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FreeWalkers Invite Public to Walk “The Big Walk” along the East Coast Greenway

Join the 3rd Annual “Big Walk” from Metropark to New York City on Saturday, May 19th

Paul Kiczek, founder of FreeWalkers.org, and resident of Morristown, NJ, plans to continue the annual tradition of walking 50 miles in one day through the suburban and urban wilds of New Jersey and into New York City. With the support of the East Coast Greenway Alliance (ECG), he will be leading 50 or more long distance walkers, on this year’s event (<http://NJ2NY50.org>).



Walking is a great form of exercise for everyone. The FreeWalkers encourage everyone to challenge themselves and just get out and walk to the best of their ability. Mass events bring attention to walking and promote an awareness of issues such as designing safe streets and planning communities that encourage walking. This is the third event in a series of walks called the Cross-Jersey Challenge (<http://crossjerseywalk.org>) in which the public is challenged to walk a total of 100 miles across the entire state along the East Coast Greenway in 2012.

The ECG (<http://greenway.org>) is a non-profit organization that is mapping out a continuous 3,000 mile trail from Maine to Key West, through populated areas along the U.S. East Coast, such as New Jersey and New York. The organization promotes a multi-use marked trail for walking, running, and biking and is open to the public. It provides a rare ground-level view of today’s communities and their challenges for pedestrians. This year the walk will go thru the newly renovated Lenape Park trail in the Cranford/Kenilworth area, hailed as one of the best in the Union County Park System.

This will actually be Kiczek’s fifth attempt at 50 miles. His interest started in 1963 when he and three of his high school friends, encouraged by a fitness fad promoted by President Kennedy, made an unsuccessful attempt at 50 miles in the summer of 1963. Much time has passed but only in the last few years has he revisited the challenge and found others interested too. Soon, the FreeWalkers group was born, dedicated to the challenges and rewards of long distance walking.

According to Kiczek, “Long-distance walking is a unique sport and challenge. Our walk is not a race but a challenge to learn, persevere, socialize and achieve a substantial personal goal.” The trail runs close to mass transportation allowing participants to join in or drop off at various places if they prefer to walk less than 50 miles. The event is FREE, there’s a chance to win a drawing prize and even a personalized dog tag for all that participate, regardless of the number of miles they walk.

For more details visit (<http://NJ2NY50.org>). Kiczek says, “We hope that the event brings public awareness of the benefits of walking and the importance of constructing *pedestrian highways* like the East Coast Greenway.”

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The Big Walk - NJ2NY50 is a FreeWalkers (<http://freewalkers.org>) walking event supported by the East Coast Greenway Alliance (<http://greenway.org>) and other generous sponsors. For more info on the ECGA, contact Andy Hamilton, ECGA Mid-Atlantic Trails Coordinator, 267-236-3407 andy@greenway.org.

