

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

Barbara Rogers, Chair
James Gallagher
Paul Mullen
Theresa Vaccaro
Becky Mathers Lowery

Michele Till
Jason Mildenberg
Mona Bhatia
Josh Kohut

TO: Cranbury Township Committee
FROM: Barbara Rogers, Chair of the Cranbury Environmental Commission
DATE: July 2019
SUBJECT: Environmental Commission 2018 Year-End Report

The activities of the Cranbury Township Environmental Commission in 2018 are summarized in this Year-End Report.

Membership – The EC had two vacancies in 2018.

Open Space Management and Initiatives:

Cranbury Book Preserve – The EC continued the replanting of native plants, the eradication of invasive plants, and the management of the grasslands. DPW mowed the grasslands in the fall. The pollinator garden was weeded, mulched and planted with additional plants

Reinhardt Forest Preserve – The site continued to be maintained by the Commissioners and DPW. Trails were cleared throughout the year. Geocache project in the preserves continued with a geocache box(container) placed in the Preserve. Geocaching is an outdoor recreational treasure hunt activity where participants use a Global Positioning system (GPS) to hide or find the containers called “caches”. Coordinates are found on the Cranbury Township website, <http://www.cranburytownship.org/notices/Geocaching-in-the-Walking-Trails.pdf>

Village Park – The Rain Garden was maintained by Environmental Commissioners with the help of DPW and volunteers. A monthly maintenance schedule was developed for the Rain Garden. Boy Scouts from Troop 52 helped trim vegetation, weed and add stone.

Unami Woods and Pin Oaks Trail – EC members partner with Parks Commissioner to maintain Unami Woods trails and clear paths. Additional maps were added to Pin Oaks Trail and paths were maintained.

Environmental Resource Inventory – The ERI was promoted on the Township website, and the EC Member on the Development Review Committee utilized the ERI during site plan reviews.

NJ Invasive Species Strike Team— The Commission continued its membership in the NJISST. The Preserve is heavily impacted and needs a concerted management effort to remove the invasive plant species to allow natives to grow. Dr. Rogers attended annual NJISST conference at Duke Farms.

Parks Commissioner Liaison – The Parks Commissioner continued to attend EC meetings and update the EC on Parks Commission activities. The EC appreciates the partnership and coordinating activities such as trail maintenance and Cranbury Day with the PC.

Educational Activities:

Cranbury Day – The EC continued to provide environmental education activities on Cranbury Day with hundreds of citizens visiting the EC booth. Information was provided about recycling, rain gardens, open spaces and water conservation. Cranbury’s Open Spaces were promoted with a map of all current and proposed township property walking trails. The Parks Commission Open Space list from their website was also presented for the public to review. A stormwater drain model was displayed and demonstrated to educate the public about stormwater management and run-off. Children enjoyed the hands-on activities and learning about watersheds and stormwater. Commissioners manned the table and talked with the public throughout the day.

Ninth Annual Alfred Meiss Environmental Appreciation Award – The EC again sponsored an award to recognize one middle school student who has been a positive environmental role model. Becky Mathers Lowery and Barbara Rogers were on the subcommittee that made changes to the award criteria and selection committee. They attended the award ceremony at the school in June and presented the award to Jenna Adams who helped the EC with various environmental projects.

Stream Clean up – In April, the EC participated in the 12th annual Stream Clean-up sponsored by the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed. Approximately 70 volunteers collected 1,101 pounds of garbage using 84 trash bags. At the 12 different Stream Clean Up sites, there were 810 volunteers, 856 bags of trash and 11,703 lbs. of trash collected.

Township’s quarterly newsletters - Articles about EC activities, Green Team initiatives and Sustainable Jersey were written by Commissioners and included in the newsletters.

Environmental Initiatives:

Sustainable Jersey – Sustainable Jersey Certification: The Green Team met during EC meetings to discuss environmental initiatives and worked on action items for 2019 recertification. A list of additional action items was developed and maintained. A few of the action items included on the list: Municipal Communication Strategy, Make Your Town EV Friendly, Bike and/or Pedestrian Audit, Renew Sustainable Land Use Pledge, Green Business Recognition Program, NJ Wildlife Action Plan, Establish a Creative Team, Community Asset Mapping, Smoke and Tobacco Free Public Spaces and Waste Management Action Items.

Sustainable Jersey School Program – The EC continues to meet with the Wellness and Sustainability Council. A Wellness and Sustainability Newsletter is written by an EC member and placed on the school website.

Cranbury School Initiatives

Aquaponics – Aquaponics 2.0 was developed with a grant from Cranbury Education Foundation. The tank was expanded in size and is currently on display in the School's cafeteria. The School participants harvested food and donated the food to Skeet's Pantry and Farmers Against Hunger.

Student Liaison to EC –The 8th grade student council president, Priya Patel, attended meetings and reported on the recycling and upcycling efforts at Cranbury School, including working with Terracycle to gather juice pouches and other containers. This position was created to keep the EC abreast of environmental initiatives within the School and as an outreach and educational component to the EC/Green Team. The liaison helped coordinate students to attend the annual Stream Clean Up as participants of Clean Community. They were awarded part of the grant for their participation.