

CREW CHOPS DOCK



Photos by Anthony Aiello

By Celeste Regal
Observer Editor

KEARNY – Chris Brooks, multimedia program coordinator at the Passaic Valley Sewage Commission, and the rest of the Passaic Valley River Restoration crew is one step closer to having the annual Passaic Valley Sewage Commission Novice Regatta that the Commission will sponsor in May 2009.

The first part of the preliminary clean up, Phase 1 of the project, was to remove

the abandoned dock located behind the Kearny Crew House off of Passaic Avenue and the Belleville Turnpike.

“This is really the first part of our whole operation. The dock has been in the water for over 20 years and it disconnected itself from the dock system down there about seven years ago,” Brooks said. “The big fear was what kind of damage could this big dock do.”

The dock, which weighs over 35,000 pounds, was tied off at the side of the bulkhead and no one knew what to do with it.

It took a crew of five men from the Passaic Valley River Restoration team two days – Aug. 28 and 29. The first day the crane lifted the dock into position and the next day it was cut into three sections approximately 10,000 + pounds each.

The crew consisted of Anthony Aiello (Brook’s assistant and photographer) and workers Tom Scorsone (foreman), George Krusznif, Keith Stewart, and Vince Fascella.

The crew is a specialized one consisting of arborists, crane operators and high-

end mechanics. Stewart used a chain saw to cut the dock into pieces. Scorsone was the crane operator and Krusznif operated the backhoe to get the pieces on to dry land. Fascella is the heavy equipment operator.

“What we got was guys who really knew what they were doing to pull it out and latch it onto a backhoe and put it right into a container,” Brooks said.

The containers then went to a landfill to

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“We couldn’t grind it up or anything like that. We didn’t have the ability to do that because it still had a lot of floatation in it– Styrofoam and old metal bolts,” he said. “So to grind it we would have to dismantle it so it goes to a landfill. You have to look at the lesser of two evils.”

Since the dock was an eyesore that could have damaged public property or someone’s boat down river, disposing of the dock at a landfill was the best bet since there was no alternative, Brooks said.

Phase two will be to place the movable docks along the Frank Vincent Marina on Passaic Avenue, where the widest part of the river is, for the upcoming crew season. The docks

allow a gangway where the crew teams can launch their boats at that location so that more schools could be invited to race. They could be floated up the river from the Newark facility to the Marina during racing season.

The Commission will also sponsor the canoe race in Kearny next July.

“The dock system will be very valuable to use for the various activities,” Brooks said.



BEFORE AND AFTER – The overground dock behind the crew house off of Passaic Avenue and Belleville Turnpike, above, has been dislodged for the last seven years. At right, the underside of the rotting, moss covered dock.

Phase 3 will be the actual Novice Regatta.

“That’ll be the grand firecracker. If we can pull off the race and everything

is successful – with all the kids laughing and having fun, since that’s really the goal of our program – to bring back recreation in a

big way,” he said. “It just that everybody enjoys the river and doesn’t see it as a hopeless mess.”

