

HOPATCONG ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Annual Report for 2014

I. Administrative

- Present Hopatcong Environmental Commission membership: Jule Girman -- Chair, Bradley Hoferkamp --Vice Chair, Georgia Schilling --Treasurer, Richard Schindelar -- Liaison to Land Use Board, Elide Young --Liaison to the Open Space/Trails Committee, Pat Hoferkamp, Jerry Scanlan, Joel Servoss (1st Alternate), John Young (Council and Deer Mgtmt liaison.)
- Over the course of the year, the following members left the commission and we thank them for their service: Mary Louise Baker and Alan Gilbert.
- Conducted nine regular monthly public meetings at Hopatcong Borough Hall. No meeting was scheduled in December and our April and July meetings were cancelled because we did not have a quorum.
- 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 2014, 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. A new vendor was located last year and we are now being paid by that vendor for each load they pick up, creating a source of revenue over an expense. Environmentally there is an array of components that are extracted and recycled from these items and the landfill is spared the risk of potentially toxic material.
- Paper Shredding Day- May3rd. Originally conceived and executed by the Environmental Commission, Shredding Day has become a scheduled annual event administered by our DPW. It is anticipated and appreciated by residents of Hopatcong, but the 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. As a result of last years efforts at deer management there was a noticeable decrease in the deer population. This second year of regulated bow hunting within the borough resulted in a significant culling of the herd. 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 bow hunting is expected to continue seasonally. Next year the DFW will extend the bow hunting season in our zone.
- NJ Tree Recovery Program - Apr 19th 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 and the efforts of all members we distributed 900 trees to residents. The event was well-promoted and well received by the community and will hopefully be repeated in years to come.
- Earth Day Hike-April 26th Jule Girman headed up organization and promotion of a successful Earth Day hike at the Mountain Inlet Trail. Cliff Lundin led a group of 28 residents and EC members while sharing 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 Earth Day..
- LHF Block Party-May 10th The HEC participated in this first annual block party sponsored by the Lk Hopatcong Fdn with a very active booth on a very windy day. Commission members Brad Hoferkamp, Rich Schindelar, and Joel Servoss transported, set up and dismantled the tent and exhibits, and Jerry Scanlan and Joel 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. The added touch of a “Guess Candy Jar” and the “Help Keep Hopatcong Clean” recycle bag handouts, along with contest prizes for the kids, helped bring traffic to the booth.
- Hopatcong Days-July12th Our booth was set up and dismantled by commission members Brad Hoferkamp, Joel Servoss and Jerry Scanlan, and manned by Jule Girman, Pat Hoferkamp, and Jerry Scanlan. The booth theme 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. Booth was very well attended and a large number of “Help Keep Hopatcong Clean” 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 member and volunteer Water Scout, Jerry Scanlan, participated in the search for Water Chestnut weeds in Lk Hopatcong again this year, canvassing the area from the back of Byram Bay Cove to the Byram Bay Club. 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.
- The Environmental Commission is continuing toward its long-term goal of achieving Bronze status with the Sustainable Jersey program. As part of the Green Team we currently have 30 completed points toward the 150 points required for Bronze certification. Another 90 are planned & in progress. To achieve our goal we will need to work in close cooperation with the

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Mayor, Administrator & dept heads & other town organizations to push this to completion. Renewed and strengthened effort will be applied in 2015.

III. Site Plan Review

- Land Use Board – Richard Schindelar
 - 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 2014
 - Monitored activities of the Deer Management Task Force with John Young as our representative.

V. Environmental Resource Inventory (ERI)

- The Environmental Commission adopted the Borough of Hopatcong Highlands ERI on April 24, 2013 is available for reference and use through a link on the town website.. No additional activity in 2014.

VI. Infrastructure

- No projects this year

VII. Grants

- No new grants

VIII. Proposed 2015 Projects

Engage Schools in our activities

Completion Date Ongoing

Status: Meet with Science dept to establish and encourage environmental projects for students to be coordinated through the HEC. Examples of environmental projects in the borough would be annual flower bed planting, water testing, marking stormwater drains, town cleanup etc. This would tie into the new HS community service requirement for graduation.

MWA Water Testing

Completion Date Ongoing

Participate in the Sustainable Jersey program with the goal of being Bronze Certified

Completion Date TBD – Bronze Status

Status: Website can be found at: <http://www.sustainablejersey.com/>. A renewed effort towards certification is planned with emphasis on assembling the most effective participants and outside agencies Ann Marie Bell, Deputy Borough Clerk, has been assigned to aid in our efforts.

Earth Day Nature Hike

Completion Date: Date to be announced for April 2015

Status: Cliff Lundin will lead and narrate hike. A new route is planned this year.

Beautification Project: Welcome to Hopatcong Signs

Completion Date: Spring 2015

Status: Need to finalize plans with Mayor and DPW. New signs & relocaion. Waiting for snow to melt!

Tree Recovery Program

Completion Date: Targeted date is April 18th

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 9th, 2015 HEC Booth

Hopatcong Days 2015 July 11th, 2015 HEC Booth

Additional projects and plans to be discussed at our 2015 Reorganization Meeting.

Respectively Submitted,
Jule Girman,
Hopatcong Environmental Commission - Chair