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Third-Annual Delaware River Clean Up Honored with NJCCC's "Rise to the Challenge" Award

TRENTON – November XX, 2020 – The opportunity to spend time outdoors has been a popular way for people to combat fatigue since the start of the pandemic. Over the summer, the Delaware River saw a record number of visitors spend time in its waters and on its banks.

Unfortunately, with an increased amount of people interested in outdoor activities, there has also been an increase in the amount of litter left behind, including discarded masks and gloves.

That's why conducting the Third-Annual Delaware River Clean Up on Sept. 19 was more important than ever this year.

"As almost everyone needs a little extra love and kindness during this pandemic, so does our beautiful Delaware River," explained Stephanie Fox, founding member and naturalist at Bull's Island State Park in Stockton. "Visitation was off the charts this summer, and so was the amount of trash along the river bank."

The New Jersey Clean Communities Council (NJCCC) created an awards program to honor those who stepped up to help greatly limit the spread of COVID-19 litter through it's "Rise to the Challenge Awards."

The third-annual clean up has been named a winner, as 120 volunteers collected more than 100 bags of trash and more than 20 tires. Larger debris, such as scrap metal and wood, were also collected.

Splitting the clean up into different groups - from fraternities to local Boy Scouts - with staggered arrival times allowed the organization to follow all federal safety guidelines. Each group was assigned a tract to maintain and transportation was provided by LINK, Hunterdon County's bus transportation.

For the past two years, this coalition of local governments agencies, state government agencies and non-profit associations have joined efforts in sponsoring the Delaware River Cleanup. The organizing committee of this event is staffed by leaders of the Clean Communities programs in Hunterdon County, Delaware Township, West Amwell Township and Stockton Borough, as well

as representatives from the New Jersey Park Service, the Pennsylvania Park Service and the Delaware River Greenway Partnership.

“The turnout for our cleanup this year was wonderful and we were excited to see such a diverse group of volunteers ready to help out their communities,” said Fox, adding that there are hopes to expand the cleanup next year.

The NJCCC considers the Delaware River Clean Up as a great example of the work being done around New Jersey to address litter during the lingering pandemic.

“With such a challenging year and strict guidelines to follow, I applaud the organizing team and local clean communities programs for making the third-annual clean up such a success this year,” said NJCCC Executive Director Sandy Huber. “This shows that when we work together and support one another, anything is possible.”

Learn more about the NJCCC at NJClean.org.

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