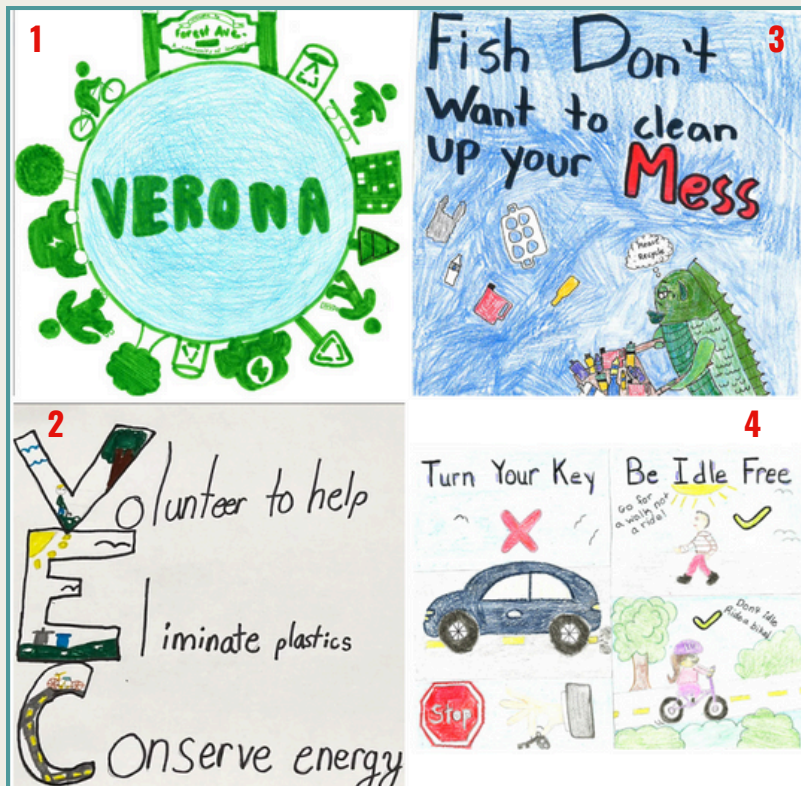


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Congratulations to The 2025 4th Grade VEC Poster Contest Winners!



- 1: **TESSA FLORES**: "Do the Right Thing Verona" Forest Ave.
- 2: **LIAM ROGERS**: "Volunteer" Brookdale Ave.
- 3: **EDDIE KONINGSFEST**: "Clean Up Your Mess" FN Brown
- 4: **JULIA PASSERO**: "Turn Your Key, Be Idle Free" FN Brown



Every year, the VEC invites Verona's fourth graders to exercise their creativity and environmental stewardship by entering into the VEC poster contest.

The themes: reduce plastic use and pollution by recycling and reuse, keep our green spaces pristine, and stop car idling.

The winners were invited to a Verona Town Council meeting where the Mayor presented them with award certificates and a \$50 prize.

Thanks to all the students who entered!

FORGING HIS PATH

Eagle Scout Candidate James Waugh

On Sunday, June 1, the VEC supported 17-year-old HS junior and Troop 2 Boy Scout member James Waugh in a major clean-up of Peckman Park.

The park, located between Commerce Court and Brookside Terrace runs along the Peckman River and contains over 11 acres of wooded passive green space. The Township of Verona purchased this site, along with over 14 wooded acres on Mt. Prospect Avenue in 2019. Both are in process to become Green Acres parklands.

The clean-up sets the stage for Waugh's Eagle Scout project of creating a walking trail for the park.



“It's an important place to clean up. And the hope is the more you clean it and bring attention to it, the less likely people are to dump stuff there. And we've seen that come true because over the years, the amount of garbage has dropped dramatically.” James Waugh



No stranger to Verona's wooded spaces, Waugh has been a regular at the VEC cleanups throughout the years, and is known for advancing into the river, even on the coldest of days, to retrieve garbage and debris.

The event attracted dozens of Verona adults, children and scouts who cleared bag after bag of waste from the woods and the river.



Mary Waugh (top right) is an avid VEC clean up attendee along with her son James.

Hilltop Conservancy member David Freschi (bottom right) attended to help cut some of the larger downed trees to make way for the walking trail.

The VEC is proud to partner with Verona's scouting organizations. Thanks to everyone who helped make the event a success!



EARTH DAY NATIVE PLANT PUSH

In years past, the VEC's Earth Day celebrations have included cleanup events and tree seedling distributions from NJ's Forestry Department.

This year, we tried something different; we promoted Native Plant education and followed up with big sale!

The goal of both events was to excite our area residents to go native while providing them with a large variety of deer-resistant perennials and shrubs to bring both beauty and pollinators to their own yards.

The VEC partnered with the NJ Native Plant Society and the Verona Public Library for the lecture and with Hillcrest Farms who offered all of the plants at wholesale prices. The end result was well beyond our expectations. At final count, the VEC's sale distributed over 1,300 plants at their April 26, 2025, plant distribution event. Happy Planting!



VEC CONNECTION

WE WANT YOUR BACKYARD WILDLIFE ENCOUNTERS

Have you spotted a wild critter roaming in your yard?

The Environmental Commission wants to hear—and see—all about it. We're putting out a call for photos of bears, fox, turtles, birds, insects and any other undomesticated animals making themselves at home near your homes.

Along with your pics, include information about when you snapped the pic and the section of town you live in.

Plus, we'd love to hear the story about your animal encounter. And sorry to have a no pets policy but we are strictly seeking **wild** animals.

Send your photos and stories to VEC@VERONANJ.ORG.

We can't wait to find out who's dropped by!



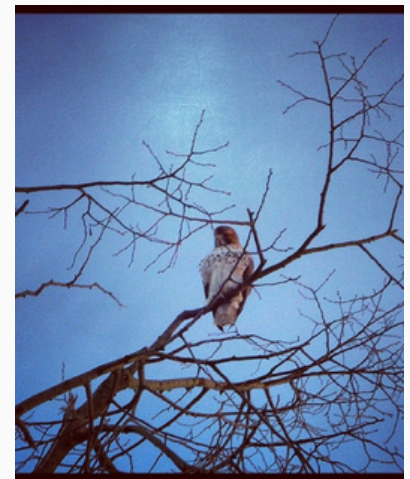
Monarch Butterfly
Summer 2019
Laning Section



Skunk and Raccoon
Winter 2018
Laning Section



Red Fox
Fall 2023
FN Brown Section



Redtail Hawk
Fall 2023
Laning Section



Look for your pics in our Fall Issue.

