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Kids have to clean up adults' giant mess in Wellsville

By MELANIE STREETER, The Times Herald

WELLSVILLE — Local volunteers took on a mountain of garbage Saturday, hauling away piles of trash from the Genesee River water shed.

For years, the bank of the Genesee running beside the River Road in Willing has been a favorite spot for litter bugs.

Following an assessment of the village of Wellsville's water supply in December by Joshua Bossard, a source water protection specialist with New York Rural Water Association, an idea was hatched to involve area Boy Scouts in cleaning up the mess of tires, bags of trash, animal carcasses, appliances and other refuse tossed from the side of the road.

"I've been picking up dirty diapers and dead animals," said Justin Kramer, a 13-year-old Wellsville Scout. "People are lazy. This completely pollutes the river. If it was a human, it would be dead."

Justin wasn't the only Scout disgusted by the mess.

Advertisement "This is a disaster," said Gage Watkins, 12, of Andover.

Scio Scout Calvin Wisniewski, 12, said the whole scene was "just bad."

"They should take this stuff to the dump," he said.

The project, which ultimately involved Boy Scouts from Wellsville, Andover, Angelica and Scio, as well as Wellsville village workers, Willing town employees, Allegany County workers, Girl Scouts, neighbors and civic groups, was no easy task.

"The Scouts got here around 10 a.m., but we started around 8 a.m.," said Dana Harris, Wellsville Water Treatment Plant superintendent.

Mr. Bossard said even with what was accomplished Saturday, another day of clean-up might be called for.

"We're making a dent, but it's a slow process," he said. "We'll see how far along we get today."

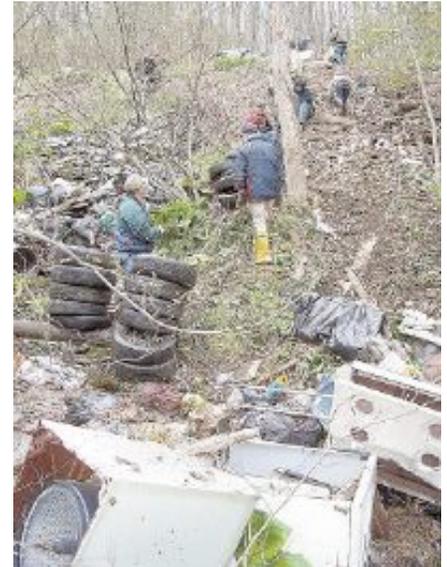
One Willing resident who lives just down the road from the trash heap said he was pleased to see the project take off the way it did.

"I think it's wonderful, and a credit to Dana Harris," said Dave Porter. "This is a great example. During these tough times, we all have to work together and we can clean up this mess."

He said this type of policing Allegany County's environment could be a boon to the local economy, also.

"We could do this on a smaller scale throughout the county to clean up scrap steel, which is getting a good price right now," Mr. Porter said. "We need to make use of what we have."

He said he hopes to see more of community spirit present Saturday in the future.



Boy Scouts and community members joined forces Saturday to clean up a heap of garbage, including old tires and rusty appliances, strewn along the Genesee River watershed on River Road in Willing.

"I hope this is just the beginning," he said.



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