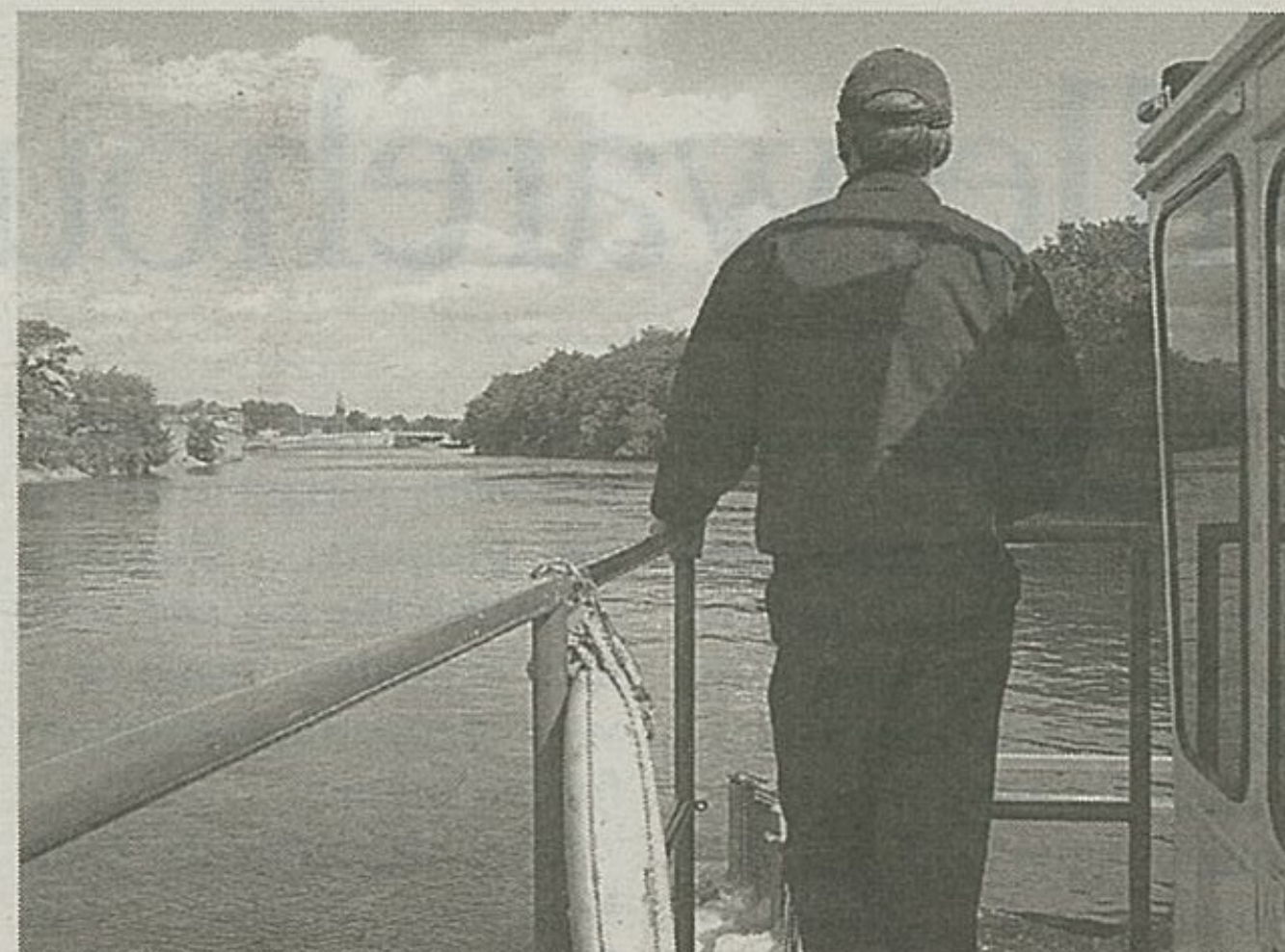


# Crews 'pave' way for Passaic Park project

By S.T. Walker  
*The Observer*

**NORTH ARLINGTON** — A skimmer crew removed debris from the borough portion of the Passaic River last week in the opening phases of a clean-up plan to prepare the River Road area for the future "Passaic River Greenway Park."

Set to break ground on Oct. 14, the park restoration will focus on turning



Photos by Adam Anik

the overgrown waterfront area into a passive recreation area with a gazebo.

"So we are going to green it up, add some benches, clean up the riverbank and open up the view of the river to the people," said Borough Administrator Robert Landolfi. "It's taken us several years because New Jersey Green Acres participated in the purchase of the land, and that didn't happen overnight."

Landolfi said the borough had to amass grant money, Bergen Open Space Preservation funds to acquire a piece of land adjacent to an existing junkyard.

Down the river from Mary Rusignola Park, he said the expansion of the area will extend along a 300-ft by 75-ft plot of land along the water. The renovation is expected to be completed by the end of November.

"Our intent is to expand the

park and clean the area, environmental efforts are being made to clean up the river to make it better," Landolfi said. "It's much better now than it (the river) was 10 years ago."

Meanwhile, last week workers from the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission manned heavy equipment and a specially equipped pontoon boat with a skimmer to clear away debris from North Arlington portion of the river.

Robert DeVita, manager of the river restoration department of the PVSC said eight workers removed about four dump trucks full of wood and foliage from the river during the three-day project.

Work crews have skimmed away debris from the cluttered waterway for the last few weeks during high tide in areas like neighboring Nutley and

Top of this page and next, crew of the 50-foot boat, Newark Bay, patrol this section of the tree-lined Passaic River.

Middle photo, facing page, Equipment Operator Keith Stewart of Kearny trims branches in preparation of landscape crews arrival for the finishing touches on the newly reclaimed riverbank park.

Bottom photo, facing page, crew fells an invasive tree.

Lyndhurst.

DeVita said the PVSC works with local municipalities along the Passaic River removing all the brush and the "junk trees that collect upon its banks."

Using two pontoon boats, the PVSC deploys a 50-foot boat that one takes a run up through Kearny from Newark and to the Route 7 bridge and a 38-foot skimmer boat in Rutherford that covers the area above the bridge.

However, he said his crew will be responsible for clearing the trees and digging up the asphalt in preparation for the planned construction of the park.

"As part of our charter, we are responsible for protecting the river. This is just an extension of what we do to protect the river, it's a proactive approach to cleaning," DeVita said.





Photos by Adam Anik

