

# BioBlitz sends scientists up and down Saw Mill River collecting data

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PLEASANTVILLE—More

than 50 scientists fanned out along the course of the Saw Mill River Friday and Saturday for a census of the water-

shed's biodiversity.

Groundwork Hudson Valley's 2009 BioBlitz was a 24-hour effort to document all

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The BioBlitz began on Friday with a ceremony at the Science Barge at the Yonkers waterfront, where scientists seined the river's mouth. On Saturday scientists took to the rest of the county, surveying locations like the Pine Cliff and the Turner Swamp Preserve in New Castle.

The group also held events all day Saturday at Pace University, including nature walks of the campus, lectures and events for children. About 100 people had attended the Pace events by mid-afternoon, Mitroff said.

The group's next step is to use the data collected to determine which parts of the Saw Mill River are in trouble.

"We're going to start looking at where we don't have enough buffers around the river," she said.



Anne Megaro of Groundwork Hudson Valley, left, points out invasive shrubs and vines during a nature walk at Pace University in Pleasantville on Saturday. With Anne was David Bedell of Sleepy Hollow, (kneeling), Deb Maier of Hastings-on-Hudson, standing at left, and Joe and Linda Hillesum of Pleasantville.

Seth Harrison/  
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the plants and animals that make their homes around the river. The group's goal is to create a species inventory for the Saw Mill River that can be used by public officials and developers when they make decisions to protect or develop land near the waterway.

The BioBlitz was the first time a group had tried that on the Saw Mill River. Ann-Marie Mitroff, Groundwork Hudson Valley's river pro-

grams director, said that a census is important so that public officials can make informed decisions.

"People think of the Saw Mill River as a parkway, but it's not just a parkway. It actually has a lot of diversity," said Mitroff, whose group recruited about a dozen scientist who will mostly count beetles. "Most people don't think the beetle is very exciting, but it's important in our watershed."

The group will issue reports that it will share with all the municipalities that sit along the 20-mile river, which stretches from its headwaters at a 1.75-acre pond in New Castle to the Yonkers waterfront.

Mitroff said the purpose of the reports is not to freeze development but to help planners and developers choose which parts of a property should be built and which should be left undeveloped.

The group will also post its findings on the Saw Mill River Coalition's Web site [www.sawmillrivercoalition.org](http://www.sawmillrivercoalition.org).

A healthy Saw Mill River is important for people who live around it, Mitroff said.

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