

Fundamentals for Effective Environmental Commissioners



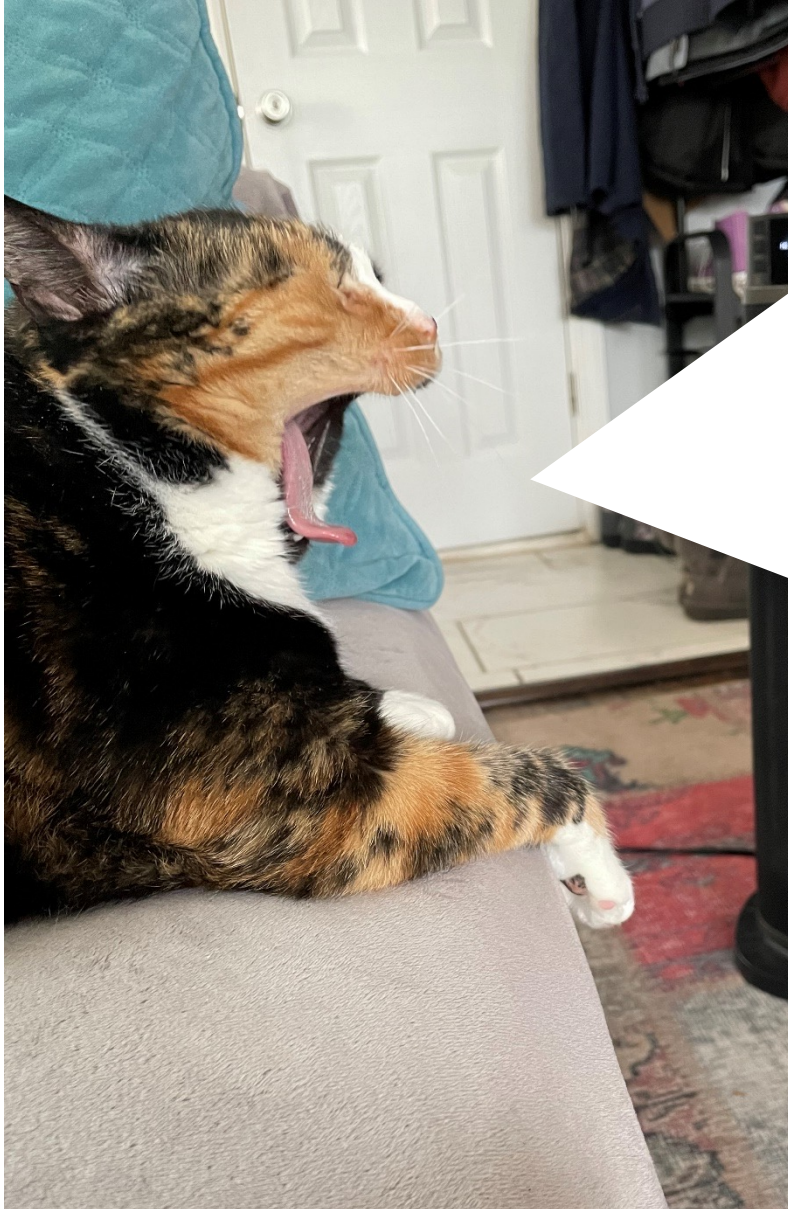
POLL: How long have you served on your EC?

1. Brand New
2. 1-2 years
3. 2-5 years
4. 5-8 years
5. Longer than 8 years



Overview of Environmental Commission Laws, Roles, Responsibilities





Olive the cat says...

NO TWO
ENVIRONMENTAL
COMMISSIONS ARE
ALIKE!



What is an EC and what can we do?

- Appointed by Mayor/Governing Body
- Has advisory role
- Does not make land use decisions
- According to state law:
 - Five to seven members and two alternates appointed by mayor
 - One of the members is also a Planning Board member
- Other types of members



POLL: How is your EC meeting now?

1. Completely virtually
2. In-person, required
3. In-person, virtual option
4. Other (put in chat)



Benefits to meeting virtually include pajama bottoms + kitty cuddles.

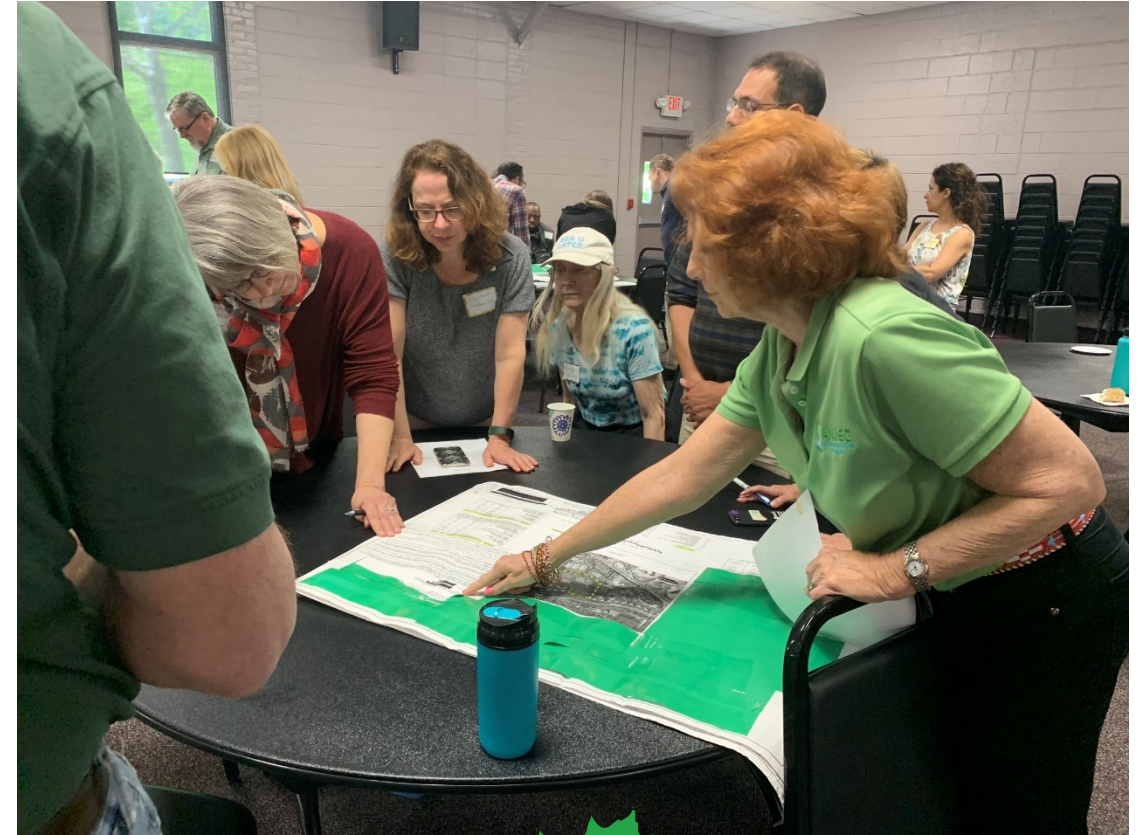
NJ State Law says...

- Rolling 3 year terms
- Subject to Open Public Meetings Act (Sunshine Law)
 - Keep records of meetings
 - Re: Virtual meetings
- Annual Report
- Index of open space



More Commission Powers

- “Study and make recommendations on water, air, waste, noise, landscape protection, environmental appearance, flora and fauna”
- Create an Open Space Index + recommendations
- ERI/NRI
 - Highlands
- Receive official notice of certain activity
 - Site plan application, other project approvals



What's the difference between a Committee, a Commission, and a Green Team?

- Environmental Commission
 - Established by ordinance
- Environmental Committee/Env Advisory Committee
 - Established by ordinance OR more normally ad hoc appointed on a yearly basis
- Green Team
 - Established via resolution



Getting organized

Mission statement

Bylaws

Annual goals

Annual report

Budget



Sample mission statements

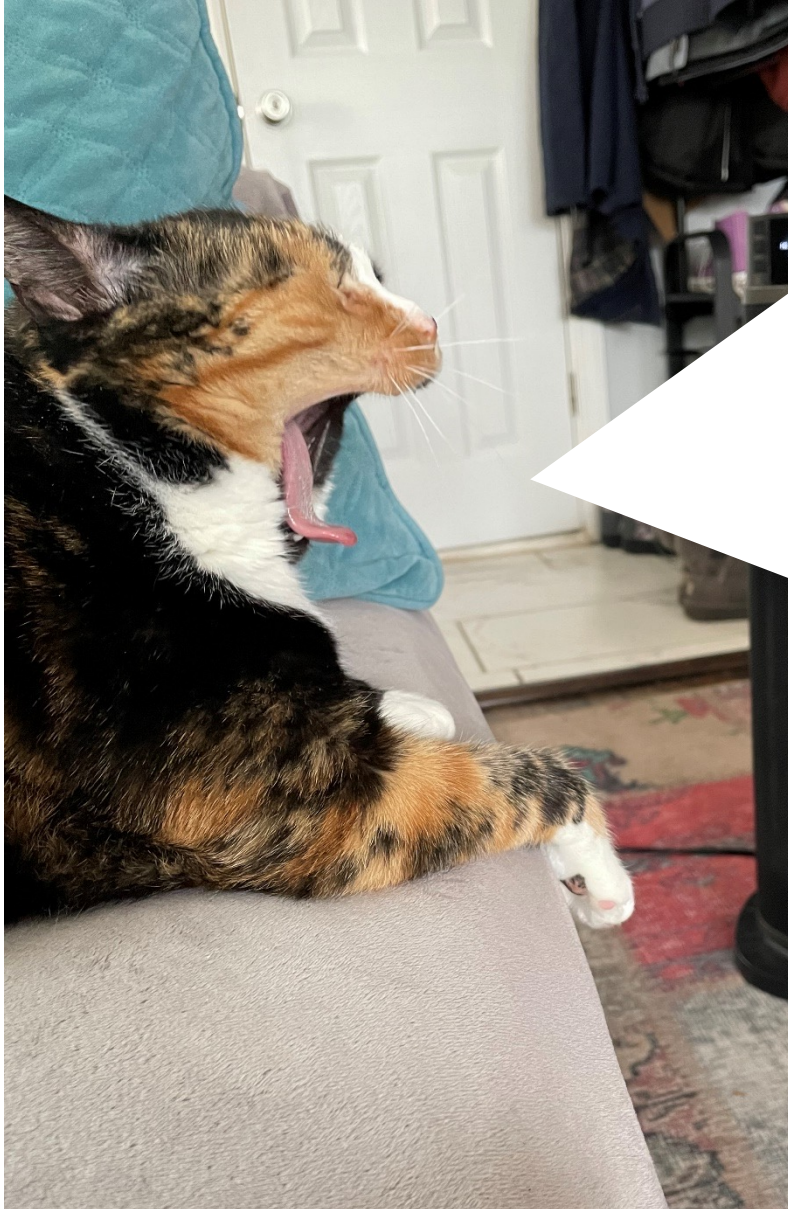
The mission of the **Summit Environmental Commission** (EC) is to provide **leadership** and **vision** in advising the City of Summit on actions and policies of **sustainability** including preservation and enhancement of the quality of Summit's environment and natural resources, as well as the health, well - being and quality of life of its residents and businesses.



Sample mission statements

"The **Mantoloking Environmental Commission** seeks to improve the environmental quality of our **land, bay, and ocean**. Through education and outreach, the Commission encourages citizens to incorporate environmentally responsible practices into homes, gardens, and daily life. The Commission's goal is to improve the health of the land and the **surrounding waters** while reducing the potential to harm the environment."





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EC Bylaws

- Attendance requirements
- Meeting requirements and cancellation policy
- Subcommittee and advisory member appointments
- Preparation and distribution of meeting minutes
- Other record keeping



Make sure to appoint a minute keeper either at each meeting or a permanent one so you're not scrawling last-minute.

Sample Bylaws

Excerpt from Jersey City Environmental Commission Bylaws

1.7 - Meetings

1.7-1 Regular meetings of the Environmental Commission shall be held in the place and at the time and day designated at the annual reorganization meeting. The Commission will hold an annual reorganization meeting at the regularly scheduled May meeting of the Commission.

1.7-3 Public participation shall be **limited to five minutes per person** unless otherwise stated by the Chairman.



Sample Bylaws

Excerpt from Hamilton Twp. Environmental Advisory Board bylaws (Mercer)

- ☐ Associate Members - The mayor may appoint four associate members for a term of one year. Each year each associate member term appointed shall expire. The **associate members** shall not be entitled to vote with the commission.

- ☐ Attendance Requirements
The **unexcused absence** of a member from two (2) consecutive meetings or four (4) total meetings within a calendar year shall constitute recommendation for removal of such member from the Commission with just cause.



Cranbury Township

Middlesex County, New Jersey

23-A North Main Street • Cranbury, N.J. 08512

Voice: 609-395-0900 Fax: 609-395-8861



CRANBURY TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION Environmental Commission 2019 Goals

2019 Master Plan Re-exam – Review and provide updates to the Master Plan for the MP Re-exam Subcommittee for Chapter 6: Conservation Element and Chapter 13: Green Buildings and Environmental Sustainability Plan. Identify sustainability items to be included in the MP.

Environmental Resource Inventory – The EC will maintain the ERI and develop a plan to continue to promote the use of the ERI to ensure that all development is undertaken with sensitivity toward the natural environment. The EC Member on the DRC will continue to use the ERI to review Land Use Applications.

Household Environmental Activities - The EC will promote the following:

- Reduction of single use plastic bags and encourage reusable bags
- Use of rain barrels to prevent stormwater runoff
- Use rain garden in Village Park to educate the public about green infrastructure
- Proper use of fertilizers and grass clippings on lawns to reduce nutrient runoff
- Use of native plant species to diversify habitat and encourage pollinators
- Household energy conservation practices to reduce energy consumption

Educational Activities – The EC will promote educational activities as follows:

- Place documents and articles on the Township's website.
- Host a Cranbury Day booth with environmental activities for visitors.
- Participate in Wellness Fair with activities that promote the importance of a healthy environment in everyday life and walking trails on the preserves
- Place articles about EC activities in each of the Township's newsletters.
- Promote green building and sustainability as contained in the Master Plan.





Environmental Commission Goals

- To maintain a healthy community and populations.
- To identify, protect, and preserve open space.
- To create and expand awareness of natural systems.
- To provide educational information that will increase awareness of issues and concerns.

POLL: How would you rate your town council/commission in terms of supporting the EC?

1. Extremely Supportive
2. Supportive
3. Indifferent
4. Occasional issues
5. Unsupportive/actively impairing



Don't worry—the poll is anonymous!

HOW TO WIN FRIENDS & INFLUENCE



**YOUR ELECTED
OFFICIALS**

THE FIRST—AND
STILL THE BEST—BOOK
OF ITS KIND—TO LEAD
YOU TO SUCCESS

Read by Andrew MacMillan

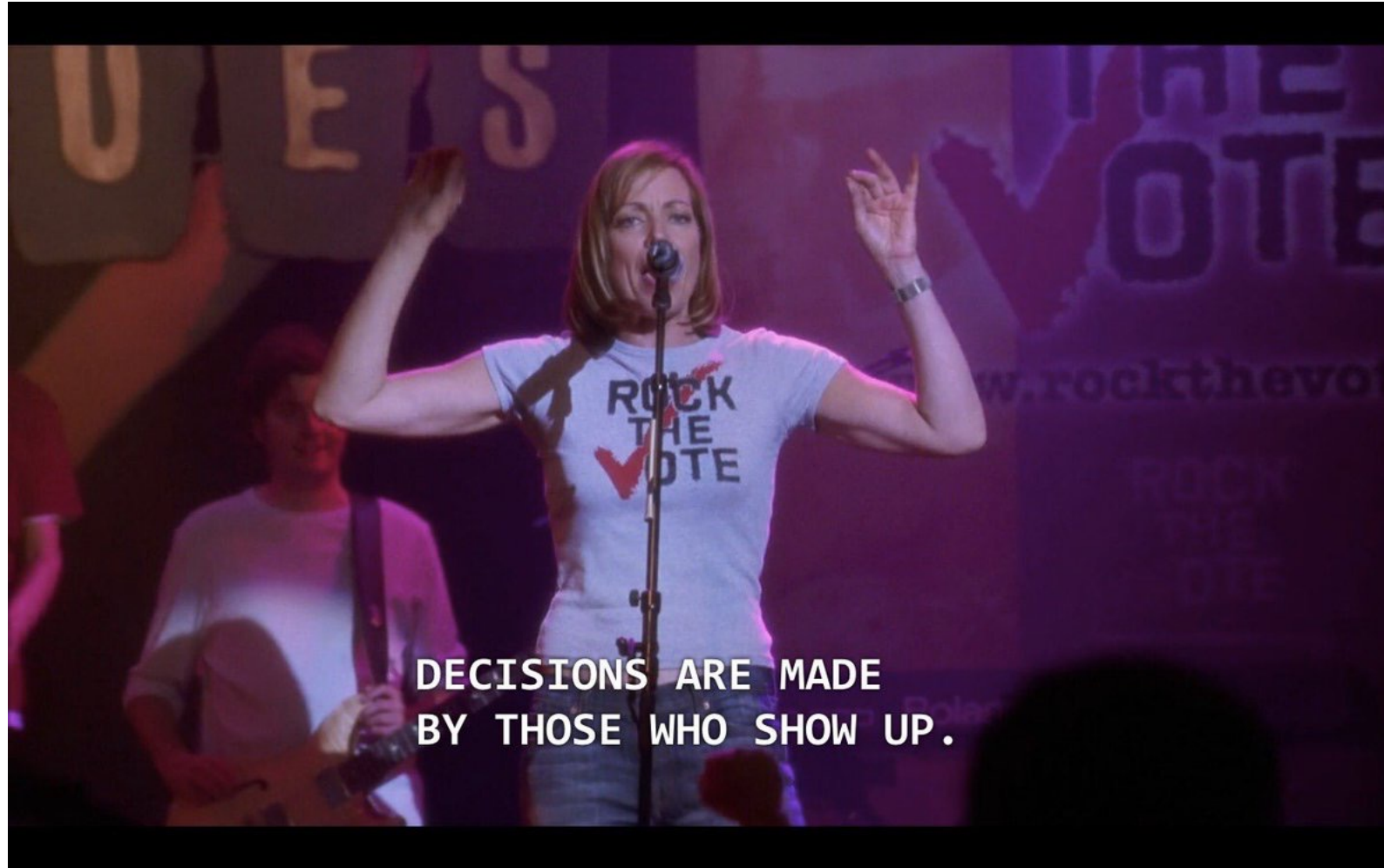


How to become an influential EC

- Give electeds easy wins
 - Small grant project, movie night, etc
- Be willing to listen and learn
 - Be open to new ideas
 - Work on what is of interest to the governing body
- Seek alliances
- Offer solutions, not just opposition
- Build a base of support
- “Thanks and Spanks”
- Don’t take it personally



Berkeley Heights Mayor Devanney and Councilman Yellin help cut the ribbon on their new community garden, led by the EC Chair Rich Leister



DECISIONS ARE MADE
BY THOSE WHO SHOW UP.

Annual Report

What should it include?

- Roster of members
- Meeting dates for the year
- List of activities and accomplishments
- Consider including goals for the coming year

Schedule and Location

2nd Tuesday Each
Month 6:00 pm
Borough Hall
15 North White Horse
Pike Lindenwold, NJ

2019 Meetings

01-08-2019
06-11-2019
09-10-2019
12-10-2019;
Cancelled: 02-2019,
03-2019,
04-2019,
05-2019,
07-2019;
08-2019;
10-2019;
11-2019

Mission Statement

The Lindenwold Environmental Commission (LEC) was established to promote the public interest in natural resource protection, sustainable development, and reclamation and to support the environmental commission and open space committee through work with citizens and other non-profit organizations.

Some of the powers and duties of the LEC are to: gather information; offer advice to other agencies; provide recommendations to the Joint Land Use Board and/or Mayor and Council members on the development and use of land within the municipality. The LEC members are dedicated to addressing the environmental concerns of the Borough and to protect the environment for future generations.

Credit Summary and Members

In 2019, the LEC worked toward promoting the Second Five Year Community Forestry Plan, research and provide communication regarding available grants to promote stewardship within the community, assist with improvements to open spaces, participated in community events, and assessed provisions to include sustainable efforts to improve the well-being of Borough citizens and the environment. Review and comment on Joint Land Use Application.

The LEC reorganized on January 8, 2019. LEC meetings are appropriately noticed with meeting agenda and minutes posted to the Borough's at <https://www.lindenwoldnj.gov/node/133/agenda> Public are welcome to attend meeting and provide comments to the LEC. Commission members included Councilman Joe DiDomenico, Beth Suckiel, Al Tine, John Kennedy, Nancy Lutz, Councilwoman Linda Hess, and Les Engels. Engineer – Douglas White, PE, PP, CFP, T&M Associates.

Actions and Meeting Highlights

January 2019 - Annual reorganization; preparation of Annual Community Forestry Report; Creation of Green Team (Sustainable NJ); Review and commented on Joint Land Use Board application JLUB-19-2 – Lighthouse Deliverance Church;

Actions and Meeting Highlights (Continued)

June 2019 – Confirmed submission of Community Forestry Management Plan; consideration/planted trees in various areas of the Borough; begin planning National Night Out with green exhibits; discussed Sustainable NJ process for applicability; review Memorial Park improvement to benefit community; obtain member volunteers to participate in Community Forestry Management Plan continuing education credit; consider and review options for dog park;

September 2019 – discussion regarding qualifying actions and participation in Sustainable NJ program; reviewed applicable grants available; members to participate/attend meetings/workshops for CEU credits associated with Community Forestry Management Plan; report on LEC contributions to National Night Out; reviewed KMA Engineers Public Notice associated with freshwater wetland permitting/no comments;

December 2019 – discussion regarding qualifying actions and participation in Sustainable NJ program; remind secretary to prepare and offer resolution for continuation of Green Team; requested extension of Second Five Year Community Forestry Management Plan.

Goals/Considerations for 2020

- Complete Annual Community Forestry Management Plan and Reporting; consider phasing plan to perform community tree survey
- Consider/apply for Sustainable NJ Program actions;
- Consider need to update Environmental Resource Inventory;
- Prepare for/attend public outreach functions;
- Review grant options to benefit community.

EC Budget

- ANJEC dues
- Courses and conferences
- Supplies for educational programs & events
- Professional fees, i.e. environmental consultant
- Outreach expense, i.e. website, FB advertising, printing, postage, signs
- Development of ERI, plans, studies or inventories
- Software or hardware needs
- Other

ANJEC Resources -- Films

- **Bag It! Is your life too plastic?**
- **Poisoned Waters** This film shows the kinds of pollution now contaminating America's waterways.
- **Highlands Rediscovered**
- **King Corn** Addresses questions about how we eat and how we farm.
- **Groundswell Rising** - Protecting our children's air & water.
- **Flow-** How Did a Handful of Corporations Steal Our Water?
- **Kilowatt Ours**— A Plan to Re-Energize America
- **Turning the Tide** Hackensack Meadowlands documentary
- **A Plastic Ocean**

ANJEC Resources – Displays

*Stormwater Display
Clean Water for Your Town*

Green Infrastructure



*Passaic River Display
Ours to Protect , Ours to Enjoy*

Display focuses on the Passaic River and its watershed, with information about stormwater impacts and what residents can do to protect and enjoy the river..

ANJEC Resource Center Handouts

*Anti -Idling Pledge
Balloons Blow
Clean Water for Our Town
Environmentally Friendly Lawn Care Guide
Fertilizer Brochure
EQ Challenge Brochure
Easy Energy Action Plan
Green Infrastructure Guidance
Habitat Protection
Landscaping for Wildlife
Pet Waste
Walk & Bike to School Events Checklist*



ANJEC Resources – Games

Wheel of Knowledge Game

Choice of two sets of questions: **Cut Your Carbon Footprint OR Cut Your Water Footprint.** Game comes with list of questions/answers for 12 categories such as eco driving, tips or water cycle.



Plink the Plastic Game

Classic Plinko game with 4 topics on single use plastic pollution; Bags, Bottles, Balloons and Body. Question example: How many plastic bags does average U.S. Consumer use every year?



Energy Game

Includes large poster that serves as game board for EQ-Challenge energy game. Also offers energy savings tips and resources and information about renewable energy, including passive heating and cooling, and how to receive rebates for replacing appliances with energy-saving models.



Keep in touch!



973-539-7547
info@anjec.org

