

ENTERTAINING IDEAS

TV Special Celebrates America's Rivers

(NAPSA)—Celebrating America's natural heritage is a special PBS broadcast of "America's First River: Bill Moyers on the Hudson" on Tuesday, April 23 and Wednesday, April 24 at 9 p.m. Although only 315 miles long and tucked away in the Northeast corner of the nation, the Hudson River courses through the heart of American history, commerce and culture.

A paradise that attracted America's early immigrants and inspired the first school of American painting, the Hudson River became an icon of pollution in the 1960's. The activism of committed citizens, however, reclaimed the Hudson, and along its banks people continue to fight to preserve and protect their river.

In the primetime special, Emmy-award winning journalist Bill Moyers journeys along the river in the wake of Henry Hudson—from the strategic center of the American Revolution at West Point, to the village of Sleepy Hollow where Washington Irving wrote America's first great literature, to the Catskill Mountains that inspired the shimmering landscape paintings of Cole, Church and the Hudson River School painters.

These paintings, enormously popular in their day, depicted the American landscape as a new Eden, wild and innocent. Even as artists celebrated the region's natural wonders, immigrants were settling in the Hudson Valley and nature gave way to industry. Factories sprouted along the river's banks and the water ran clear no more. "It was in the Hudson Valley that we found America the Beautiful—and almost lost it," says Moyers.



(Courtesy of Public Affairs Television)

In the 1970s, PCBs destroyed the once thriving Hudson River fishing industry.

By the 1960's, people all along the river started to say "enough." The abuse of pollution and disregard for the river had turned the Hudson into a garbage dump.

Calling attention to the dangers of pollution and searching for remedies, committed citizens eventually



(© Don Perdue)

The Half Moon is a modernized replica of Henry Hudson's ship. Bill Moyers joined Captain Chip Reynolds, who leads a young crew on an annual expedition to discover the wonders of the Hudson as the 17th-century sailors saw it.

"inspired thousands of others to take part in cleaning up the Hudson, and to press for legislation like the federal Clean Water Act," says Moyers.

In promoting their own cause, the Hudson activists issued a clarion call that waterways across the nation were in jeopardy. Americans across the country responded and, as a result, the country rallied around its natural heritage. Congress reacted by enacting a comprehensive body of law to protect our waters—highlighted by passage of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in 1970, the Clean Water Act in 1972, and the Safe Drinking Water Act in 1974.

Healthier today than it has been in years, the Hudson River remains at risk, like so many American rivers. "America's love of nature and its restless growth are always in conflict," says Moyers. The challenge is to find a balance.

Today, the majority of the American population lives within a mile of a river or stream. According to the non-profit organization American Rivers, everyone can help to preserve the beauty and the purity of the rivers that run through their own community by taking these small but significant steps to protect the environment.

EIGHT EASY STEPS TO CLEANER RIVERS

1. Conserve water in your home with water saving faucets.
2. Do not over-water your lawn or garden because it can cause fertilizer to leach into ground water.
3. Never pour unwanted chemicals on the ground. They may contaminate runoff.
4. Clean up after your pets. Pet waste can contaminate surface water.
5. Maintain your septic system. Inspect it annually and pump it out regularly.
6. Use non-toxic environmentally-friendly products that won't pollute waterways.
7. Recycle oil and antifreeze by taking them to service stations and other recycling centers. One quart of oil can contaminate up to two million gallons of drinking water.
8. Protect riverside greenways. If you own riverfront property, keep it in its natural state.

Greenways provide wildlife habitat, aid in flood control, provide recreation areas, and are a natural filter for drinking water.

For more environmental tips and information from American Rivers log on to www.americanrivers.org.

"America's First River: Bill Moyers on The Hudson" premieres on Tuesday, April 23 and concludes on Wednesday, April 24 from 9-11 p.m. (ET) on PBS (check local listings).