

# Dumped cars removed from Greenbelt

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A rusty 1977 Pontiac Firebird, so badly deteriorated it was hard to tell it had once been red, was sitting amid knee-high vegetation in the Greenbelt yesterday.

And it had company.

The three illegally dumped, crumbling and dilapidated vehicles — all of which had seen better days — were hauled away yesterday in an effort to restore the pristine character of the White Trail area of the Greenbelt, located behind the archery field in Willowbrook Park.

The cleanup was spearheaded by Chris Ballou, founder of the New York Adventure Running Association and an officer with the Police Department's Harbor Unit Scuba Team.

Ballou was joined by fellow off-duty officers and members of his group and of X Sports Cafe in the removal mission. The crew cut apart and lifted the old cars off the trails with the help of the Greenbelt Conservancy.

"These are altruistic, great guys representing the next generation which will maintain the Greenbelt. Chris has the right attitude," said Dorothy A. Reilly, director of public relations for the Greenbelt, who joined the crew yesterday afternoon.

Ballou, who trains on the Green-



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Volunteers use tools to break up parts of old vehicles.

belt trails, became frustrated running and walking amid abandoned derelict car heaps for the last five years.

The crew used a Hurst tool, typically used in rescues and nicknamed the "jaws of life," to disassemble the cars. The parts were then loaded onto the Greenbelt's "mule," a special four-wheeled cart. It took about three hours to remove each car.

Beside organizing races, the mission of Ballou's association is to maintain and clean up the trails on the Greenbelt used for its races.

"We want to leave them better than they were before. Today, people understood our commitment

to the environment. It was a great day for us. We all left the trail with a good feeling," said Ballou.

His inspiring feat snowballed into a full-blown cleanup, as officials from the Parks Department, the Greenbelt and the Sanitation Department descended onto the trail. Parks officials swept the trail after the car shells were removed and Sanitation helped the crew properly dispose of heavier automobile parts.

The trail will be used for High Rock Adventure Challenge on April 28, which is attracting runners from all over the country. For more details on the group or race, visit [www.nyara.org](http://www.nyara.org).