

HOPATCONG ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Annual Report for 2015

I. Administrative

- Current Hopatcong Environmental Commission membership: Jule Girman - Chair, Bradley Hoferkamp -Vice Chair, Georgia Schilling -Treasurer, Elide Young - cross-member to the Open Space/Trails Committee, Pat Hoferkamp, Jerry Scanlan, Mark Gaffney-Land Use Appointee, Joel Servoss (1st Alternate), Jen Barone (2nd Alternate), John Young-Council and Deer Mgt Liaison, Richard Schindelar-2nd Council Liaison .
- In 2015 we had the following membership changes: Mark Gaffney was appointed as Land Use Rep, Jen Barone was appointed as 2nd Alternate, and Richard Schindelar moved to 2nd Council Liaison after his election as Councilman.
- Conducted eight regular monthly public meetings at Hopatcong Borough Hall. January, April and July meetings were cancelled because we did not have a quorum and December meeting was removed from schedule.
- Continued membership in the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC)
- Continued support of the Musconetcong Watershed Association.

II. Outreach & Education

- We continue to support the ongoing water testing of the Musconetcong River at its Willow Street access. This testing is conducted under the supervision of the Musconetcong Watershed Association and Jule Girman and Georgia Schilling represent our commission in these efforts. Note the MWA always has a need for volunteers to help out, especially at this location. The environmental status of the Musconetcong River near its Lk Hopatcong source was tested and documented seasonally throughout 2015, and waters were found to be healthy and able to support all expected marine and insect life.
- Electronics Recycling – The Environmental Commission initially started electronic recycling several years ago as an environmentally beneficial way of helping residents dispose of electronics. What had once been an annual event is now an ongoing service administered by our DPW. It is available to the public any time the Recycling Center is open or, with a bulk sticker and a phone call, items can be picked up curbside.
- Paper Shredding Day- May 9th. Originally conceived and executed by the Environmental Commission, Shredding Day has become a scheduled annual event administered by our DPW. The primary benefit is environmental; shredded paper is recovered and recycled. However, it is also an anticipated service and one greatly appreciated by our residents.
- Deer Management Task Force –The environmental commission monitors deer management through its liaison to the task force, John Young. This third year of regulated bow hunting within the borough has resulted in considerable reduction to the deer population. Regulated bow hunting is expected to continue seasonally in accordance with DFW regulations. However, management of the forest canopy to allow the younger, smaller trees and underbrush to grow as a food source is thought to be the long-term answer to drawing the deer away from residential plantings and back into natural habitat.
- NJ Tree Recovery Program – Event held April 18th. 2nd year of highly successful program in which the state offered free tree seedlings for municipalities to hand out to residents free of charge. This program was planned as an effort to replace trees felled by Hurricane Sandy. With the help of the DPW, Boy Scouts, and the efforts of all EC members we distributed close to 1,000 trees. The event was well promoted and well received by Hopatcong residents and will hopefully be offered again next year.
- National Trails Day Hike - June 6th. Hopatcong celebrated National Trails Day with a nature hike at the Mountain Inlet Trail. Cliff Lundin led the group of 26 residents and EC members and shared his rich knowledge on the area, its trails, its geology, its flora & fauna, and its history. This first week of June was the perfect time of year to be on the trail enjoying nature. Everyone agreed it was the best hike we've had.
- May 3rd -Visited local Beekeeper, Jim Puccio, to learn about beekeeping and observe him introduce new bees to his hives.
- Sussex Cty Days -May 3rd Joined with Hopatcong Borough and Greentree Devlprs in a combined setting of booths promoting Hopatcong & it's amenities. Along with information on a variety of environmental issues, the EC booth featured games and prizes for both adults & kids, as well as tree seedlings for county residents to plant.
- LHF Block Party-May 9th The HEC participated in this second annual block party sponsored by the Lk Hopatcong Fdn. EC members Brad Hoferkamp, Rich Schindelar, and Joel Servoss, with the help of Keith Schilling (non-member), transported, set up and dismantled the tent and exhibits, and Jerry Scanlan and Georgia Schilling were on hand to help Jule Girman and Nancy Kunz (a non-member) man the booth. A game wheel from ANJEC was very popular (especially with the kids), as were the other exhibits on clean water, recycling, and storm water control. A "Guess Me" Candy Jar and Help Keep Hopatcong Clean tote bags, along with contest prizes for the kids, helped to bring traffic to our booth.
- Hopatcong Days-July 11th This year we had an additional booth on beekeeping, with live observation hives and beekeeping equipment, as well as presentations by Jim Puccio and his wife, Christine. The Community Garden booth was directly across from us and the combined effect was perfect. The theme of the EC booth was directed to education on clean water and invasive weeds; it included educational displays and games, as well as photographs and live examples of invasive plants that are a growing problem in our community. Our booth was very well attended and a large number of tote bags were given out to visitors. Again the ANJEC game wheel on water conservation was a big success with the kids.
- Lake Hopatcong Water Scouts –Commission members Jerry Scanlan, Jen Barone and Joel Servoss participated in the search for Water Chestnut weeds in Lk Hopatcong again this year. The program, aimed at identifying any presence of the destructive water chestnut weed, is sponsored and coordinated by the LHF and the Knee Deep Club.

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- This year Hopatcong was awarded Bronze Status in the Sustainable Jersey program. The EC working as the Green Team, and with the intensive assistance of Ann Marie Bell and borough administration, completed 170 action points and was awarded Bronze certification. This was an outstanding achievement for all who participated over the years to reach this goal.
- Hopatcong Environmental Commission Facebook page – Jen Barone launched our commission’s Facebook page in June and continues to contribute postings and monitor activity, much to the delight of our members and the community at large. It is a wonderful way to communicate environmental announcements, ideas, and issues to Hopatcong residents throughout the year.

III. Site Plan Review

- Land Use Board – Mark Gaffney
 - Reviewed environmental issues directed to the Environmental Commission and ensured that comments were provided to the Land Use Board. Monitored Land Use activities through liaison updates.

IV. Land Use Planning

- Open Space / Trails – Elide Young
 - Elide Young kept the EC apprised on activities of the Open Space Committee and provided feedback. There was minimal Open Space activity in 2015
 - Monitored activities of the Deer Management Task Force with John Young as our representative.

V. Infrastructure

- No projects this year

VI. Grants

- Nothing planned at this time.

vii. Proposed 2016 Projects

Engage Schools in Environmental Outreach

Completion Date: Ongoing

Status: Work with HS to involve students in environmental projects, such as Town Cleanup, MWA water testing, invasive weed control, etc to fulfill community service requirement.

MWA Water Testing

Completion Date Ongoing

Participate in the Sustainable Jersey program

Completion Date Bronze Status good till 2018. (But need to update existing actions as they expire.)

Status: Website can be found at: <http://www.sustainablejersey.com/>. Continued efforts to update expiring actions and retain Bronze certification while working toward Silver.

National Trails Day Hike

Completion Date: June date to be announced

Status: Cliff Lundin will lead and narrate hike. Selection of trail pending.

Beautification Project: Welcome to Hopatcong Signs

Completion Date: Spring 2016

Status: On hold for new signs.

Tree Recovery Program

Completion Date: Targeted date is April 22nd.2016

Status: Currently in planning stage. Will be similar to last year with the EC members handing out free seedlings provided by the state for distribution to Hopatcong residents. DPW will assist in pickup and staging.

LHF Block Party May 7th, 2016 HEC Booth

Hopatcong Days 2016 July 11th, 2015 HEC Booth and Green Fair

Additional projects and plans to be discussed at our 2016 Reorganization Meeting.

Respectively Submitted,

Jule Girman,

Hopatcong Environmental Commission - Chair