

Canal sweep is back in time for a new spring

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They've found tires, car doors, unopened cans of paint, bicycles -- even a refrigerator.

Hundreds of volunteers at dozens of sites over several years have pulled on gloves and hauled buckets of waste from nature trails and walks along the extensive state canal system.



It's time to start again, and volunteers could use some help.

The weekend of April 15 and 16, more than 1,000 residents statewide will take to New York's canals for the Canal Corp. and Parks and Trail's sixth annual Canal Clean Sweep.

Volunteers organize the cleanups, with 90 separate events throughout the state, Project Director Wally Elton said. Events are in recognition of Earth Day and in preparation for summer tourists.

The cleanups happen on lock grounds, sections of the Canalway trail and in local canal parks. Eighteen cleanups are planned in Cohoes, Albany, Niskayuna, Clifton Park and other local communities.

Last year, 95 groups in the Canal Corridor including municipalities, businesses and non-profit and civic groups, participated.

Elton says garbage often gets dumped as the season changes to winter and people are no longer frequenting the parks.

"If there wasn't a clean sweep event, a lot of these items wouldn't be reported or picked up," he said.

Volunteers who wish to join in a cleanup can visit

<http://www.ptny.org/canalway/sweep/index.shtml> for a list of local events. Each volunteer gets a free Canal Sweep T-shirt. The Canal Corp. provides trash bags and arranges for disposal of the garbage collected, but volunteers should bring gloves and any tools they may need.

-- Dayelin Roman

Suit filed in ATV death

A wrongful death lawsuit is pending in state Supreme Court in Albany against a Cobleskill business that sold an all-terrain vehicle involved in the 2009 death of a 13-year-old boy from Knox.

James Spencer, the father of the late James Wyatt Spencer, is suing the company, Gable Motorsports Inc., for selling a Yamaha Rhino ATV that hit a wet patch of grass, rolled, flipped and landed on the boy in a field some 500 yards from his home on Bozenkill Road in May 2009.

The case is in the pretrial stage. No trial date has been set, said the family's attorney, Marshall P. Richer.

The suit is not tied to the hundreds of defective-product lawsuits against Yamaha Motor Corp. in the aftermath of injuries and deaths in Rhino accidents,

On Monday, Yamaha was absolved of responsibility in a rollover ATV crash that caused a serious injury in southern California, according to FairWarning, a nonprofit, online investigative publication that focuses on safety and health issues.

A state court in Orange County, Calif., rejected the claims of Daniel Swainston, 59, of Bakersfield, who suffered a crushed leg in the crash of his Rhino ATV in 2006. FairWarning reported that while Yamaha has faced about 700 defective-product lawsuits involving Rhino ATVs, Monday's verdict marked its sixth straight winning verdict out of eight trials in total.

-- Robert Gavin

How to get involved

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