

The Great NEPA Clean-Up

Earth Week is April 18-25

By Natalie Gelb Solfanelli

For many years, anthracite was extracted from the earth with little regard to the consequences of depleting those resources or polluting the environment.

Fortunately, the culture is changing and the people are beginning to recognize the value of our natural resources. Earth Week, April 18-25, is going to see active engagement throughout the Lackawanna Heritage Valley. The Northeastern Pennsylvania Conservation Alliance and LHVA are sponsoring The Great NEPA Clean-Up to help local groups and organizations coordinate and promote their clean-ups events schedule.

The Great NEPA Clean-Up is part of the Great American Clean-Up that runs March 1-31. Members of The Great NEPA Clean-Up will join together to clean up trash and debris from neighborhoods and communities, roads, streams and rivers, parks and forests, and businesses.

Many organizations are welcoming spring with neighborhood clean-ups, and special “green” events. Schools have created projects focusing on the importance of individual and collective responsibility for protecting the environment.

Since the Conservation Alliance and LHVA put out the call for event registration, a diversity of individuals and organizations have responded with information about activities that have been scheduled.

On Saturday, April 25, LHVA will conduct a clean-up of the CNJ Trail between Elm Street and 7th Avenue in Scranton from 8 a.m. to Noon. The Lackawanna River Corridor Association (LRCA) will conduct a levee and river bank clean-up in Scranton.

The University of Scranton has organized a variety of daily events for Earth Week as part of its commitment to social justice and civic engagement, including a Student Government Street Sweep, on April 19, a tour of “green” business in Scranton on April 20, an Earth Day fair on April 21, and a lecture by Paul Rogat Loeb, author of “Sour of a Citizen,” on April 22.

Local business woman, Maureen Duffy of Duffy Accessories, is heading a group of Scranton businesses who will clean up the blocks near their establishments. The McCann School of Business in Dickson City is hosting a recycling program, and groups from Standing Stone Township in Bradford County, Promised Land State Park, Lacawac Sanctuary, Forest City, Hazleton, Dalton, Clarks Summit and Lackawanna State Parks have plans for everything from roadside cleanups to seedling plantings.

It is heartening to learn that citizens are taking individual responsibility for making that happen. Everyone can help! The members of the Conservation Alliance offer the following recommendations to encourage involvement:

1. Plan an event. Determine who is involved, where and when the clean-up will be held. Notify LHVA.
2. Talk to everyone you know and encourage them to get involved with a clean-up event during Earth Week (April 18-25).

Reach out to scout troops, civic and service organizations, local churches, park and cemetery associations, schools and youth groups, area businesses, hunting and fishing clubs, conservation organizations, sport teams, and especially town leaders. The Northeastern Pennsylvania Conservation Alliance is an umbrella partnership of more than 80 regional environmental groups that meet quarterly to share ideas and to develop projects that preserve and enhance the natural resources of the region. The Lackawanna Heritage Valley Authority (LHVA) works with heritage attractions, government, civic and educational organizations in the region. It encourages collaboration and provides funding for projects that conserve, preserve, and educate the public about the region's historic, cultural, economic and natural resources.

LHVA facilitates the NEPA Conservation Alliance in partnership with the Lackawanna County Conservation District. For more information about The Great NEPA Clean-Up, contact Lindsey Ritchey, OSM/VISTA at the Lackawanna Heritage Valley Authority, at LRitchey@LHVA.org or (570) 963-6730 ext. 8212.

All indications are that Earth Week and The Great NEPA Clean-Up will become another proud tradition to celebrate as part of the story of the Lackawanna Heritage Valley.

Natalie Gelb Solfanelli is executive director of the Lackawanna Heritage Valley Authority. E-mail her at nsolfanelli@LHVA.org.