

GEHR Watershed Minute #23

Patcong Creek: (223 words)

Patcong Creek drains 33 square miles in Egg Harbor Township, Northfield, Linwood, and Somers Point into the Great Egg Harbor Bay just south of the Route 559 Bridge. Cedar Branch, Blackmans Branch, Mill Branch, Little Meadow Run, and Maple Run are feeder streams to Patcong Creek that flow into Bargaintown Lake.

The Lenni Lenape Indians were the first residents in the area, making summer camp on the high ground around the cedar swamp that is now Bargaintown Lake and along the banks of Patcong Creek. They used the river as a source of water, fish, and shellfish.

European immigrants settled the area in the 1600's, and Patcong Creek was dammed to create Bargaintown Lake soon after. The dam provided power for both a saw mill and a grist mill, and the lumber was used to supply 3 shipyards on Patcong Creek below the dam.

Wood cutting and sawing, milling, farming, clamming, oystering, egging, salt hay gathering, ice cutting, and ship building provided good prosperity along Patcong Creek for early towns like Bargaintown and Steellmanville.

Today, fishing, shellfishing, and recreational boating are active industries on Patcong Creek. Given the abundance of tidal and forested wetlands and wildlife below the Garden State Parkway bridge, that segment of Patcong Creek was designate by Congress as part of the National Wild and Scenic River System in 1992.