



COUNTY OF LEHIGH

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

June 22, 2010

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Cleanup at Walking Purchase Park Planned

Lehigh County, Allentown, Salisbury Township, Fountain Hill and local organizations to participate on Saturday, June 26.

Lehigh County's Department of Community and Economic Development, Office of Solid Waste, Parks, and the Office of Juvenile Probation have joined forces with the City of Allentown, Salisbury Township, Fountain Hill, Norfolk Southern, Waste Management, Lehigh County Conservation District, Wildlands Conservancy, Valley Mountain Bikers, Lehigh Valley Kayak and Canoe Club, and Lehigh Valley Hospital to begin cleaning up Walking Purchase Park.

This event will be the first of several efforts scheduled to clean Walking Purchase Park and Riverside Drive. "We will begin with an initial clean-up on June 26 and will host larger cleanups this fall," stated Virginia Savage, Lehigh County's Manager of Main Street Initiatives.

The project arose when the Mountain Bikers and Kayak and Canoe Clubs approached officials in Lehigh County and Salisbury Township with a request to participate in the County's yearly "Pick It Up! Lehigh County" event. "We quickly realized this project needed ample planning time and decided to wait until the group could meet and organize the details," stated Savage. The need for the project arises from Walking Purchase Park's isolation and deep forest cover. Unfortunately this Park has been treated as a dumping ground by some of the surrounding community, and for a long time. This effort seeks to be the starting point to turn this Park back into one of the most natural Parks we have in the Greater Lehigh Valley.

"Our parks and open spaces are very important to the quality of life in Lehigh County and we are pleased to be facilitating this effort," stated Don Cunningham, Lehigh County Executive.

Walking Purchase Park is a little known gem nestled between Allentown, Bethlehem, Fountain Hill and Salisbury Township. It is bounded on the north by the Lehigh River. Large sections of the mountain and river remain in an undeveloped and natural state. It is recognized by its forest cover and Service Electric's large radio mast on top. The actual park is over 800 acres in size, with as much undeveloped private land.

Volunteers have been asked to wear long sleeves and pants, appropriate shoes, and bring their own work gloves and bug spray. Participants should park at the Fearless Fire Company, located at 1221 South Front St. by 9 a.m. The group will be distributing cleanup instruction and information to the park from this area.

For more information, contact Virginia Savage, Manager of Main Street Initiatives, 610-782-3809, virginiasavage@lehighcounty.org.