**NJ Clean Communities Helps Remove Hundreds of Tires from Raritan River**

Partnership with Local Organizations Key to Successful Effort

**SOMERSET COUNTY, NJ—JUNE 4, 2014—**Somerset County Park Commission maintenance staff has removed more than 900 tires from the Raritan River, part of a recent clean up effort led by NJ Clean Communities, the Somerset County Park Commission and the Central Jersey Stream Team.

The effort focused on removing tires from two dump locations in and along the bank of the Raritan River behind the Torpey Athletic Complex in Bridgewater. It's a continuation of an initiative that began in 2013 as “Just 2 Eagle Scouts” cleaning up sections of the Raritan River in central Somerset County. The effort has since ballooned into a full-blown charitable venture focused on preservation of the environment in and around New Jersey’s longest river.

“We are extremely proud of the Raritan River Cleanup because it involved the cooperation of several partners in solving an environmental problem," said Sandy Huber, Executive Director, NJ Clean Communities Council.

Last summer the Somerset County Park Commission Rangers provided a support system for a group of Scouts, students, and adult volunteers who participated in the American Rivers National River Cleanup, a nationwide community-based initiative to clean up rivers and streams and to raise public awareness about the need for healthy rivers.

Just 2 Eagle Scouts led the South Branch/Raritan River Cleanup, a grassroots effort to clean a 10-mile stretch of the Raritan River from Neshanic Station to Raritan Borough. That effort resulted in removal of 507 tires and various other unwanted materials from the river over two weekends.

Tires submerged in the river were removed by Central Jersey Stream Team members while tires along the bank of the river were removed with equipment provided by the Somerset County Park Commission. Tire disposal was funded through Somerset County’s allocation from the Clean Communities Program Fund.

For their efforts, on May 22, Somerset County Park Commission, the Central Jersey Stream Team, and Somerset County Clean Communities Program were given Clean Water Awards from NJ Clean Communities for the tire removal project.

"Partnering with community organizations, businesses and governmental agencies is the most effective way to tackle this sort of effort," Huber said. "We anticipate conducting similar cleanups statewide and we can't thank enough everyone who cooperated to make this cleanup a success," she said.

"The Central Jersey Stream was excited to assist the Somerset County Park Commission and NJ Clean Communities in removing hundreds of tires from in the river along the Finderne Farms dumpsite,” said Joseph David, President of Central Jersey Stream Team. “The site is something that we've hoped to work on for some time and we were honored by the invitation to be a part of this great project."

**About the clean-up partners**

The **Central Jersey Stream Team** (CJST) is a grassroots nonprofit organization dedicated to the restoration of Central Jersey waterways and surrounding land for environmental protection and sustainable recreational use. Its aim is community engagement with hands on projects designed to establish and encourage new environmental stewards. Visit them at [www.cjstreamteam.org](http://click.icptrack.com/icp/relay.php?r=9836116&msgid=181533&act=EFXR&c=1312384&destination=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.cjstreamteam.org).

Atlantic County volunteer **Marlon Hargis** (pictured above) and **Your Choice the People's Choice**, a community organization active in Atlantic County cleaning state and county roads.

**New Jersey Clean Communities** is a statewide, comprehensive, litter-abatement program created by the passage of the Clean Communities Act in 1986. Visit them at [www.njclean.org](http://click.icptrack.com/icp/relay.php?r=9836116&msgid=181533&act=EFXR&c=1312384&destination=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.njclean.org).

Information on all Somerset County park Commission programs and activities may be found online at [somersetcountyparks.org](http://click.icptrack.com/icp/relay.php?r=9836116&msgid=181533&act=EFXR&c=1312384&destination=http%3A%2F%2Fsomersetcountyparks.org)