

Community Values in the Cleanup and Restoration of the Passaic River

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The following values were developed by the Passaic River Community Advisory Group to represent the consensus ideals of the Passaic River community. These values are intended to guide federal agencies and other stakeholders in making sustainable decisions and taking responsible action regarding all aspects of the cleanup, restoration, and stewardship of the Passaic River.

Protection of Public Health

- Design all decisions and activities to protect the health and safety of residents, visitors, and workers

Environmental Protection and Restoration

- Make all decisions in light of a long-term goal to eventually return the river to a fishable, swimmable condition
- Restore the Passaic to a living river and a viable natural resource, with coordinated short and long-term efforts to conduct wetlands, habitat, and wildlife restoration
- Place a high priority on locating natural resource restoration activities in the local communities that have been directly affected by the long-term pollution of the river
- Protect against cross contamination to air, groundwater, and other environmental media
- Clean sediments to a level that supports the above conditions and limits the potential for recontamination

Economic Benefits

- Plan and manage activities in order to protect ongoing commercial uses of the river
- Create living wage jobs for local residents to the maximum extent possible
- Engage local businesses in cleanup, restoration, and long-term stewardship activities to the maximum extent possible
- Incentivize and support environmentally sustainable development of waterfront properties
- Recognize the long-term economic value of creating recreational, park, and open space along the river as part of the cleanup and restoration process
- Strike an appropriate balance between sustainable business and river restoration

Community Benefits

- Enhance area aesthetics through river beautification and litter removal
- Protect local culture and heritage
- Enhance and maintain the positive perception of the local community
- Provide positive physical and societal connections between people and the river
- Engage in ecological education for local residents, and particularly for youth

- Recognize the importance of environmental justice in all decisions and activities

Recreational Opportunities

- Develop greenways, parkland, recreational opportunities, open space, and natural areas along and connected to the river
- Create convenient, attractive, sustainable, and safe public access for both passive and active recreation along and on the river, including non-motorized boating

Cleanup Process Effectiveness

- Ensure positive stewardship of the cleanup process by supporting community information, interest, and involvement, and listening to their concerns
- Ensure transparency and effective communication of all cleanup information and openness in information exchange
- Work in partnership with all stakeholders, including the community, to address issues and solve problems
- Expedite and prioritize cleanup decisions and action to realize near-term results for river restoration, access, and use
- Consider the full range of alternatives for cleanup and restoration, maintaining a strong overall focus on the long-term goals for river restoration