



anvec

REPORT

SUMMER 2014

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Get NJ back in RGGI clean air pact

Earth Day round up

Is citizen science right for your town?



Director's Report

Three decades' view

This summer, I will retire from ANJEC after nearly 30 years working here, which offers me the opportunity to reflect on three decades of environmental policy in New Jersey.

Though we've had ups and downs along the way, the State has made incremental progress in environmental policy resulting in some of the strongest laws in the nation. These landmark pieces of legislation include the Freshwater Wetlands Act, the mandatory recycling law, the Highlands Act, the Global Warming Response Act and several open space bond issues. Each law required major effort by a coalition of interests cooperating for passage. The compromises made to gain everyone's support means that none of the laws is perfect; however each marks a major advancement in environmental protection.

Good legislation is just the first step. Laws are implemented through regulations developed by the Executive Branch, in our case the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Some regulations have been comprehensive and effective, while others might be a step backward. An example of the latter is the current weakening of the regulations to remove New Jersey from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, the multistate cap-and-trade program that limits climate-changing pollution from power plants. (See the article page 4 and the ANJEC website for information on how to protest this action.)

Even when regulations are effective, they still need strict enforcement, and currently this is a great concern. In recent years, the number of State environmental enforcement actions has fallen substantially and the number of DEP enforcement inspectors is also down.

In addition, we have also seen how easily the Governor can subvert the intention of laws through his power of appointment. Recently the Pinelands Commission voted against a proposed pipeline through the Pinelands. In the following months, replacements have been proposed for three of the Commissioners who voted against the pipeline to punish them and to create a Commission that will vote the way the Governor wants.

People need to use the public process to voice their concerns on governmental actions. To paraphrase the quote attributed to Thomas Jefferson, "The price of *environmental protection* is eternal vigilance." We must constantly monitor the actions of the Governor, the NJ Legislature and the DEP to be sure that laws remain strong and enforced.

Local government, too

Over the years, environmental protection efforts on the local level have also had their ups and downs. A mayor can greatly add to the effectiveness of the environmental commission by appointing knowledgeable and dedicated people. In addition, the local government can turn to the commission for advice on environmental matters, and can provide sufficient funding so that the commission can do its work effectively.

Sometimes, we have seen town councils that have not recognized the value of their commissions' work and have failed to support them. Usually, after time, the commission regains its strength as new people get elected to office.

To make sure that a commission continues to get support, it should continue to let the municipal council know about its accomplishments. Individually, citizens can raise environmental concerns as issues in local

elections, to reflect residents' concerns. If all else fails, run for office yourself! Many environmental commissioners have won elections to their town government, and have enhanced local policy with their environmental background and expertise.

Throughout the highs and lows of advocating for environmental protection in New Jersey, I have been inspired by the dedication and hard work of the environmental commissions and the ANJEC staff and trustees who work diligently to assist them. Incrementally their efforts have benefited communities throughout the State – preserving open space, restoring contaminated sites, guiding development, informing residents, saving energy and working in myriad other ways to improve their towns and cities.

It has been my honor and privilege to serve as ANJEC's executive director over these past years and I look forward to continuing to celebrate the accomplishments of the organization and environmental commissions throughout New Jersey in the future.

Sandy Batty
Sandy Batty
Executive Director

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565 MUNICIPALITIES ONE ENVIRONMENT

Executive Director Sandy Batty
Editor Julie Lange Groth

The Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions is a private, non-profit educational organization serving environmental commission and open space committee members, concerned individuals, non-profits, and local officials. ANJEC's programs aim to promote the public interest in natural resource preservation, sustainable development and reclamation and support environmental commissions and open space committees working with citizens and other non-profit organizations.

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On the cover: *A caterpillar attends the dedication of the Environmental Commission's butterfly garden in Fanwood.* Photo by Gary Szelc

What you can do to get New Jersey back into the RGGI clean air pact

By **Doug O'Malley**, Environment New Jersey Director

Global warming is perhaps the most confounding of all local issues to work on as an environmental commissioner. It is – by its very definition – not local, and yet the last decade has shown in study after study that global warming’s impacts are affecting us right now, from sea level rise to increased extreme weather.

As the climate science has become terrifyingly clear, it also leaves us to wonder what we can do to change its course. In a post-Sandy world, there has been an increased focus on preparing for future storms, building more resilient communities and embracing sustainability. But we also need to remind ourselves that communities across New Jersey can shape State policy.

New Jersey historically has been a leader on clean energy and fighting climate change. In 2007 the New Jersey Legislature passed the *Global Warming Response Act*, one of the nation’s strongest laws mandating reductions in carbon emissions by 80 percent by 2050. And even before that, starting in 2005, New Jersey along with other Northeastern states started discussions that led to the formation of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) in 2008, a groundbreaking ten-

state program to reduce global warming pollution from existing power plants in the region and fund clean energy programs. This program has proven effective at reducing carbon pollution across the region, facilitating local clean energy projects and providing long-term consumer benefits.

Unfortunately, in May 2011, Gov. Chris Christie unilaterally decided – with no public or legislative input – to pull New Jersey out of RGGI. The Legislature tried to override the Governor’s decision – with support from local town councils – but fell short of the needed supermajority. In 2012, Environment New Jersey and Natural Resource

Defense Council (NRDC) filed and won a lawsuit in State court, alleging the Christie Administration broke State law by not allowing public comment on the decision to withdraw New Jersey from the regulations governing RGGI. As a result, the Administration is now complying with the ruling by planning a 60-day public comment period starting on July 7 and stretching into early September.

Thankfully, the Christie Administration is being held to account for its lack of action on climate change. In early June, the Environmental Protection Agency released the *Clean Power Plan*, a historic



Doug O'Malley

proposal to reduce carbon pollution from existing power plants nationwide. For the first time, no state – or fossil fuel power plant – will be able to spew carbon pollution into the air without consequence. The *Plan*, which is in the midst of a public comment period, will require states to submit their implementation plans by 2016 using a variety of strategies to reduce global warming pollution, including switching away from the dirtiest fossil fuels to investing in clean energy and energy efficiency programs. If states balk at submitting a plan, the EPA will step in with a federal plan. The proposal was certainly modeled after state programs like RGGI – and joining RGGI is one of the easiest ways for New Jersey to comply with these EPA standards.

So what does this mean for your town?

The EPA *Clean Power Plan* will ensure that no state can fail to act on climate change. Especially for New Jersey, with our history of leadership on clean energy and the impacts we suffered under Hurricane Sandy, the need is paramount. The EPA carbon rule proposal clearly states that the easiest method to comply is to join the RGGI program. So why is the NJ Department of Environmental Protection proposing to officially leave the program?


Here's what you can do to oppose this maneuver, knowing that action by a multitude of towns can really make an impact:

- Contact the Governor's office and your State legislators urging them to rejoin the RGGI program in whatever way possible, and ask others to do likewise.
- Ask your governing body to pass a resolution calling for the State to rejoin RGGI.
- Offer testimony, either in person or by email, during the public hearing process to build up a huge drumbeat of local support.
- Send press releases or write letters to the editors of local media to build attention to this critical climate issue in the dog days of summer.

A great report from our allies at Environment Northeast documents the program's strengths, what's at stake, and why these local actions matter. It shows that RGGI has:

- contributed to reducing carbon pollution by almost 30 percent;
- cut electricity prices by 8 percent;
- created more than 23,000 job-years of work;
- locked in more than \$1.8 billion in long-term savings on energy bills;
- added more than \$2.4 billion in economic activity to the region.

More info

ANJEC has provided a sample resolution, talking points and a press release template for municipalities to use in working to return New Jersey to RGGI. Find them at www.anjec.org/Alerts.htm#RGGI. 

Doug O'Malley is director of Environment New Jersey, a state-wide citizen-based advocacy group based in Trenton, representing over 20,000 citizen members across the state.

Don't Miss Out!

If we don't have your current email address, you could be missing valuable information from ANJEC.

ANJEC is depending more and more on email to share late-breaking environmental news, announcements about trainings and grants, and other developing information of interest to local environmentalists. To make sure you're in the loop, **send your current email address to info@anjec.org.**

Acting Locally



By **N. Dini Checko**, ANJEC Resource Center
and **Cheryl Reardon**, ANJEC Project Director

Earth Day – Jersey style

Earth Day was founded on April 22, 1970, by Senator Gaylord Nelson with the intention to inspire awareness and appreciation for the Earth's natural environment. Here are just a few examples of the 44th Earth Day activities of NJ environmental commissioners and their partners.

Washington Twp. (Gloucester) 24th Annual Earth Day Celebration, Washington Lake Park, April 16

The Washington Twp. Environmental Commission educated visitors on environmental topics and increased awareness of water quality, litter and pollution problems at this free event. The Commission gave away 1800 white pine and black gum tree seedlings along with basil plants and other goodies. Local Girl Scouts made s'mores in pizza box solar ovens, conducted trail tours and held a groundbreaking ceremony for their upcoming butterfly garden.

Among the 100 exhibitors and vendors were NJ Food & Water Watch, Fin Free New Jersey, the Gloucester County Nature Club, Master Gardeners, the Washington Township Open Space Commission, the Office of Recycling, several 4H clubs and local animal shelters as well as vendors selling recycled crafts and jewelry, food vendors and face painters. Each year, the Commission hosts a 4th grade poster contest and the winners were awarded prizes and congratulated by local elected officials. There was live and recorded music and, in memory of past Commissioner Paul Greger, a bench overlooking the park's Koi Pond was dedicated.



South Plainfield Girl Scout Troop #65014 helped distribute free tree saplings/tubelings donated to the Township of Edison by the Arbor Day Foundation as part of the NJ Hurricane Sandy Tree Restoration Program.

Edison Earth Day Papaiani Park, April 27

About 1,000 presenters, speakers, vendors, volunteers and visitors participated in an energizing day that included cleanup around Lake Papaiani, Test America environmental testing and gardening programs.



Beekeeper Josephine Giaim at Highland Park Earth Day

Sustainable Highland Park Earth Day, Highland Park Environmental Center, April 27

This great event included lots of fun activities such as learning about beekeeping, raising chickens, scavenger hunts, composting and rain barrel demos.



Volunteers clear the walking paths at the Green Village Pond Conservation Area.

Chatham Township Environmental Commission's Twelfth Annual Open Space Workday, Green Village Pond Conservation Area, April 19

Over 50 volunteers came to pick up trash, prune brambles, spread woodchips on the trail and enjoy a taste of spring on this beautiful 30 acres of woodlands, marshes, streams and a natural pond. One volunteer even found a natural treasure, an intact set of deer antlers!



Arm-of-the-Sea Theater Production at South Orange River Day

South Orange River Day Rahway River, May 4

This annual community gathering to clean up the East Branch of the Rahway River was a huge success with one ton of garbage taken out of the water with the help of over 300 volunteers. Fun activities promoted environmental awareness, including the Arms-of-the-Sea Theater performances and the wild edibles walk and cook-off.



Environmental Commission Member Denise Rolong with ANJEC's water conservation prize wheel game at Rahway Day

Rahway Day Rahway Public Library, May 3

"Think Rahway First" was a great opportunity for Rahway residents to learn about all that the community has to offer, from its public library system to water conservation tips from the environmental commission.

**Woodbridge Twp.
Earth Day Fair**
Woodbridge
Community Center,
April 19

Woodbridge Environmental Commission created a video highlighting the eco-friendly vendors, educational material and activities of the fair, including plant seedlings distribution, home energy audits and the grand opening of a seed library. Check out the video at www.facebook.com/GreenableWoodbridge. 



Woodbridge Environmental Commission shares the limelight with the Arbor Day Foundation

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plus

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When the best laid plans fail to protect

By **John A. Thonet**, Thonet Associates, Inc.,
Environmental Planning and Engineering Design Consultants,
and **Blaine Rothausser**, BR Environmental, LLC

*“Don’t it always seem to go
That you don’t know what you’ve got
Till it’s gone.
They paved paradise
And put up a parking lot.”¹*

Active Citizens for Responsible Sustainability, Inc. (“ACRES”), is a non-profit advocacy group whose mission is “protecting pocket woodlands in our neighborhoods ...one acre at a time.”

ACRES’ first project sought to preserve a small, pocket woodland at Bernards High School in Bernardsville, where the Board of Education (BOE) announced plans to clear-cut hundreds of trees, some 50 to over 150 years old, from over an acre of the school’s woodlands, in order to construct a small (15,000 square feet) expansion of existing ball fields. Sound familiar? The BOE’s plan is very reminiscent of Joni Mitchell’s 1970 hit song, “Big Yellow Taxi.”

Environmentally important

The high school’s woodlands are located in headwaters of two tributary streams to Penn’s Brook, itself a tributary to the Great Swamp. Although small in size, the woodlands are part of a larger, ecologically productive greenway that connects the school property to the nearby Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge.

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) designated these streams as regulated “State open waters” with protected riparian buffers and also identified a small, EPA priority wetland within the area to be cleared.

The US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) found the project site suitable for federally protected migratory birds and federally endangered Indiana bats and recommended that tree clearing be prohibited each year from March 15th through September 30th.

A habitat survey, conducted over a day and an evening by ACRES’ environmental consultant BR Environmental, documented the presence of 23 bird species, seven mammals, two amphibians, one reptile, 73 species of moths and other insects, and 32 species of plants, as well as the trees themselves.

Bernardsville planned for preservation

On behalf of ACRES, Thonet Associates reviewed Bernardsville’s written plans, policies, reports and ordinances regarding the preservation woodlands and streams and found none of the documents supported the BOE’s requested ball field expansion.

For example, in 2009, Bernardsville’s Borough Engineer prepared a report identifying one of the high school’s streams as experiencing significant erosion along its banks and channel and documenting that the other stream was in need of monitoring as part of a maintenance program for the remaining downstream portions of the tributary to Penn’s Brook.

¹ From the song lyrics of “Big Yellow Taxi” by Joni Mitchell, 1970

In that report, the Borough Engineer recommended that an “overlay district” be established for all properties within the watershed of these streams, including the high school property itself, with a stormwater management strategy, requiring more stringent runoff control standards than otherwise required in the Borough to minimize further channel and bank erosion in the tributaries to Penn’s Brook.

The Borough *Master Plan*, within its adopted *Stormwater Management Plan*, also discusses the high school’s streams, designating them as “mitigation areas” to be used for construction projects elsewhere in the Borough that were unable to fully comply with the Borough’s stormwater management standards.

The Borough’s *Stormwater Management Plan* further references the Borough’s *Tree Protection Ordinance* as a key, Borough-wide “nonstructural stormwater management strategy,” stating that the ordinance would be expanded to include not just the preservation of trees, but also the preservation of “forested areas.” The Borough’s existing *Stormwater Management Ordinance* requires development projects to “minimize land disturbance,” including in forested areas, “to the maximum extent practicable.”

Because the Borough’s plans, policies, reports and ordinances so clearly encourage preservation of the Borough’s woodlands and streams and specifically recognize the high school’s streams as being in need of protection and restoration, ACRES expected that the Borough would act responsibly to ensure the ball field expansion plan would undergo a thorough site plan review, with particular attention to identifying alternative plans that could meet the high school’s needs, but comply with the Borough’s environmentally protective plans, policies, reports and ordinances.

ACRES’ proposed alternative field orientation

To minimize tree clearing, ACRES developed an “alternative field orientation” plan, designed to meet the BOE’s immediate ball field expansion objectives while reducing the required tree clearing by over 85 percent. This alternative plan, suggested originally by the chairman of the Borough’s Planning Board, received favorable comments from the Environmental Commission and several members of the Planning Board.

ACRES’ alternative would eliminate the need for purchasing and importing a large quantity of fill material. There would be no need for construction of elaborate stormwater management facilities, and the USFWS tree clearing restrictions would not apply. The project would require approval from only one outside agency, the Somerset Union Soil Conservation District (SUSCD).

The ACRES alternative would preserve hundreds of trees and could be constructed immediately at an estimated savings to taxpayers of hundreds of thousands of dollars.

In early December of 2013, ACRES submitted this plan to the Planning Board, who declined to formally consider it on advice of the BOE’s attorney and the Borough’s planner, and postponed consideration of ACRES’ alternative plan until a formal site plan/variance hearing could be scheduled before the Zoning Board of Adjustment.



B. PRETZ

So what happened?

The Mayor and Council granted the BOE a waiver of the Tree Protection Ordinance that would have precluded excessive tree clearing. Council conditioned the granting of that waiver on fulfillment of “Reasonable Conditions,” including the Borough engineer’s review of stormwater drainage calculations, and receipt of all required agency approvals and permits prior to commencing work.

These “Reasonable Conditions” delayed approval of the project for about 10 months because the BOE’s originally prepared plans failed to comply with the Borough’s Stormwater Management Ordinance, the SUSCD’s Soil Erosion and Sediment Control rules, the NJDEP’s *Flood Hazard Area Control Act* regulations and the New Jersey *Freshwater Wetlands Protection Act* Rules.

During this extended delay, as ACRES continued to comment on the plan’s environmental and regulatory deficiencies, the BOE revised its plans seven times to avoid disturbance of NJDEP-regulated riparian buffers and EPA priority wetlands, to add required stormwater detention/infiltration facilities, and to respond to other changes required by the Borough Engineer and the SUSCD.

Unfortunately, before the BOE even applied for the site plan/variance approval, the Council permitted the BOE to begin preparing the site for the ball field expansion by clear-cutting the project area’s woodlands.

This premature clear-cutting of the site’s woodlands effectively precluded the Zoning Board of Adjustment and the public from even considering ACRES’ alternative plan. After all, why bother to consider an alternative plan that would preserve the site’s trees, if all of those trees had already been cut down.

Current status of the project

By the end of May, 15 months had passed since the BOE prepared its first set of plans for the project. No local approvals had yet been granted for the construction of the fields except for the premature clear-

cutting of the area. While ACRES’ alternative plan could have been readily constructed for immediate use by students, the BOE’s proposed plan remained unapproved.

To make matters worse, stormwater runoff from the high school property has increased due to the clear-cutting of over an acre of trees, undoubtedly accompanied by increased erosion within and along the already unstable tributary to Penn’s Brook, to the potential detriment of all downstream property owners and the stream itself.

Lessons learned

Simply put, it is not enough for a town to prepare good plans, reports, policies and regulations aimed at providing sound land use planning and environmental protection. A town’s governing body, land use boards and public entities must also act in a responsible manner that ensures compliance. Otherwise, what’s the point of having spent taxpayers’ money to prepare those planning documents and ordinances?

ACRES, together with Bernardsville’s Environmental Commission, the Borough Engineer, the SUSCD, the NJDEP and the USFWS, should be commended for their conscientious efforts to ensure that the BOE’s project, once constructed, will comply with all applicable environmental regulations. However the actions of Bernardsville’s elected officials constitute a missed opportunity to teach high school students and the community at large about the art of compromise – that responsible land use management and athletic fields can coexist.

In addition, the Mayor and Council’s actions, and the BOE’s project itself, send the message that a small expansion of a ball field is more important than preserving their world’s natural environment... even if it’s only one acre at a time. It’s an unfortunate message. 

Stormwater control:

Doing it right in your town

By **David Peifer**, ANJEC Project Director

In 2004, the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) adopted two new sets of rules related to stormwater control to comply with the federal Clean Water Act. According to DEP, these rules, “establish a comprehensive framework for addressing water quality impacts associated with existing and future stormwater discharges.” But ten years later, implementation remains uneven and the rules are poorly understood at the municipal level.

The New Jersey Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NJPDES) Stormwater Regulation Program Rules (NJAC 7:14A) deal with pollution from existing stormwater runoff. Municipalities that operate separate storm sewer systems, referred to as MS4s, must obtain and abide by a NJPDES Municipal Stormwater Discharge Permit

that establishes basic requirements for pollutant removal. Municipalities also are responsible for adopting local ordinances to control litter, pet waste, wildlife feeding, and waste disposal. They must also address street sweeping, catch basin cleaning, control of solids and floatables, locating discharge points, stenciling catch basins and, importantly for commissions, public education on stormwater issues. Although municipalities enacted ordinances based on models provided by the DEP, environmental commissions are sometimes not familiar with them.

DEP’s Stormwater Management Rules (NJAC 7:8) govern the contents and preparation of municipal or regional stormwater plans. Municipalities experiencing shared stormwater problems with neighboring

At Fanwood Public Library volunteers planted a rain garden, a non-structural stormwater management technique.



communities can join together to produce a regional stormwater plan.

Stormwater management plans exhibit a wide range of approaches, from bare minimum to more comprehensive treatments. State rules set the minimum requirements, but there is no reason a municipality cannot be more detailed, thorough or expansive. East Amwell Township (www.eastamwelltownship.com/Stormwater-Management-Plan.pdf) produced a particularly comprehensive plan.

The *Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL)* requires stormwater management plans to be adopted into the municipality's Master Plan. Commissions should familiarize themselves with their towns' stormwater management plans and implementing ordinances and consider possible needs to upgrade or expand them.

These rules establish stormwater facility design and performance standards for new developments. They require maintaining groundwater recharge, run-off quantity and quality control, buffers around Category One (C1) waters and use of non-structural methods. (www.nj.gov/dep/stormwater/sw_rule_faqs.htm).

Hamilton Township: A case in point

In 2010, the Delaware Riverkeeper Network conducted a detailed study of stormwater rule compliance in Hamilton Twp. (Mercer). Twelve projects approved by the Hamilton Twp. Planning Board were reviewed using a standard 100-point scale to grade adherence to the rules. The average compliance grade was 42 percent, with a dismal 13 percent for use of nonstructural stormwater management strategies, a primary goal of the program.

The report also made a series of 15 recommendations to improve stormwater practice by municipalities and the DEP. (*Evaluating Local Performance: Delaware Riverkeeper Network Study of Hamilton Township 2010* - www.delawareriverkeeper.org/resources/Reports/Hamilton_Twp_NJ_SWM_Implementation_Report.pdf)

Hamilton Township responds

In June, 2011, Hamilton Twp. partnered with Rutgers Cooperative Extension Water Resources Program and two members of the Environmental Commission, Chairman Lester Finch and Haig Kasabach - also a member of the Planning Board - to produce the *Hamilton Township Hydrology Report*.

(http://water.rutgers.edu/Projects/Hamilton/FINAL_Hydrology_Report_09092011.pdf)

This report provided objective information about the municipality's water resources. The report goes beyond stormwater concerns to include information about watershed protection and makes specific recommendations for municipal actions, including:

- development of a "Stormwater Model" to predict future impacts from land use changes and climate change;
- performing a detailed impervious cover analysis to guide stormwater control approaches;
- inspecting conditions at existing detention basins;
- creating a GIS database for stormwater basins and other stormwater infrastructure;
- mapping stormwater devices to help in evaluating their suitability;
- conducting a survey of riparian areas;
- monitoring water quality of lakes.

Overall, the hydrology study provided an excellent basis for a broad range of water resources decision-making.

The Watershed and Stormwater Management Implementation Plan

Following the hydrology study, Hamilton and Rutgers also issued the *Watershed and Stormwater Management Implementation Plan* in 2012. http://water.rutgers.edu/Projects/Hamilton/FINAL_Implementation_Plan_Complete_02142012.pdf

The goals of the Plan included: engaging the community to protect water resources, managing water quality, minimizing flooding, implementing Phase II stormwater controls and improving facility maintenance.

One of the recommended actions in the *Plan* was an inventory and evaluation of vernal pools, completed with an ANJEC grant in 2013. The methodology employed may be useful for other commissions working to preserve these ecological resources. (www.kratzerenv.com/files/Hamilton_Vernal_Report_12-20-2013.pdf)


Hamilton has made dramatic progress in improving stormwater and water resources management in a relatively short time. These efforts, begun under considerable negative pressure, were possible because of the municipality's commitment, cooperation with Rutgers Cooperative Extension, working with the Environmental Commission and funding support from several sources, including ANJEC.

Help for municipalities


To address the statewide need to improve stormwater management perfor-

mance, ANJEC and Rutgers Cooperative Extension teamed up to present three workshops on stormwater management for municipalities this spring. The presentations were designed to make environmental commissions, planning boards and elected officials aware of their responsibilities for stormwater management and to give them the tools to improve their performance.

One important element of this training is a series of questions to ask applicants during site plan review to assess conformance with the stormwater rules. A PowerPoint presentation is available at www.anjec.org/pdfs/Congress2013-StormwaterReviewCObropta.pdf. The list of questions is at www.anjec.org/pdfs/Congress2013-StormwaterQuestionnaireHandout.pdf.

Rutgers CE Water Resources Program plans to offer online training in stormwater management. Watch your ANJEC email for the announcement. 

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Protecting your wetlands treasure

By **Jody Carrara**, ANJEC South Jersey Project Director

Spring and summer are a great time to explore your local freshwater wetlands. A nighttime hike with a flashlight will introduce you to the variety of fauna that use the wetlands either for reproduction or their entire life cycle. Whether a red maple, Atlantic white cedar or hemlock “swamp,” New Jersey’s wetlands provide breeding and watering grounds for significant populations of reptiles, amphibians, fish mammals and birds.

- Nearly all reptiles and amphibians depend upon wetlands for breeding and reside there.
- Muskrat and beaver depend entirely on the stream/wetland ecosystem; other mammals like deer depend upon the fresh water.
- New Jersey waterfowl depend upon wetlands, as do migratory song birds such as warblers.

The recreation that wetlands provide for hunting, fishing and ecotourism bring millions of dollars into local economies. Freshwater wetlands also provide critical services to residents that would cost municipalities millions to duplicate. Freshwater wetlands: soak up flood waters and mitigate drought conditions; trap and clean pollutants from stormwater runoff before it flows to streams; collect sediment; and provide aquifer recharge and stream flow maintenance. Imagine the money the taxpayer would save had our forefathers recognized the value of wetlands and preserved them. There would be no need to treat stormwater since the wetlands would do it!

Memories of wetlands past

If your town has been consistently flooded in recent years, look at an old map to see if there used to be a wetland

forest along the stream banks. Today, flood protection and resiliency have become the buzz words in New Jersey. State wetlands regulations preempt municipal authority to adopt ordinances regulating freshwater wetlands. However, your town can pass ordinances and plans to protect other natural resources.

For example:

- **Stream corridor buffer/overlay zone** – Require that 150 feet or more of vegetated stream buffer be deed-restricted and remain undisturbed if development occurs.
- **Stormwater management** – Follow NJDEP guidelines calling for retention of vegetation.
- **Sediment control** – Ensure that new development prevents erosion and require a full-time inspector for large jobs.
- **Steep slope overlay** – Protect slopes of 25 percent or less from erosion and prohibit development on land sloped above 25 percent.
- **Cluster ordinance** – Allow development to be clustered closer together in order to preserve 50 percent of the lot as deed-restricted open space
- **Open space plans** – Map critical areas such as stream corridors, wetlands and floodplains and include sufficient buffers on open space.

Besides your local ordinances, State and federal laws protect wetlands, including the *Freshwater Wetlands Protection Act* (N.J.S.A. 13:9B), passed in 1987. Information about wetlands law and New Jersey freshwater wetlands maps can be found at: www.nj.gov/dep/landuse/fww.html.

Another tool for local protection is restoration of degraded habitats. Towns throughout New Jersey are restoring



*Great
Swamp
National
Wildlife
Refuge*

Photo by
Jesper Rautell Balle

wetlands and stream banks through partnerships with nonprofits, land trusts, corporations and state and federal government. In one project, the South Jersey Land Trust worked with the NJDEP, the New Jersey Conservation Foundation, Ducks Unlimited and others to restore 42 acres of wetland habitat within the Cedar Lake headwaters of the Great Egg Harbor River. The project provides critical nesting and feeding habitat for various species of resident and migratory waterfowl and shorebirds.

In another project, The North Jersey Resource Conservation and Development Council restored 1,630 feet of Walnut Brook in Mine Brook Park. The project stabilized 400 feet of eroding stream banks, enhanced in-stream fish habitat, created a 400-foot riparian forest buffer and improved wildlife habitat in the riparian corridor.

New Jersey regulations encourage minimal disturbance of wetlands, and promote a “no net loss policy.” Nonetheless, over 40 percent of New Jersey’s wetlands have been lost to farming and development, and wetlands can still be drained, filled and mitigated.

What commissions can do

Let residents know about the laws. The tools we’ve discussed will assist your town

with resiliency, but educating residents and officials about the importance of wetlands may be your most important tool. For example, the Borough of Montvale Environmental Commission educates residents about the importance of wetlands on their municipal web page:

www.montvale.org/index.php/boards-a-commissions/environmental-commission/freshwater-wetlands-in-montvale/wetlands-faq.html.

Lead a wetland hike and introduce your residents to the wonderful variety of creatures living there. Bring the bug spray, but let residents know that healthy wetlands actually reduce mosquito populations by providing predator habitat. In fact, in Essex County, Massachusetts, the restoration of a 1,500 acre wetland cut the mosquito population by 90 percent.

Take your bird book and identify the warblers; wait for dark and hear the frogs begin their chorus; sit quietly and watch the deer come for a drink. Enjoy your wetlands...and don’t forget your boots!

For more information, the ANJEC handbook “Freshwater Wetlands Protection in New Jersey: A Manual for Local Officials” is available through the ANJEC website (www.anjec.org/Pubs/Water.htm) or by calling (973) 539-7547. 🌿

Citizen science: How everyone can help natural resource management

By **Lewis E. Gorman III**, Chair, Cherry Hill Environmental Board

Managing public lands well requires good intentions, energy, commitment, support and consistency. However, these must all be based upon requisite knowledge and experience. Professional natural resource managers rely on scientific knowledge to guide their actions as they care for the lands and waters under their jurisdiction. In New Jersey, these lands include state forests, state wildlife management areas and national wildlife refuges.

Where do natural resource managers get the scientific information they need? Universities and scientific research published in professional journals are primary sources, but they cannot provide all the research data needed. Today, citizen volunteers have become key players in gathering research data on animals, plants and their habitats. For environmental commissions, citizen science offers an excellent opportunity to engage the community in the shared goals of protecting the local environment and helping wild nature through conservation community service.

How to get started

First, answer this question: What plants or animals are of particular concern to my environmental commission, board or organization? Then, find a relevant citizen science program to work with.

Interested in dragonflies? The Migratory Dragonfly Partnership operates a citizen science program that gathers regular monitoring and centralized reporting data

from participants across three nations to help answer some of the many questions currently surrounding dragonfly migration. This site will allow you to submit dragonfly migration observations.

www.migratorydragonflypartnership.org/index/welcome

How about birds? Contact the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. Do croaking frogs interest your organization? Is the loss of wetlands an issue for your municipality? The US Geological Survey, a bureau of the US Department of the Interior, operates the North American Amphibian Monitoring Program in conjunction with the NJ Department of Environmental Protection. Frog Watch USA is a citizen scientist program run by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. One website, www.scistarter.com, can help locate a citizen science project on nearly any topic imaginable. These organizations and others need assistance collecting data that supports natural resource conservation and management research.

Citizen science offers the dual benefit of helping scientists and natural resource managers gather information from the environment while serving as an outreach mechanism connecting people to nature. Research indicates that citizen science contributes to large-scale conservation spanning long time periods and geographic ranges.¹

1 Devictor, Whittaker, & Beltrame, 2010

Lew Gorman records frog calls at a pond in his town of Cherry Hill for the North American Amphibian Monitoring Program.



Bringing people and nature together

Richard Louv stresses the importance of nature education and connecting kids to nature in his book, *Last Child in the Woods*. A connection to nature is critical to caring for biodiversity and habitat conservation, and to supporting private programs and public funding to care for land and waters. Citizen science projects are a powerful tool to connect Americans, especially youth, to nature.


State and federal agencies care about bringing people and nature together. Through their Urban Connection program, the US Forest Service (US Department of Agriculture) seeks to introduce the natural world to people, particularly those in urban settings, who have little opportunity for exploring woods, streams, grasslands, ponds and trails. The US Fish and Wildlife Service, also a bureau of the US Department of the Interior, recently initiated the Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership Program. Much like the US Forest Service, the National Wildlife Refuge System embraces the idea of bringing people into nature, especially in areas where there is little access to public lands.

Citizen science offers a powerful tool to nurture a closer relationship between humans and their environment while providing a valuable contribution to scientific knowledge. The data collected helps managers of natural lands and waters make informed decisions to conserve plants and wildlife.

Realizing the potential of citizen science as a potent conservation instrument, NatureServe, a network connecting science with conservation, partnered with Texas Parks and Wildlife and iNaturalist to build a smartphone app that will help

volunteers gather scientific data on Texas species at-risk. The data are then shared with researchers and Texas natural resource managers who manage land and aquatic habitats for targeted species.

Although New Jersey may not yet have a special citizen's science app, there are plenty of opportunities to get your municipality's students and residents outside collecting substantive scientific data about local plants and wildlife while enjoying the natural surroundings. A growing appreciation of open space lands and support of environmentally sensitive land use will surely result from citizens engaged as scientists. Because of the myriad of excellent resources available and due to the urgent need for data, now is the time for environmental organizations to take up the challenge to expand citizen scientist efforts locally.

Besides, it's fun! 



By **Kerry Miller**, ANJEC Assistant Director

Commission hopes deer enclosure will protect wildflowers

The South Plainfield Environmental Commission has a long history of stewardship of a 36-acre natural area now known as the Highland Woods Environmental Education Reserve. The Commission was instrumental in saving the parcel from development in the early 1990s and has felt a sense of ownership of the Reserve since then.

Nestled between residential neighborhoods and light industrial facilities in this built-out older suburb in Middlesex County, the land had approximately 150 species of native wildflowers when surveyed in 1996.

The Commission helped to establish the Friends of the Woods (FOW) nonprofit organization and has worked closely with that group over the last two decades. When the Reserve received Watchable Wildlife designation from New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Endangered and Nongame Species Program in the late 1990s, the occasional deer wandering through was a pleasant attraction for visitors. "But about ten years ago, the deer started to become a nuisance as more and more open space was lost to development," says Environmental Commission Chairman Dorothy Miele. "The deer had no recourse but to forage for food in the Reserve and the surrounding area."

Fencing in flowers

The native wildflower population in the Reserve was being decimated, so the Commission and FOW engaged Dr. Emile DeVito, a South Plainfield biologist and

long-time collaborator, to discuss options. They settled on the idea of a pilot deer "enclosure" area to determine what benefits might accrue if they were to limit deer access to some or all of the preserve. Would old wildflower seeds in the soil germinate and thrive when protected from deer predation?

With a \$1500 ANJEC 2013 Open Space Stewardship Grant, supplemented by a \$500 donation from FOW, the groups were able to buy 600 feet of 14-gauge, 8-foot-high welded wire fencing, enough to



Volunteers erect fencing around the deer enclosure in South Plainfield.

enclose seven-tenths of an acre behind the Nature Center facility, and a gate.

Dr. DeVito and Dr. Alice Tempel, South Plainfield's Environmental Specialist, marked out the area. Volunteers cleared the fence area, minimizing disturbance as much as possible. They spent five hours installing six rolls of wire fencing and a padlocked gate.

The Commission will monitor the enclosure for five years, logging their observations. They will use the Bowman's Hill Wildflower Plant Stewardship Index (PSI), which assigns values from 0 -10 to each plant species observed, to track the vigor and diversity of wildflowers both inside and outside the fence.

Educational value

A hallmark of the Commission's relationship to the Reserve has been its community outreach and education activities with FOW. The deer enclosure has added a new dimension to the educational walks in the Reserve and increased opportunities for residents to get involved.

The groups held a well-publicized open house at the Reserve. Many residents, having read about the enclosure project in a series of local newspaper articles (triggered by press releases from the Commission), came to see what was going on. Guides from the Commission and FOW led four mixed-age tour groups through the property, telling the story of

the enclosure project and also recruiting volunteers to collect plant data inside and outside the fenced area over a five-year period.

The first official monitoring event took place on June 1. The session started with training for the "citizen scientist" community volunteers, to enable them to identify the species of plants they would encounter in the Reserve. Volunteers then surveyed 20 test plots which had been selected randomly at the start of the project. Ten are inside the enclosure and ten are outside.

Overall, the citizen scientists found that growth in both the protected and unprotected plots was lush.

The data did not show significant differences in the presence or vigor of wildflowers between the interior and exterior plots. Dr. DeVito believes that the unusually cold, snow-covered winter of 2013-14 minimized the ability of deer to browse the ground throughout the Reserve, and therefore provided a boost for the exterior plots. Regardless, the first data will serve as a baseline for the project, and a careful count of species in the initial data will also help Dr. DeVito to determine if more test plots are needed. Differences between the plots, if they occur, will become more apparent as time goes by.

This project will provide valuable data on which to base decisions about managing the Reserve. The Commission and FOW also hope that it will help them engage the community in a better understanding of

local ecology. They are looking forward to incorporating their observations into future walks and talks, and will continue to keep the community posted on what they find out.

For more information about this project, contact the ANJEC Resource Center at resourcecenter@anjec.org or (973) 539-7547. 🌱

Volunteers will continue tracking the vigor and diversity of wildflowers both inside and outside the fence.



ANJEC in the City

By **Chris Sturm**, NJ Future Senior Director of State Policy

New report highlights State's water infrastructure crisis

Case studies include Camden, Hoboken, Jersey City, and Paterson

New Jersey's cities face a multi-billion-dollar price to fix combined sewer systems that dump over seven billion gallons of raw sewage into our waterways every year. New Jersey Future has released a major report highlighting the extreme degree to which the water infrastructure in New Jersey's oldest cities is in disrepair; the threat this represents to those cities' economic vitality; and the many barriers faced by efforts to repair and upgrade it.

The report is being released in two parts. The first part, *Water Infrastructure in New Jersey's CSO Cities: Elevating the Importance of Upgrading New Jersey's Urban Water Systems*, is an analysis of the extent of the problems in cities with the most obsolete form of wastewater infrastructure, combined sewer systems. The analysis was prepared by a team led by Daniel Van Abs Ph.D., associate research professor in Rutgers' School of Environmental & Biological Sciences and current chairman of the New Jersey Clean Water Council. The second part of the report, *Ripple Effects*, summarizes the major findings in the Van Abs report and includes case studies from four New Jersey cities with combined sewer systems.

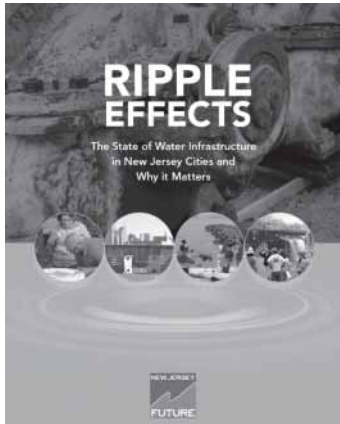
New regulatory requirements being imposed because of the federal Clean Water Act will force upgrades to these systems that have a multi-billion-dollar price tag, according to the report, an amount many of New Jersey's cities are unable to afford. However, as the report illustrates via case studies from four such cities, not upgrading this infrastructure can act as a significant drag on economic revitalization.

An economic imperative

"Upgrading our water infrastructure is not just a federal and state mandate," said Pete Kasabach, New Jersey Future's executive director. "It's an economic imperative for cities that want to continue attracting businesses and for residents

who seek an urban environment where they can enjoy clean, dependable drinking water and avoid encounters with raw sewage and stormwater."

"The fundamental issue we face is that our water infrastructure is degrading, it will cost a great deal to fix or replace and the costs will mount the longer we take to address the problem," said Van Abs. "But moving forward, we can improve both our infrastructure and our cities in cost-effective (though still expensive) ways."



After decades of decline, New Jersey cities have begun to outperform the rest of the state in population and employment growth. The water infrastructure upgrades now required by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection provide a great opportunity to fix ancient pipe systems that could threaten continued urban revitalization.

Among the report's findings

- The cities with the oldest water infrastructure are seeing renewed growth pressure. They accounted for one quarter of the State's population growth between 2008 and 2012, and are projected to absorb one-fifth of future population and employment growth through 2040.
- In the 21 New Jersey cities with combined sewer systems, even routine rainstorms cause sewage to flow into streams, rivers and bays, to flood streets and parks and to back up into homes, creating a public health hazard.
- Drinking water and wastewater pipes need attention statewide, but nowhere more than in our older cities, where pipe systems are routinely more than a century old. In Hoboken, one of the cities studied, some pipes date back to the time of the Civil War.
- New Jersey cities now face federal and State deadlines to control their combined sewer systems, at a projected cost of more than \$2 billion.

- Many of these cities lack the financial resources to pay for necessary upgrades; 36 percent of the State's residents who live in poverty live in these cities.
- Upgrading is further complicated by the maze of interwoven authorities that govern water distribution, collection and treatment. Though New Jersey's combined sewer discharges are on the scale of Philadelphia's, instead of one city water department, there are 18 entities in charge of sewage collection and eight sewage treatment authorities, in addition to many more that manage drinking water systems.
- Redevelopment and innovative approaches such as the use of green infrastructure, which help keep stormwater out of urban sewer systems are helping to alleviate and sometimes reverse the problem in some areas.

Urban case studies illustrate the degree to which residents and businesses are affected by their water infrastructure. In Camden, for example, a routine rainstorm can cause extensive flooding and sewage backups into residential areas, while in Jersey City, developers' foresight in the 1970s in installing water infrastructure with extra capacity has helped to enable the city's current waterfront redevelopment boom.

The report was funded by a grant from the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, and is available at www.njfuture.org/2014/05/06/new-report-water-infrastructure/. 

ANJEC's 2014 Environmental Achievement Awards

To be presented at the 41st Annual
New Jersey Environmental Congress

October 24 at Raritan Valley Community College, Branchburg

Deadline: Must be received by September 5, 2014

Mail entries to ANJEC, PO Box 157, Mendham, NJ 07945,
fax (973) 539-7713 or email info@anjec.org

For categories, application form and additional details,
see the ANJEC website at www.anjec.org or call (973) 539-7547

2014 ANJEC open space grants go to 15 towns

By **Kerry Miller**, ANJEC Assistant Director

As the first round of ANJEC Open Space Stewardship Grants in 2013 clearly demonstrated, environmental commissions can accomplish big things with a little bit of extra financial support and the help of community volunteers. This year's grants, announced in late April, promise to be just as productive.

Environmental commissions from 15 communities around the state received 2014 awards ranging from \$750 to \$1500. Their projects were selected from 60 applications received in April. The commissions are already snapping into action, using their new grants to carry out trails work, mapping, signage, cleanups, management plans, training and other tasks to enhance and increase stewardship of local open space.

- Hillsdale, Norwood and Verona are restoring and improving local trails, in some cases rerouting them to avoid wet or sensitive areas or to avoid large trees that fell in recent storms. Norwood hopes that by making trails in its 53-acre preserve more attractive to hikers and altering a stream crossing, they will also discourage illegal ATV use there.
- Franklin (Gloucester) and Woodstown will plant vegetation to enhance their parks, increase habitat, and also reduce goose droppings and sediment runoff around water features.
- Pitman is organizing a lake area cleanup event that will also educate local volunteers about the importance of permanently preserving the adjacent woods.
- Several commissions, including Madison Borough, will tackle invasive plants on open space parcels.

- New Brunswick and Hillsdale will publish open space guides. The New Brunswick Commission hopes that this project, featuring a public walking/bicycle tour, will inform the creation of an open space/parks/gardens master plan for the City.
- In Hopewell (Mercer), the Environmental Commission will update its inventory of conservation easements and conduct outreach to property owners.
- In Commercial Township, the Commission aims to increase residents' use and appreciation of a 25-acre lake park by installing identification, directional and interpretive signage.
- Maplewood's Commission will engage a landscape expert to train staff and volunteers in Maplewood and neighboring South Orange on organic turf field maintenance. They hope to create a model for other towns to follow.
- Several commissions, including Eatontown, Fair Haven and Peapack-Gladstone, will be using GPS to geolocate trails, environmental features, significant trees and the condition of resources on open space tracts. The GPS points will enable them to map and catalog information for ongoing monitoring and management, as well as to create walking and observation guides for the public.
- Commissions in Frelinghuysen and Peapack-Gladstone will hire naturalists to help them develop long-term management plans for preserved parcels in their towns.
In addition to their "on the ground" grant activities, commissions are required

to conduct community outreach – press releases, website and social media postings, newsletter articles, exhibits, speaking engagements – about their projects, to keep residents informed and also to raise the commission’s profile in the community. Many of the 2013 projects obtained great press coverage for their work by arranging for a reporter to attend a kickoff or ribbon-cutting event, or a community tour of the completed work, or by submitting articles and photos for posting on other



East Amwell Environmental Commission members and volunteers built a trail with their ANJEC Open Space Stewardship 2013 grant.

organizations’ websites.

For a full listing of the 2014 grantees, visit www.anjec.org/EnvCommissionGrantProgram.htm. While there, take a look at the scrapbook of 2013 projects (www.anjec.org/pdfs/OpenSpaceGrantsScrapbook.pdf), and stay tuned for the new entries from 2014 projects. 🌿

ANJEC awards Lechner Scholarship

Raleigh Kane has won the 2014 ANJEC Lechner Scholarship. Kane will be entering his senior year majoring in environmental policy, institutions and behavior at Rutgers University where he maintains a 3.9 grade point average and places consistently on the Dean’s List. He has been interning with the Milltown Environmental Commission and the Lawrence Brook Watershed Partnership.

Kane has been studying, locating and mapping the state of terrestrial invasive species on the Milltown portion of the Lawrence Brook. He has educated and worked with the middle school green team to remove English Ivy in preparation for building a community garden. Kane has also organized and coordinated volunteers to remove English Ivy from Mill Pond Park.

ANJEC awards this scholarship biannually in memory of Hermia Lechner to honor her commitment to the preservation of open space and natural resources in New Jersey. 🌿



Raleigh Kane

Every Penny Makes a Difference to ANJEC!

Help us assist environmental commissioners and other local officials working to protect the environment. As a nonprofit organization, ANJEC depends heavily on individual donations. Your support will mean that ANJEC remains a vital force for the environment in New Jersey.

Please help if you can by making a tax-deductible donation on our website at www.anjec.org/Donate.htm

Smart Planning Updates



By **David Peifer**, ANJEC Project Director

Highlands *Plan* up for review

In addition to the *Highlands Act*, protection of the critical natural resources of the region rests with the application of the *Regional Master Plan (RMP)* to local land use decision making. Municipalities with lands in the Preservation Area are required to conform their planning and zoning with the *RMP*, while those with land in the Planning Area have the option of doing so. This process is referred to as “Conformance” and is actively underway in many Highlands Communities.

The *Highlands Act* requires that the *RMP* be reviewed by the Highlands Council every six years with public input and formal public hearings. The current *RMP* was formally adopted in 2008. Although the hearings and opportunities for public input have not been scheduled yet, environmental commissions throughout the region should prepare to express their views when the time comes.

To move the process forward in an informed way, the Highlands Council has hired two consultants. The Regional Plan Association (www.rpa.org) has been charged with developing a “Master Plan Review Report.” RPA will analyze data on an array of natural, historic and cultural resources, transportation, future land use, landowner equity, sustainable economic development, air quality and implementation.

The final report will identify “indicators” and “milestones” to be used in future evaluations of the Regional Master Plan. There will also be opportunities for input in a series of outreach sessions, at least two Technical Advisory Groups and individual meetings with the consultants.

The second consulting contract was awarded to Place Works (www.placeworks.com) to perform a fiscal analysis, which will be incorporated into the Master Plan Review Report. The analysis will investigate a host of factors related to traditional economic indicators including: population, real estate, economic growth and municipal finance trends (2004 – 2014).

Land uses related to economic activity will also be evaluated, including the hospitality and service industry, agricultural, horticultural, forestry products, and commercial and industrial activity. An important product will be a “municipal fact book” describing fiscal conditions in each of the Highlands municipalities. The final report, a “Regional Economic Evaluation of the Highlands Region,” will identify key economic trends in the region, anticipated economic conditions and municipal finance conditions expected in the 2014 – 2024 timeframe.

To review the Requests for Proposals for the two consulting contracts go to www.state.nj.us/njhighlands/news/rfp.html or contact ANJEC’s Highlands Project Director at (973) 539-7547. 🌱

ANJEC Capitol Day: A visit to the eagles' nest

By **N. Dini Checko**, ANJEC Resource Center

Environmental commissioners and others had an opportunity on May 30 to interact with an all-star team of pro-environment legislators and advocates at the State House in Trenton. Ed Potosnak, Executive Director of NJ League of Conservation Voters, started the conversation with an introduction to the League's Common Agenda for the Environment, which reflects the shared policy priorities of funding open space, safeguarding clean water and securing clean air.


Senator Christopher "Kip" Bateman, Minority Conference Leader, continued the discussion with details for achieving the Common Agenda. For instance, he has sponsored and advanced legislation S1415 and S1416 to promote the use of green or blue roofs, using vegetation or mechanical devices to control water drainage and improve storm water management. Senator Bateman is encouraging his colleagues to embrace the paradigm that a clean environment is also good for business.

Assemblyman Daniel Benson, Environment and Solid Waste Committee, offered some insights into the legislative process. First, he said, it's more difficult to get environmental bills through the Assembly versus the Senate. Second, don't assume anything is a done deal; it's critical to put pressure on your legislators.

Senator Bob Smith, Energy and Environment Committee Chair, has a long and illustrious public service record beginning with chairman-

ship of the Piscataway Environmental Commission. Senator Smith discussed his top priorities, including SCR 84, a resolution that asks voters this November to approve a constitutional amendment to dedicate \$150 million of the corporation business tax to preserve open space, farmland and historic structures. He also advocates new legislation to manage state forests that are in dire need of stewardship.

Doug O'Malley, Director of Environment NJ, rallied and encouraged the commissioners to use their unique knowledge to voice environmental concerns. He advised getting to know local town officials and mayors because they belong to the NJ League of Municipalities, the most influential voice in State politics. O'Malley said New Jersey's involvement with the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) is an extremely pressing and critical issue. (See page 4.) July 7th is the start of a 60-day public comment period where citizens can express concerns about the Christie Administration's repeal of the RGGI rules.

(www.environmentnewjersey.org/programs/nje/stop-clean-air-rollback). 



Senator Bob Smith speaking at ANJEC Capitol Day

Remembering Peggy Snyder

The New Jersey environmental community lost one of its most thoughtful, persuasive and respected champions when Margaret “Peggy” Snyder died suddenly in May. A civil engineer with a master’s degree in computer science, she spent most of her career fighting to preserve wetlands throughout the State.

“With Peggy, it was always about changing the world,” said Scott Olson, a Byram Twp. official. “Peggy was an environmentalist’s engineer. She knew the rules, line by line, and did everything in her power to make sure applicants – and perhaps more importantly, local planning boards or the DEP – stuck to them.”


Peggy was a founding member of the Coalition to Save Hopewell Valley, which fought Merrill Lynch’s plan to build an office park and extend sewer service into the Township. Peggy went on to serve on the Hopewell Township Planning Board. In recent years she started her own engineering firm, Emerald Environmental Solutions.

Peggy was a real friend to ANJEC, often helping to train environmental commission members about protecting water resources. She will be greatly missed. 

A note of thanks to Nan Hunter Walnut

ANJEC is honored to receive a generous bequest from beloved environmental advocate Nan Hunter Walnut, who died in March. She was among the Pine Barrens’ most outspoken defenders for 40 years and helped Gov. Brendan P. Byrne create New Jersey’s *Pineland Preservation Act of 1979*. Walnut was a founding trustee of the Pinelands Preservation Alliance that remains a strong voice in protecting the uniquely important Pinelands biosphere that occupies 22 percent of New Jersey’s land area.

Candy Ashmun, ANJEC’s first executive director, remembers her like this:

“Nan Walnut was to me the ‘mother of the Pines.’ She was one my earliest advisers and dearest friends as she gave so generously of her time and energy to, as she put it, ‘get the plan right.’ Nan didn’t just kibbitz; she served on her town planning board as the first woman and first environmentalist in that position. Serving without benefit of a town environmental commission, she understood the value of such a resource and always supported ANJEC in its mission to fill that gap.” 

ANJEC Annual Meeting and Election of Board Members

Friday, October 24

41st Environmental Congress

Raritan Valley Community College, Branchburg

Officers

Two-year term elections

President - Nancy Tindall

Vice President for Operations - Ray Cywinski

Vice President for Development - Barbara Vadnais

Secretary - Marion McClary

Treasurer - Leonard Berkowitz

Trustees

Three-year terms

Amanda Nesheiwat (Hudson)

Jenine Tankoos (Monmouth)

John Thonet (Hunterdon)

ANJEC members can also make additional nominations at the Annual Meeting.

ANJEC thanks our 2013 donors

These individuals and organizations supported our mission to provide education and resources to local environmentalists.

\$1,000 or more:

Chris Allyn
Leonard Berkowitz
Peter H. Craig
Nelson Dittmar, Jr.
Peter & Cynthia Kellogg
Foster S. Osborne, Jr.
Nancy Wysocki
Agnes & Walter Wright

\$500 to \$999:

Candace M. Ashmun
Sandy Batty
Cynthia Jacobson
Joyce Laudise
Cheryl Reardon
Elizabeth Ritter
Nancy Tindall

\$100 to \$499:

Byron A. Allen
Mindi Arcoleo
Peter Ault
Sue Barbuto
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Pamela Mount
Mountain Lake Community Association and Watershed Advisory Group
Mary Mysliwicz
Navaid Management Services
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Maureen Ogden
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And the survey says...

We asked environmental commissioners what's important for you in 2014. Thank you for your time and constructive feedback! Here are some highlights.

Top 3 Environmental Issues

Over 40 percent of you said your top issues were:

- 1) Open Space
- 2) Development
- 3) Tree Protection

Top 3 Commission Challenges

About 40 percent also said your top challenges were:

- 1) Difficulty engaging the public
- 2) Limited time
- 3) Finding and getting volunteers


Outreach

About 82 percent of respondents said their primary method of communicating with the community was the town website. Second and third were local newspapers and the environmental commission website.

Top Takeaways:

- Do actively promote your commission's achievements and events.
- Do use ANJEC content for updating your information.
- Do use the *ANJEC News* Commissioners Conversation Corner to talk things over, ask questions or share ideas with fellow environmental commission members: <http://anjecnews.weebly.com/forum.html#/>

How ANJEC is responding:

- Social Media webinar on June 26
- A hands-on workshop at the ANJEC Congress (See page 8) on creating a web presence
- Updating Tools & Resources section of our website with easier access to outreach communication tools such as press release templates. 

Save the date!



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Check the ANJEC web site (www.anjec.org) for times, starting points and destinations.

To sign up for a specific sail, email ANJEC at info@anjec.org or call (973) 539-7547

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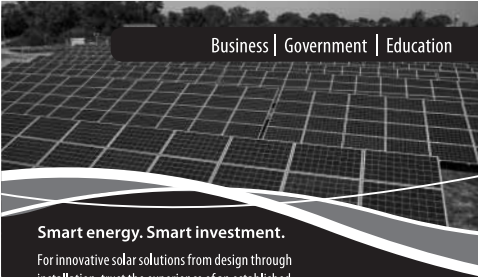


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