

Volunteers Give Saw Mill A Thorough Spring Cleaning



The Hudson Valley Bank clean-up crew include, from left, Joel and Rose Maldonado, Devon Plunkett, Bridget and Lindsay Carden, and Matthew Maldonado.



Girl Scout Troop 2650 lending a hand during the clean-up.

Photos by Donna Davis

Trash didn't stand a chance when 100 volunteers went to town on a glorious, sunny Saturday, April 26, for the fifth annual Great Saw Mill River Cleanup. By the end of the day, volunteers had collected three tons of trash – more than 182 bags worth – including a shopping cart, a football helmet, a giant roll of chain link fencing, and enough parts to just about build an entire car.

Hosted by Groundwork Hudson Valley, the event included four Yonkers sites on the Saw Mill: the daylighted Van der Donck Park, Ann Street, Hearst Street and Walsh Road and War Memorial Field. Farther north on the river, the cleanup tackled two more sites, scouted in advance for heavy trash buildup: Woodlands Lake in Irvington and South County Trailway between Ardsley and Elmsford.

Spread between the various locations were students from Lincoln and Gorton high schools in Yonkers; members of Yonkers Brownie Troop 2650; employees from Hudson Valley Bank; the Yonkers Bike Club; students from Dobbs Ferry, Valhalla and Ardsley high schools; and members of the Hudson River and Beyond Kayaking Club, who fished for garbage from their kayaks.

Yonkers Bike Club member Norma Silva

Guzman reported that, in addition to 32 bags of litter, her group collected eight tires, one suitcase, a concrete slab, three rusty paint cans, and a large garbage can at Hearst Street.

“On the bright side, we saw a gander laying on her nest and saw her get up and turn the eggs over and lay down again. Awesome!” she said. “Everyone enjoyed themselves.”

Ardsley biology teacher Dan Barnett, working at the Woodlands Lake site, added: “The park and lake were so much cleaner than when we started with this clean-up five years ago. This effort is clearly paying off.”

“The Great Saw Mill River Cleanup is a collective effort that succeeds only when community, business and government pull together,” said Ann-Marie Mitroff, who organizes the Groundwork event every year. “The Yonkers Department of Public Works guys were amazing, hauling bags and large debris from all of these sites throughout the day. And the trail maintenance crew of Westchester County Parks did a great job, too, carrying away tons of trash.

“Also, our friends at Hudson Valley Bank sponsored the event, Yonkers' Shop Rite provided the water, and Yonkers Costco supplied the healthy snacks,” concluded Mitroff.