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Week-long 'South Jersey Scrub' to Begin This Saturday in Camden's Gateway Park

By TAPINTO CAMDEN STAFF

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TRENTON, NJ— A week-long, volunteer effort to clean up the Delaware Estuary will kick off this Saturday along the Cooper River in one of [Camden's newest parks, Gateway Park](#).

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Catherine R. McCabe will be on hand this Saturday in Camden for the start of the South Jersey Scrub, a week-long volunteer cleanup of the Delaware Estuary.

Coordinated by the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary, this is the second annual regional cleanup of trash and debris from the Delaware River and Bay and their tributaries.

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"The Delaware estuary is an important part of the identity of South Jersey," said Commissioner McCabe in a statement. "Residents have a deep source of pride for the estuary. We thank the many volunteers, including many from the DEP, who will be helping to protect this treasure throughout the week, improving wildlife habitats and restoring waterways to their natural beauty."

A "scrub" is a strategic, organized cleanup initiative that targets a watershed, county or region. Individual community scrubs will be held at different times throughout the week-long cleanup and will be held in communities from Trenton to Cape May. The goal of this year's South Jersey Scrub is to prevent trash from reaching the Delaware River by targeting communities in the lower Delaware River watershed. Hundreds of DEP employees will be participating in cleanups on Wednesday, April 10.

An estuary is a river and/or bay system where fresh water mixes with salt water. The Delaware Estuary stretches from the mouth of the Delaware Bay at Cape May Point to the Falls at Trenton. Its watershed spans nearly half of southern New Jersey's land area.

The bay region is globally renowned for its ecological assets, including being an important stop for shorebirds during epic annual migrations and is rich in maritime history and culture. The bay and river have played an important role in the nation's development and are important drivers of the regional and national economy.

A significant ecological challenge for the estuary is litter and debris along shorelines, much of it carried by stormwater runoff through aging urban stormwater and wastewater infrastructure known as combined sewer outfalls. This litter and debris are not only unsightly, but it also affects wildlife habitats and can impact water quality.

Next week's cleanups include focused efforts on Burlington Island, one of the largest islands in the Delaware River, and kayak-based cleanups of Cumberland County's Maurice River, which flows through pristine salt marshes to the Delaware Bay. Partners include the DEP, the AmeriCorps Watershed Ambassadors, and New Jersey Clean Communities.

The South Jersey Scrub is patterned after the DEP's Barnegat Bay Blitzes and the Schuylkill Scrub in Pennsylvania. People who live in southern New Jersey can register their own community cleanup at www.SJScrub.org. Volunteers can sign up for one or more cleanups by visiting SJScrub.org and clicking on the "Join a Cleanup" link. Data about items collected from each event will be displayed on this website.

Gateway Park is located at 2798 Admiral Wilson Boulevard (U.S. Route 30). Saturday's South Jersey Opening Scrub ceremonies will be held at 10 a.m. Cleanups will conclude on Saturday, April 14.

For more information about the South Jersey Scrub, contact Brittany Musolino of the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary at 302-655-4990 x112, or bmusolino@delawareestuary.org.

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