

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**NEW "DON'T WASTE OUR OPEN SPACE" INITIATIVE TO COMBAT
ILLEGAL
DUMPING ON STATE LANDS YIELDS FIRST ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS
*INVESTIGATIONS OF ILLEGAL DUMP SITES CONTINUING***

(14/P37) TRENTON – The Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) new initiative to crack down on illegal dumping in state parks and natural lands has yielded several arrests and charges throughout the state as investigations of illegal dump sites by State Park Police, Conservation Officers, and the DEP's Compliance and Enforcement team continue.

The DEP's "Don't Waste Our Open Space" campaign was launched in March. It is a coordinated effort of a host of DEP agencies, including Parks, Fish & Wildlife, Compliance & Enforcement, Solid Waste, Water Resources, State Park Police, State Conservation Police, State Forestry Services and the Natural Lands Trust. All activities of this new effort are posted on www.stopdumping.nj.gov, a new website that serves as a hub for the entire program.

Recent enforcement actions related to the crackdown of illegal dumping include:

- Dennis Jenkins, 51, of Franklin Township, has been charged with illegal dumping and for the illegal transport of solid waste in connection with more than 60 yards of trash and debris found in the Six Mile Run section of D&R Canal State Park in Franklin. The two charges carry a minimum fine of \$7,500 and possible forfeiture of vehicle used to transport the trash. The debris, which included construction waste, household trash, mattresses and furniture, filled two 30-yard dumpsters.

An arrest warrant also has been issued for Leardee Fortenberry, 55, of Franklin Township, for charges relating to this alleged dumping incident. The case was investigated by State Park Police Detectives Timothy Kasony and Gregory Lawrence.

- Saleh Naser, 48, of Hackettstown, has been charged with illegal dumping of solid waste and household debris at two separate locations on Waterloo Road in Mount Olive, within Allamuchy State Park. Naser faces a minimum fine of \$5,000 for the two alleged dumping incidents. The case was investigated by State Park Police Detective Steve Franzone.

- John Szeszko, 19, of Jackson has been charged with discarding refuse in a State Wildlife Management Area. That penalty carries a fine of up to \$1,500 and restitution for cost of cleanup. Szeszko was also charged with illegal solid waste disposal, which bears a minimum penalty of \$2,500.

The summonses were issued after discovery of a large household debris pile found dumped at Turkey Swamp Wildlife Management Area in Freehold Township. The case was investigated by Arthur Zanfini of DEP's Compliance & Enforcement and Conservation Officer Jean Mutone.

- John Roberts III, 22, of Paulsboro, has been charged with multiple counts of illegal dumping and illegal transport of solid waste after household debris was located at Brendan T. Byrne State Forest. Roberts faces a minimum fine of \$2,500. State Park Police Detective George Fedorczyk and Sergeant Richard Kieft led the investigation.

The new "Don't Waste Our Open Space" campaign incorporates strict enforcement of illegal dumping practices, while raising awareness of the problem through outreach and education.

Strategically deployed motion-sensor cameras have been set up in select state parks and wildlife management areas to help nab violators. Information on arrests and charges filed in connection with illegal dumping will be posted on www.stopdumping.nj.gov.

The DEP is being aggressive in its pursuit of civil and criminal complaints against violators. Penalties for illegal dumping in state parks and in fish and wildlife areas will include criminal fines of up to \$5,000 per violation and civil penalties of up to \$1,500 per violation. In addition, the state also will seek much stiffer penalties for major violations through the Solid Waste Management Act, which authorizes the DEP and county health departments to initiate civil actions for illegal dumping violations.

Illegal dumping, which includes everything from unlawful disposal of construction debris and old TVs and computers to the dumping of car parts and tires-- and even entire vehicles -- has been a growing problem in the state's vast natural holdings in all 21 counties in recent years.

Nearly all of the state's more than 170 publicly owned tracts, including state parks, state forests, wildlife management areas, and natural lands and preserves, have been impacted by illegal dumping. These lands account for 813,000 acres of state-preserved open space.

For more information on State Parks and Forests,

visit:<http://www.state.nj.us/dep/parksandforests/>

For more information on State Park Police,
visit:<http://www.nj.gov/dep/njstateparkpolice/index.htm>

For more information on Solid Waste Compliance and Enforcement,
visit:<http://www.nj.gov/dep/enforcement/sw.html>

For more information on DEP Natural Lands Management,
visit:<http://www.state.nj.us/dep/parksandforests/natural/index.html>

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