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To: Editor Times of Trenton

From: Mary Allessio Leck, Friends for the Abbott Marshlands

[leck@rider.edu](mailto:leck@rider.edu)

732-821-8310

Re: Thanks to Trash Pickup Volunteers

On behalf of the Friends for the Abbott Marshlands, a sincere thank you to the many volunteers who helped with very successful trash pickups on November 19th and on April 25th. These were coordinated by Katie Harrison, AmeriCorps Ambassador – Watershed Area 20. While the focus area was Roebling Park, some helped at the Trenton Boat Launch on Lamberton Road. Volunteers included students (Rider University, TCNJ, and Bordentown and Burlington High Schools), girl scouts, folks for whom it was their first trash pickup at the marsh and others who’ve been at every pick up since they were first organized by D&R Greenway Land Trust in 1997. Thanks, too, to those who pick up trash every day they visit. Home Depot and Clean up America provided bags. A shout out to all!

In March, more than 130 bags of trash, and tires, sets of keys(!), and sundries were removed. There is still more, especially along the roads and Delaware shoreline on Duck Is. Where does all the stuff come from? Why are trash pickups organized twice a year, every year? Some of the trash surely is litter, such as the soda can or coffee cup dropped along a trail or thrown from a car along roads. However, much of the plastic that enters the marsh comes from the storm drains that empty into it or into the Delaware River, washed there by the rain following windy recycling days. Along Lamberton Road, were mattresses and construction debris, deliberately dumped.

If you’re a paddler you can help via kayak or canoe on April 19th; see [www.abbottmarshlands.org](http://www.abbottmarshlands.org) for details. On the water pickups are coordinated by Leona and George Fluck for the Sierra Club.

Thank you, too, to Mercer County Parks, the City of Trenton, D&R Canal State Park, NJ DOT, and Hamilton Township personnel for removing the trash.

The plastics we collect, at least, don’t make to the ocean, where gyres of plastic interfere with ocean life.

What can you do? Eliminate use of plastic and Styrofoam as much as possible – don’t use plastic bags and reuse drink bottles; secure plastics on recycling day so they don’t blow into a gutter; if you’re on Duck Is, report anyone you see dumping to the police (do not confront anyone yourself). I do appreciate the irony of using plastic trash bags to collect plastic! We need an alternative.

The Abbott Marshlands have more than 11 miles of walking and paddling trails for you to enjoy. Please join our volunteers in helping protect this wonderful natural and cultural resource.

Mary Allessio Leck

Friends for the Abbott Marshlands