

HOPATCONG ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Annual Report for 2016

I. Administrative

- Present 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, Rich Schindelar-Land Use Appointee, Joel Servoss (1st Alternate), Jen Barone (2nd Alternate), John Young-Council Liaison.,
- Over the course of the year one member, Mark Gaffney, Land Use Liaison, left the commission and we thank him for his service.:
- Conducted nine regular monthly public meetings at Hopatcong Borough Hall. Our regular April meeting was suspended so members could attend an ANJEC workshop held here in Hopatcong and our September and November meetings were cancelled because we did not have a quorum.
- Continued membership in the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC)
- Continued membership in 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, and this year Jen Barone, represented our commission in these efforts. Note the MWA always has a need for volunteers to help, especially at this location. The environmental status of the Musconetcong River near its Lk Hopatcong source was tested and documented seasonally throughout 2016, and waters were found to be healthy and able to support pollution sensitive marine and insect species.
- ANJEC Trails Grant – The Environmental Commission applied for and was awarded an ANJEC grant for \$800 to build and erect signs to the proposed Lake Hopatcong Trail that will be built by the LHF around Lake Hopatcong. Phase 1 of this trail will be the Hopatcong section. The signs will be placed at the various trail access points and community parking areas in Hopatcong borough. The project must be completed by May 2017. A scout has chosen this as his Eagle Scout project and will work with scouts, HEC members, and the LHF to plan and complete the project.
- Paper Shredding Day- May 7th. Originally conceived and executed by the Environmental Commission, Shredding Day is now a scheduled annual event administered by our DPW. It is anticipated and appreciated by residents of Hopatcong, but its primary benefit is environmental; shredded paper is recovered and recycled.
- Deer Management Task Force –The environmental commission monitors deer management through its liaison to the task force, John Young. Again in 2016 there was a noticeable decrease in the deer population throughout the borough. This year, in addition to regulated bow hunting, regulations were expanded to include firearms as supported by DF&W rules. 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. Regulated seasonal deer hunting is expected to continue next year.
- NJ Tree Recovery Program. April 23rd. The Environmental Commission again participated in this highly successful program in which the state provides free tree seedlings for municipalities to hand out to residents free of charge. This five-year program originally started in 2014 to replace trees felled by Hurricane Sandy and his year members of the EC, with the help of the DPW and local scouts, again distributed over 900 trees to Hopatcong residents. The event was well-promoted and well received by the community and is expected to continue for another two years.
- ANJEC Stormwater & Green Infrastructure Seminar-April 27th. HEC Chairman assisted ANJEC staff in securing the Hopatcong Senior Center to host officials and environmentalists from surrounding municipalities for a special seminar/workshop on Stormwater & Green Infrastructure. The event was well-received and very informative. In attendance were Hopatcong borough officials and HEC members, as well as municipal officials from surrounding communities.
- National Trails Day Hike-June 4th. The HEC conducted a nature hike at the Mountain Inlet Trail to celebrate National Trails Day. Cliff Lundin led the group of 22 residents and EC members on a hike through the Sanctuary and shared his rich knowledge of the area, its trails, its geology, its flora & fauna, and its history. It was a great hike and a wonderful way to commemorate National Trails Day.
- Green Fair/ Hopatcong Days- July 9th. Incorporated a Green Fair into annual Hopatcong Days celebration. Originally 15 vendors signed up but when rain forced a rain date, only 9 vendors could participate. There were various organizations that made it: (LHF, MWA, SC Mosquito Control) as well as a variety of green vendors such as Hula Yoga, Hopatcong Community Garden, Presto Garden supplies, a birdhouse vendor, a gutter company, etc. The HEC had a booth with ANJEC displays no stormwater management and the usual game wheel. Despite the rain date, the event was very successful and will be repeated next year.
- Lake Hopatcong Water Scouts –Commission members and volunteer Water Scouts, Jen Barone, Jerry Scanlan, and Joel Servoss participated in the search for Water Chestnut weeds in Lk Hopatcong again this year, canvassing assigned areas of Lake Hopatcong for this invasive species. This 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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- LHF Field Trips - Georgia Schilling, Jule Girman, and Jen Barone participated in the LHF Field Trips for 4th grade students from local school districts to learn about the ecology of Lake Hopatcong and how to keep it healthy and clean.
- Creative Arts Council – Inspired by a Sustainable Jersey action, the HEC worked with Hopatcong Mayor Petillo to organize a Creative Arts Council in Hopatcong to promote all types of art and stimulate art appreciation in the community. So far the council has conducted two very successful events: Apple Pie and Art in Sept. and Snowman Park in December. The goal is to present four events next year.
- Environmental Commission continued its efforts to maintain and build on Hopatcong’s Bronze status with the Sustainable Jersey program. Increased emphasis will be applied in 2017 to recertify by 2018 and move to the next level.
- The Hopatcong Environmental Commission’s Facebook page is a lively and informative source of environmental tips and announcements maintained by member, Jen Barone. In addition to her work with the Environmental Commission, Jen may be best known as President of the Hopatcong Community Garden. She is also currently pursuing accreditation as a Master Gardener. Great job Jen!

Proposed 2017 Projects

MWA Water Testing

Completion Date Ongoing

Participate in the Sustainable Jersey

Completion Date TBD – Bronze Status

Status: Website can be found at: <http://www.sustainablejersey.com/>.

A renewed effort towards recertification.

Earth Day Nature Hike

Completion Date: Date to be announced for April 2017

Status: Plans to hike a section of the new Lake Hopatcong Trail.

Beautification Project: Welcome to Hopatcong Signs –

Completion Date: Spring 2017

Status Renew project interest.

Tree Recovery Program

Completion Date: May 6, 2017

Status:

LHF Block Party May 13^h, 2017 HEC Booth

Hopatcong Days 2017 July 8th, 2017 Green Fair II

Additional projects and plans to be discussed at our 2017 Reorganization Meeting.

Respectively Submitted,

Jule Girman,

Hopatcong Environmental Commission - Chair