects.

"Students from the New Jersey Youth Corps of Paterson are participating in various clean-up projects this year at Paterson's Great Falls in which they work alongside the PVSC in helping to restore water-flow by eliminating waste along the river's edge," explained Susan Ronga, NJYC Program Coordinator. "Students have received valuable lessons in water treatment and waste elimination as well as the significance of these historic falls and keeping the City of Paterson waste free for everyone," said Ronga.

"PVSC understands the importance of partnering with local groups like the New Jersey Youth Corps so together we can work towards maintaining a cleaner Passaic River and a healthier environment," said PVSC Commissioner Kenneth J. Lucianin. "The dedicated students you see here today represent our future leaders and stewards of our waterways and I applaud them on their efforts," 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. 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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