

City of Newburgh

Press Release

83 Broadway, Newburgh, N.Y. 12550
(845) 569-7354 – (845) 569-7370

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Hudson-Fulton-Champlain Quadracentennial Legacy Project Debut of Limited First Edition of “Estuary Eye-Spy” Coloring Book

What do whirligig beetles, a school of mummichog and a great blue heron have in common? They all inhabit the Quassaick Creek Estuary Preserve, and if you look hard enough, you might find all these and more, within the pages of Estuary Eye-Spy!

On April 22, fourth graders from Horizons-on-Hudson Magnet School received the first copies of the first limited edition of the coloring book at a press event at the Board of Education auditorium. The launch, timed to coincide with Earth Day 2009, celebrates the Quadracentennial theme of the environment of the Hudson River and its estuaries.



Fourth Graders from Horizons-on-Hudson Magnet School were the first to receive the “Estuary Eye-Spy” First Edition Coloring Book, a Quadracentennial Legacy Project. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Annette Saturnelli is pictured in second row, far right. Other press conference participants included (back row, l-r) Mark Castiglione, Acting Executive Director, Greenway Conservancy for the Hudson River Valley, Orange County Historian Ted Sly, County Legislator Anthony Marino, County Legislator Jim Kulisek, Artist Linda Thomas, Legislator Christopher Eachus, Barbara Fratianni, Assistant Director Hudson-Fulton-Champlain Quadracentennial Commission, Chris White, District Representative, Office of Congressman Maurice Hinchey, and Mary Crabb, Former Mayor, City of Newburgh and Orange County Representative to Greenway Council.

The coloring book is the brainchild of Newburgh Beacon Bay Quadracentennial Co-Chair Elizabeth (Betsy) McKean, (also the City of Newburgh Records Manager) a long-time advocate of the creek corridor preservation, and one of the founders of the Quassaick Creek Coalition, an informal gathering of supporters of the Quassaick Creek Estuary Preserve and Mill Trail. Coalition members include the City of Newburgh, the New York State DEC Estuary Program (support through several grants), Hudson River Valley Greenway, Hudson River Foundation, National Park Service Rivers & Trails, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic

Preservation, Orange County Planning Department, Scenic Hudson, Orange County Land Trust, Orange County Historian's Office, Parks & Trails New York, and the adjoining communities.

The Quassaick (thought to mean 'stony brook' in Algonquin) originates at Orange Lake in the Town of Newburgh and empties into the Hudson River between Newburgh and New Windsor. For three centuries, its waters provided food and power to those who settled its banks, and sustained woolen, linen, and paper mills, and factories making fencing, wire, cannons, and daguerreotype instruments.

Despite 150 years of industrial development and another 50 years of neglect, nature has begun to reclaim the estuary of the Quassaick Creek. In 2004 biologist James G. (Spider) Barbour did a biodiversity survey of the Quassaick corridor funded by a New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Estuary Program "Stewardship" grant. He contacted designer Don Watson of EarthRise, and artist Linda Thomas, who contributed a pencil sketch of a mural to illustrate many of the species identified at the time of the study.

Linda Thomas of Westport CT is an award-winning artist and natural science illustrator, whose works include murals (such as Sam's Point Interpretive Center's), portraits, landscapes, wildlife, and illustrations represented in museums, nature centers, galleries and private collections. Don Watson, FAIA, CIP, of EarthRise Design www.DonaldWatson.com, engages people in a direct, personal connection to nature through interpretive planning, art, exhibits and architecture.

"The moment I laid eyes on the pencil sketch of the mural, I realized it lent itself to both a coloring book and poster art to promote the Estuary Preserve & Mill Trail," said Betsy. "As one of the Quadricentennial themes is the Hudson's ecological health, on behalf of the Newburgh Beacon Quadricentennial Committee I applied for several small Quad grants, hoping to debut a watercolor book legacy project on Earth Day 2009."

Sponsors of "Estuary Eye-Spy," include the Greenway Conservancy of the Hudson River Valley, Newburgh Enlarged City School District, the Newburgh Beacon Bay 2009 Committee, the New York State Hudson-Fulton-Champlain Commission, Orange County Land Trust, the City of Newburgh, Orange County Historian Ted Sly, and EarthRise Design.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Annette Saturnelli commented, "We must join together to carry out the mission of the Quassaick Creek Coalition. The first edition of Estuary Eye-Spy is one example of how we can work together to recognize and communicate the importance of the history and ecology of Quassaick Creek. We must preserve and restore our resources so that they can continue to provide recreational and educational opportunities for all, especially for our children who will grow up to be the citizens that will make our community a better place to live."

Betsy added, "We are so grateful to everyone who had a part in making the first edition of "Estuary Eye-Spy" a reality, and especially for the support of the school district. Deputy Superintendent of Schools Ralph Pizzo and Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Marsha Sobel took one look at the original mock-up and pledged the printing and assembling of 1,000 copies, one for every fourth grader in the district. Al Romano, NECSD Science Director is developing lesson plans inspired by the "Estuary Eye-Spy" book to integrate into the local history component of NYS curriculum for fourth graders."

Why fourth graders? Orange County Historian Ted Sly spends a great deal of time visiting fourth grades throughout the county, bringing them an awareness and appreciation of local history. Added to that now will be a glimpse into the abundance of natural history and biodiversity in their 'backyards', as well as lessons in the impact humans have on the environment.