



# The Raritan River: Using Education as a Tool to Promote Awareness and Activism

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## IWL Statement

The Leadership Scholars Certificate Program is a two-year selective, interdisciplinary certificate program that prepares Rutgers undergraduate women to be informed, innovative, and socially responsible leaders.

Leadership Scholars design and implement social action projects to expand their understanding of issues and problems and to develop leadership skills. This project gives Scholars the opportunity to apply the theoretical knowledge they have gained about leadership, advocacy, and social change with the practical and experiential knowledge they have developed about a particular policy issue or problem through the field site placement. It also further develops leadership skills by giving undergraduates the opportunity to *practice leadership through* action.

To find out more please visit the Institute for Women's Leadership's website at <http://iwl.rutgers.edu>.

# Goal Statement

This project aims to use education to promote much-needed environmental awareness and activism, focusing on the Raritan River. By arranging a trip along the Raritan aboard the R/V Rutgers, attendees will be allowed to learn about the river up close and with the guidance of Heather Fenyk, Board President and *de facto* Executive Director of the Lower Raritan Watershed Partnership. Their experiences, along with pertinent information and a resource guide, will be compiled into a zine to be distributed.

After attending the boat trip or reading the zine, I hope individuals will have newfound knowledge about the Raritan River and be inspired to take action.

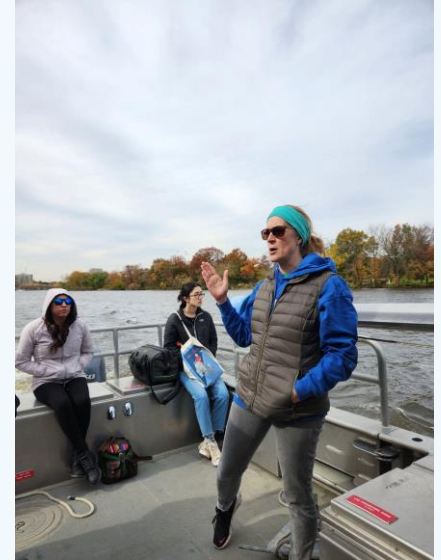


Photo Courtesy of Robin Scudder

# Area of Concern

- “The Raritan is still the 14th most polluted waterway in the nation, with 20 federal Superfund sites and 200 state-registered toxic sites along its banks and the banks of its tributaries” (Raritan Riverkeeper Program)
- “At all other monitoring sites [excluding South Amboy] bacteria concentrations exceeded the standard more than 75% of the time” (LRWP 2020 Annual Report, 2020)
- “Researchers found that up to 35% of river miles in the Raritan Basin had a probability of *E. coli* impairment greater than 90% on the most polluted day of the study period” (Money et al., 2009)

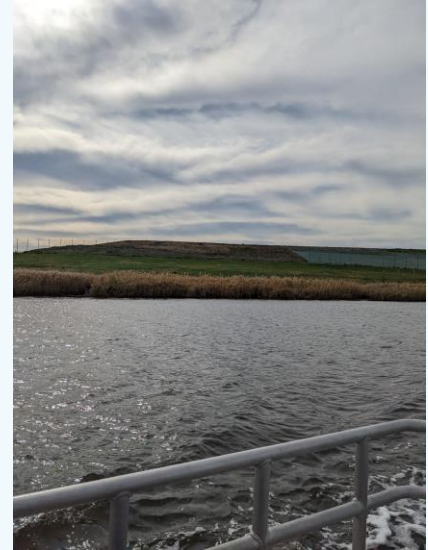


Photo Courtesy of Parthena Rosahl



# Feminist Leadership

## Women and the Environment

- Paul Mohai's 1992 paper, "Men, Women, and the Environment: An Examination of the Gender Gap in Environmental Concern and Activism."
- Examples like Heather Fenyk, Board President and *de facto* Executive Director of the Lower Raritan Watershed Partnership.

# Timeline

Phase 1

## Connect

Connected with Chip Haldeman (researcher and captain) and Heather Fenyk (LRWP).

Phase 2

## Organize

Made arrangements for the trip with Chip and Heather. Recruited attendees.

Phase 3

## Boat Trip

Trip aboard the R/V Rutgers took place October 28th.

Phase 4

## Zine

Prepare Zine featuring trip aboard R/V Rutgers.

# Partnerships

**RUTGERS**  
School of Environmental  
and Biological Sciences  
**DEPARTMENT OF MARINE  
AND COASTAL SCIENCES**



**RUTGERS**  
School of Communication  
and Information

# Promotion

This poster was distributed through social media and by email.

## EXPLORE THE RARITAN RIVER

### TRIP ABOARD THE R/V RUTGERS

Join us for a trip along the Raritan aboard the Rutgers research vessel on October 28th.

We will be meeting at the Rutgers Boathouse for 12:45 pm.

The boat will depart at 1:00 pm for a two hour trip.

Contact Kirstin Slattery if you are interested or have any questions!

**Contact:**  
[krs222@scarletmail.rutgers.edu](mailto:krs222@scarletmail.rutgers.edu)



# Promotion of Zine

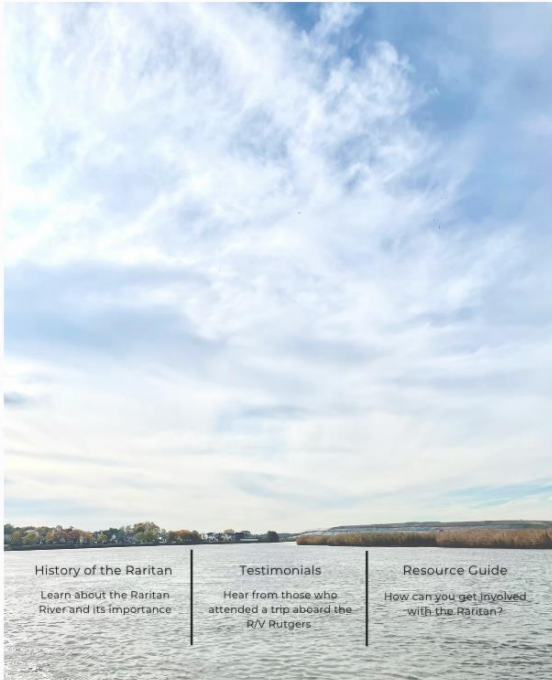
The zine will be distributed  
virtually and physically.



Photo Courtesy of Rutgers University

# Product Materials

## A Trip Along the Banks



## Testimonials

### Robin Scudder

Retired Advanced Practice Pediatric Nurse Practitioner. Hiker, kayaker, outdoor enthusiast



Photo Courtesy of Robin Scudder

"The immersive experience of being on the river was wonderful. I loved the experience of being within the natural area, as opposed to peering in from the chaos of the Parkway Bridge."

### Michele Yusko

Interested Citizen

"I've lived on the Raritan all my life and used to canoe near my home. Being able to travel farther out and see the area surrounding the river was an eye opener. It made me sad to see how this treasure has been destroyed by industry. And yet I'm hopeful that organizations like LRWP, concerned citizens and students...can have a positive impact."

### Colin Sabol

Junior at the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences studying Marine Biology

"Prior to the trip I knew nothing about the Raritan. I never knew it faced nearly as many pollution issues as it does." Rutgers students should absolutely be given the opportunity to learn about the Raritan River "...it is rooted in the history of both Rutgers and the city of New Brunswick."

### Kalina Totzeva

Graduate student at Rutgers University

"I loved going on the boat. I didn't really know much about this topic so it gave me a chance to learn more and it gives me a chance to be more connected to the community. Clearly more has to be done to clean the river up, not just from a policy stand point but also community and public wise. I think more of this has to be talked about in the classroom because it is such a landmark."



Photo Courtesy of Robin Scudder

# Lessons Learned

## Communication

Every aspect of this project required constant communication.



## Flexibility

This project faced numerous obstacles, and being flexible was essential.



## Creativity

How can I get Rutgers students to want to learn about the Raritan?

# Acknowledgements

Thank you to the Institute for Women's Leadership, including Professor Trigg, Sasha Toner, and Elizabeth O'Brien, for guiding me through this process.

And a special thank you to Dr. Daniel Van Abs, Chip Haldeman, and Heather Fenyk, whose contributions made this project possible.

# Thank You

Please stay tuned for updates regarding the zine and short film.

CREDITS: This presentation template was created by **Slidesgo**, including icons by **Flaticon** and infographics & images by **Freepik**

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