1,200 Trees Planted!

Fairfax Hutter, AmeriCorps New Jersey Watershed Ambassador for Central Delaware, obtained funding from The Nature Conservancy to purchase native trees and shrubs (plus tubes to protect the young trees from deer browsing), which were planted along the Lockatong Creek in Kingwood Park and surrounding open space properties. The project was a cooperative effort between Kingwood Township, Hunterdon Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy, NJ Water Supply Authority and NJDEP.

Thank you to everyone who helped plant trees and restore an area of riparian buffer, which will help protect water quality, stream bank stability, restore wildlife habitat and reduce downstream flooding. Lockatong Creek is a Category 1 trout maintenance stream and one of Kingwood’s most valuable environmental resources.

Local Opposition Stalls PennEast Pipeline

The proposed PennEast natural gas pipeline is inconsistent with a clean, healthy sustainable future.

Throughout 2018 the opposition to the unneeded, unsafe, unwanted PennEast pipeline continued. Various legal actions from Kingwood and other municipalities, HALT (Homeowners Against Land Taking), NJ Conservation Foundation, Delaware Riverkeeper, and others were filed to protect residents and future generations from this unconstitutional land-taking, and economically and environmentally destructive proposed natural gas pipeline. Despite FERC’s January 2018 issuance of a conditional certificate, PennEast was unable to go on private property without the homeowner’s permission throughout 2018.

In spring 2018, the U.S. District Court in Trenton held three sessions to hear testimony of both landowners and PennEast representatives. On December 14, the Judge issued a ruling, granting PennEast the right to take properties by eminent domain and to access them for obtaining surveys, such as wetlands and endangered species surveys and test borings for HDD. Township Attorney Katrina Campbell wrote a summary of the ruling. Eminent domain authority does not equal approval to build!

PennEast originally projected an in-service date of November 2017, and despite the recent court order, PennEast’s approval is anything but assured. After PennEast completes surveys, they will need to obtain permits from NJDEP and DRBC and there will be opportunities for public comment.

In a 2018 poll by FDU, 2 out of 3 NJ voters agree that natural gas is not “clean” energy. The urgency to protect our state’s people and resources from the harmful effects of climate change, including sea level rise and more intense storms, led NJ to pass legislation to require 50% renewable energy by 2030 and 100% by 2050.
New EC Members The EC welcomes new members Mara Tippett and Ralph Celebre.

Membership in ANJEC The EC renewed annual membership in ANJEC, which provides resources such as a quarterly newsletter. New EC members Mara Tippett and Ralph Celebre attended the ANJEC workshop “Fundamentals for Effective Environmental Commissions.” Debbie Kratzer and Mara Tippett attended the ANJEC Environment Congress on October 12.

Chris’ Citgo (now Chris’ Sit-n-Go) Ground Water Classification Exception Area Sandra McNicol followed up with the LSRP (licensed site remediation professional) and received information about this area where soil contamination was discovered. Water samples from surrounding wells found that there has been no spread of contamination to neighboring properties to date.

Ground Water An updated NJDEP Water Supply Master Plan was issued in 2017. Since the plan determined that Kingwood’s watersheds are stressed (more ground water is used and removed than is replenished from rain recharge), Lois Voronin wrote a follow-up letter for the EC requesting tools, such as ground water modeling programs, that municipalities could use to determine ground water availability so that they can make informed decisions. NJDEP’s response letter stated they do not offer assistance to municipalities in the area of management tools for determining ground water availability. The EC plans to reach out to surrounding municipalities to see if there is similar interest and need and working together with NJDEP to address sustainable use of our water resources.

Approval of the Recommendation to Township Committee to adopt the Resolution for Single Use Bags Single Use Plastic Bags Legislation was vetoed by Gov. Murphy. It was felt that more environmentally supportive solutions should be pursued.

Horseshoe Bend Park Bags are provided for dog owners to pick up dog waste in order to prevent the nutrients and bacteria from entering waterways. Volunteer Michael Flood was thanked for volunteering to do this for several years but we are in need of new volunteers to continue.

Site Plans The EC reviewed a number of site plans in 2018, but none required detailed comments from the EC.

Luxfer (formerly MEL and before that MEI) Representatives of Luxfer gave presentations at a special EC meeting on December 4, 2017 concerning contamination, spills and clean-up efforts and progress. Since they were unwilling to share the powerpoint presentations, the EC looked into obtaining professional transcription of the meeting, but didn’t have the funds to do this. EC members are working on a detailed meeting report, as well as follow-up questions. Gail Ashley has stayed in touch with the engineering firm that is representing Luxfer and the DEP case manager. A report was due to NJDEP in fall of 2018. A Remedial Action Report is due in May 2019. An incident was called in for radium 226 in soil in 2017, Incident # 17-02-01-1443-35. The EC is still concerned about high levels of salt found in ground water, and that they have never addressed the cause.

Collection Permits The Kingwood EC has authority over collection of biological materials on Township owned properties. Permission was granted to collect bees on several days in spring 2018 for a PhD research project. Permission was also granted to Toad Shade Wildflower Farm, Frenchtown, NJ to collect a small amount of gooseberry seeds at Horseshoe Bend Park for the purpose of propagating this special concern plant.

Proposed Sustainable Aquaculture Systems in Franklin and Kingwood Townships The EC has been concerned about the potential ground water and surface water impacts of this proposed project, which is mostly in neighboring Franklin Township. Franklin approved the project, but construction has not begun. Lois Voronin contacted Franklin Township but was unable to obtain the information she requested or an update on the project’s status.

Free Radon Test Kits Available from Hunterdon Public Health http://www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/health/environmental/radon.html

2018
Kingwood EC
Members

Gail M. Ashley
Timothy Cahalin
Debbie Kratzer (Chair)
Sandra McNicol

Cynthia Niciecki
Mara Tippett (Vice-Chair)
Lois Voronin

Governing Body Member: Maureen Syrnick
Secretary: Michele Tipton-Walters
Alt. #1: Ralph Celebre
Alt. #2: Willard Reasoner
1,000 Free Trees
2018 was the best turnout ever seen for the tree giveaway, with all the trees given away by 11:30 am.

Trees improve
* water quality * air quality * home value * wildlife habitat *
* ground water supply * mental and physical health * and reduce energy use

New Free Mapping Tool: www.njmap2.com
The Geospatial Research Lab at Rowan University developed a free online mapping tool with Kingwood Township as one of the first provided with NJ Map Build-Out Modeler. The Rowan GIS system incorporates Kingwood block and lot maps and zoning regulations to show future build out and the effects on the nitrate levels in the soil. This measurement helps to determine how many septic systems the Kingwood soil can ultimately handle. This will be a useful tool for Kingwood land management in the future. The tool has been very handy at meetings to quickly find aerial photos, wetlands and more during discussions of specific land parcels in Kingwood.

Invasive Species
EC members Ralph Celebre and Sandy McNicol attended the FoHOS Invasive Species Workshop. NJISST expects 20 new invasive species this year. Ralph Celebre and Mayor Dodds met with a specialist from NJ Department of Agriculture concerning mile-a-minute, an invasive plant that has become a problem in Horseshoe Bend Park. A particular weevil attacks the weed and is present in the area but it will take many years to obtain the necessary equilibrium to keep the weed in check naturally. In the meantime, the specialist recommended using Round-Up in June, which is the most effective time of year because it destroys the seeds in addition to the plants which will reduce the spraying necessary. Signs announcing the spraying are posted in all affected areas.

Recycling News
There continues to be a problem with the distinction between “recyclable” materials and the types of materials we can accept at the Kingwood Recycling Depot. For example, we can’t accept children’s toys, bags, PVC, Styrofoam, pizza boxes or other dirty material. These materials contribute to the problem of China’s reduced use of US recyclable material and the glut of material that the US now needs to process.

Sandra McNicol continued as Kingwood’s recycling coordinator. She updated the recycling flyer that was mailed to residents, obtained recycling data, submitted the Recycling Tonnage report to the state, and coordinated with DPW to switch the recycling dumpsters less frequently, resulting in a cost reduction from approximately $1200.00/month to $644.00/month.

Clean Communities money was used to support the litter clean-up program as well as an educational program in Kingwood School. Math Teacher Sara Alpaugh, coordinated environmental education sessions for the PreK-4th grades. Environmental educator Diana Dove taught the children about bugs, birds, wild flower gardens and littering.

Kingwood Green Team seeking volunteers
Mara Tippett, lead of Kingwood’s Green Team, attended the NJ Sustainability Summit College in June, where she learned more about the steps required to develop a Sustainable Jersey group in our township. She would like to apply for a grant in February. The goal is to be able to certify Kingwood as a Sustainable Municipality at the bronze level for 2019.

Niciecki’s Awarded NJ Audubon Society “Richard Kane Award”
EC member Cynthia Niciecki and her husband Jack received this award for their conservation efforts. Eric Stiles, president and CEO of NJ Audubon Society, presented an award to the Niciecki’s for the changes they’ve made to the timing of haying their farm fields which allows both bobolinks and meadowlarks to complete their breeding season without disruption. This was a personal life decision to put conservation of these species first. The Committee applauded Cynthia and Jack Niciecki for their commitment to conservation.

Fall Discount Water Testing and Septic Cleaning Program
Everyone in Kingwood gets their water from private wells. Mara Tippett, representing Raritan Headwaters, arranged a community well testing day. Homeowners were able to purchase a basic kit for $60.00 which includes the recommended basics of coliform bacteria and nitrates, or residents could select more to address their individual needs and health concerns. The samples were collected by homeowners and then sent to Garden State Labs for results. These self-collected water tests, although accurate, do not qualify as “Chain of Custody” results to be used for the Private Well Testing Act when selling a property or for a court case. Russell Reid was selected for the 2018 Resident Discount Septic Cleaning Program.

Check the Kingwood website in the late summer for information on 2019 well testing and septic cleaning!