

**CRANBURY TOWNSHIP
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
23A North Main Street
Cranbury, New Jersey 08512**

James Gallagher, Chair
John Reinfelder
Anna Drago
Barbara Rogers
John Persico
Andrew Johnson
Paul Mullen

TO: Cranbury Township Committee
FROM: James Gallagher, Environmental Commission Chair
DATE: January 2013
SUBJECT: Environmental Commission 2012 Year-End Report

The activities of the Cranbury Township Environmental Commission in 2012 are summarized in this Year-End Report.

Membership – The EC had full membership for 2012. Dietrich Wahlers resigned in July.

Cranbury Book Preserve – The EC continued the replanting of native plants, the eradication of Bradford pear trees, multi flora rose and other invasive species, and the management of the grasslands. Recommendations were made to the Township Committee to level the dirt piles adjacent to the township soccer fields in preparation for planting trees from the No Net Loss Reforestation Phase II grant.

Scout Projects - Girl Scout Lisa D/Souza received approval from the Commission for a project for her Silver Award, a Clean Up Day in the town, which was held in May.

The EC created a list of possible projects for future Scouts.

Reinhardt Preserve – The EC continues to monitor the preserve, which was damaged from Super Storm Sandy in October. Many trees were felled. A parking lot was installed. Trees from the No Net Loss Reforestation Grant will be planted next year at

the parking lot for a border and shade. The Commission urged the clean up of the property and created a subcommittee to investigate creating a natural trail.

Environmental Resource Inventory – Updates on this document begun. Commissioners were assigned specific sections to review.

Dam Reconstruction Project – Commissioners reviewed preliminary plans for the project, due to begin in Winter 2013. They suggested converting the concrete beach to a terraced riparian buffer and remediation for lakeside erosion.

County-donated mulch – The EC advised on placement at Village Park and not the Preserve, where several large dirt piles already exist.

Educational Activities –

The EC continues to provide environmental public education through our Cranbury Day activities. In 2012, patrons to the booth were given information about recycling and water conservation, and wrote individual personal environmental pledges on paper leaves, which were then attached to a real tree branch for all to read. At the table, a storm water drain model was displayed and demonstrated to educate the public about storm water management and run-off. Commissioners manned the table and talked with the public throughout the day.

Rain barrel workshop – In April, the EC sponsored a successful, informative and fun two-hour workshop for residents to make rain barrels for their homes. Held at the Cranbury Barn Park, there were seven (7) attendees. Seven (7) barrels were sold at \$45 each. The trainers were EC Commissioners James Gallagher, Paul Mullen and Linda Scott of the Recycling department. The DPW set up tables and chairs.

Alfred Meiss Environmental Appreciation Award – The EC again sponsored an award for Cranbury School 8th grade students. Entrants were required to describe either the Cranbury Brook Preserve or Unami Woods and how it inspires and is important to them. They shared their favorite place in whatever way they deemed appropriate, i.e. essay, song, photo, poem, etc. A subcommittee of EC members reviewed the submissions using a judging criteria rubric. Student Kelly Coyle was chosen the winner of a \$100.00 Savings Bond, out of eleven (11) entries received. Her entry was titled, “Message in a Bottle.” John Reinfelder attended the award ceremony in June and presented the award.

Stream Clean up – The EC participated in the 6th Annual Stream Clean-up sponsored by the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed in April. Approximately 37 volunteers collected mostly plastic bottles and soda cans, food wrappers and car tires. Also found were a car seat, traffic cones, a folding bed, an airplane tire and a parachute. Three wheel barrel

loads of bricks and cement blocks were gathered. In total, 51 bags of trash and recyclables were collected, totaling 2,112 pounds.

Articles about EC activities were written by Commissioners and included in the Township's quarterly newsletters.

Environmental Initiatives

Sustainable Jersey – The EC formed a “Green Team,” led by Barbara Rogers, after the Township Committee approved a resolution. Dr. Rogers also attended several Cranbury Business Association meetings to coordinate the theme for Cranbury Day, “Going Green.” Also, the EC approved the town Farmers’ Market. Also applicable to the certification was the hydro-raking of the lake in June. The EC is working towards certification by accumulating points.

No Net Loss Reforestation – Barbara Rogers and Dietrich Wahlers continued to participate in a subcommittee to advise the Township Committee on the planting locations for Phase 2 of the New Jersey Turnpike Mitigation Project. Mr. Wahlers was chairperson till July and Dr. Roers took over the position after his retirement. They also advised on tree placement, species choice, watering, soil condition, deer protection and staking.

At the Hagerty Property, October Super Storm Sandy devastated many trees, mostly willow oaks. Also, in the spring, beavers harvested many trees so a fence was installed. The subcommittee, the DPW, and some volunteers wrapped the trees with deer guards. The contractor will replace damaged trees in two years according to warranty.

NJ Invasive Species Strike Team – Two NJISST interns came to Cranbury July 23 and 24 to survey Cranbury Brook Preserve and Unami Woods. They eradicated ivy, pachysandra and winter creeper. They sprayed the remaining Callery pears in the Brook Preserve. They also mapped the callery pears behind Shadow Oaks in the township easement. Barbara Rogers and Anna Drago accompanied the interns. Volunteer Bob Rogers also assisted.

Stormwater Ordinance – Review began on a possible update of this ordinance, using Hightstown's newly adopted ordinance as an example. The Stony Brook Millstone Watershed policy department is advising.

Applications – Numerous applications for development were reviewed, and comments were submitted to the Planning Board and Zoning Board, as appropriate. This year, Viridian/Cranbury Brick Yard, LLC, Cranbury Park, APCO Petroleum and Greenvest, Chinmaya Mission, and Leaf Industries applications were considered.

The EC continues to monitor state DEP activity.

Development Review Committee (DRC) – EC Chairman James Gallagher served as the EC representative to the DRC until August and Commissioner Paul Mullen served from September to December. They provided input from an environmental standpoint to applicants seeking land use approvals.

Joint Meeting with the Parks Planning Commission - This meeting was held in January with full attendance of both commissions. Discussed were the various parks and preserves in Cranbury and any issues involved. Several recommendations were made about trees, grass, trails, plants, mowing and bridges in the different parks and preserves. The upcoming dam repair was discussed as well as Sustainable Jersey certification. Parks highlighted the Memorial book of gifts being created. The EC shared news about the annual Stream Clean Up. At the conclusion, each Commission agreed to read the minutes from each other's meetings and also send representatives to attend them. They also agreed to work together on connecting trails throughout Cranbury.

Track Subcommittee – John Reinfelder participated in this subcommittee of the Recreation Commission. They continue to investigate the feasibility of constructing a running track for the township.