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Pulling a mattress from Muddy Run during the March 7 clean-up, from left: Michael Kopie, Rick Adams, and Wayne Tarapilli of the Tri County Sportsmen Motorcycle Club

There was More than Mud in Muddy Run

NORMA — Over 50 volunteers came out to lend a hand to the Muddy Run stream clean-up on Gershal Avenue in this Pittsgrove Township community outside of Rosenhayn in Cumberland County.

The clean up was planned by Beverly Pflaumer, the current N.J. AmeriCorps Watershed Ambassador, and by Mike Bradway from the Tri County Sportsmen Motorcycle Club. The Cumberland County Improvement Authority supplied the bags, gloves, and a 30-cubic yard dumpster.

Bradway originally found the area while he was completing freshwater mussel surveys.

“It could be an enjoyable area to fish and picnic,” he says, “but it is being abused by dumpers.”

The Tri County Motorcycle Club routinely does charitable things for the local community in Port Elizabeth and decided they could branch out beyond their normal boundaries to do something important for the local watershed.

The N.J. Watershed Ambassador Program is hosted by the N.J. Department of Environmental Protection Division of Watershed Management. The purpose of the program is to improve water quality by exploring the relationships between people and the environment, nurturing community-based environmental activities and empowering residents to make responsible and informed decisions about their watershed.

“That is exactly what was done today,” says Pflaumer, ambassador for Cumberland, Salem and parts of Gloucester County, who attempts to make an impact on students and adults throughout the area by teaching about all of the pollution that affects the environment, and what they can do to help.

A group of students from St. Michael the Archangel School in Clayton in Gloucester County came to lend a hand after learning about the different kinds of pollution that can end up in the local waterways and the macroinvertebrates that live in the water.

“It’s great to see all of these volunteers give up their Saturday to come out to help clean up the environment,” Pflaumer says. “It was especially rewarding to see some of the students I had talked to about the pollution, come out to lend a hand.”

She adds that she couldn’t even begin to thank everyone enough. “The members of the Tri County Sportsmen Motorcycle Club did an amazing job getting everything out—thank you for donating your time, talents, and muscle.

“I want to thank the students and teachers from St. Michael the Archangel School.—You were wonderful, I am very happy to know that when I talked, you listened. Keep up the great work.”

Pflaumer also thanks her fellow Watershed Ambassadors, Alexandra Marcus and Jennifer Wolfe for coming to help.

Lisa Fagan of the Vineland High School SHAPE Club was also thanked for keeping “everyone motivated to get everything out of the water.”

Road Dog Photography was thanked for helping to document the effort through photos; and Dennis DeMatte and Craig Truitt of the Improvement Authority were thanked for “supplying everything.”

And, Pflaumer adds: “A huge thank you for everyone else that volunteered to clean up and help make this a beautiful place to visit and enjoy.”

She deemed the clean up an overall success, with the big dumpster almost completely filled up with junk and trash.

The group of volunteers pulled out and picked up tons of tires, mattresses, car parts, and even the back end of a car out of the stream and from the surrounding area, Bradway says.

“The most disturbing thing to find,” says Bradway, “was the oil that was, thankfully, still in containers, but would have eventually broken and spilled into the stream.”

Pflaumer and Bradway are hoping to promote the communities’ interest in the local watershed, the environment, and the watershed program.

“I want to help preserve the water and the environment we have and keep it safe for everyone else for generations to come,” says Pflaumer, adding:
“If everyone pitched in a little to keep it clean, we could preserve the natural resources that we have.”

For more information about the watershed program or upcoming clean ups contact Beverly Pflaumer at 825-3700 ext. 4010 or by email at bev_p_wma17@yahoo.com
www.state.nj.us/dep/watershedmgt/

The Cumberland County Reminder

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