

Local News

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Borough festival celebrates cleaner river

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REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

NAUGATUCK — The community celebrated a cleaner park and river with its first Naugatuck River Festival.

For years, Linden Park and Naugatuck River have been polluted with garbage disposed from the highway and



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trash that gets washed down when it rains, residents said.

Longtime resident Carolyn Ranning added "the park was rough before they cleaned it."

The Naugatuck Valley Outdoor Club alongside the Housatonic Valley Association cleaned the park and removed a staggering amount



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Clayton Watson, 16, a member of the Naugatuck High School Air Force Junior ROTC, tries his hand kayaking on the Naugatuck River with Rich Ziembrocki of Shelton, left, during the Naugatuck River Festival and Fun Paddle Run held Saturday at Linden Park in Naugatuck.

of garbage a few months ago.

"In just one day, we pulled out over 40 large garbage bags of trash in a 200 yard space," said Madelene Beck-

er, member of the outdoors club.

The event highlighted the cleaner space as well as encouraged residents to explore

the river with a paddle run.

Residents, after paying a \$4 registration fee, were able

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to paddle the course of the Naugatuck River.

Twelve paddlers took part in the event.

Mary Johnson of Naugatuck said she was nervous for both her and her 14-year-old son but found joy in taking part in the day's event.

"It's harder than it seems but it's good bonding time for my son," Johnson said.

The race was to also celebrate the eight paddlers who are apart of The Source Paddle Trip, a 149-mile course that lasts 10 days merging from the Housatonic River and ends on Long Is-

land Sound.

Housatonic River Adventure coordinator Maria Grace hopes that the festival will showcase the gem that residents have in their community.

"If they walk it, if they paddle it, they'll start to care about it," Grace said.