



# ANJEC REPORT

Local Environment Matters

AUTUMN 2022

## Inside:

- Storm clouds on the horizon
- Harnessing the power of youth
- Community solar





## Director's Report

This September, we remember the lives of 30 New Jersey residents who were taken from their loved ones in Hurricane Ida in 2021. We hold their families in our hearts as we work to protect New Jersey residents from future disasters. Hurricane Ida was the second deadliest storm in New Jersey's history, eclipsed only by Superstorm Sandy exactly nine years prior, where 40 residents perished.

Since 1999, New Jersey residents have endured seven 100-year storm events and three 500-year events. Six of these storms have each caused over \$1B in damage in New Jersey alone. Last summer, Hurricane Ida caused more than \$65 billion in damage across eight states. (See pages 20-21)

New Jersey is one of the few states with enough foresight to adopt regulations under our own *Flood Hazard Area Protection Act* that are more protective than that of the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The flood elevation standards that permit development in New Jersey exceed the minimum federal requirements by two feet to provide a margin of safety for communities. That two-foot standard, however, was established in the 1970s and 1980s, and it is now absolutely inadequate to protect public safety.

A coastal state, New Jersey is experiencing some of the most intense effects of climate change. We are vulnerable to more intense hurricanes and tropical storms because warmer ocean water provides more energy, allowing storms to grow larger and travel farther across land from the Gulf and up the coast than they have ever before.


New Jersey is also experiencing increasing precipitation rates from non-hurricane storms. We are receiving more rain than we have in recorded history. The data we use to build stormwater management systems for new development dates from 1899-1999 to determine 100-year storms as well as all the smaller 2-, 5-, 10-, and 20-year storms. However, the volume of annual precipitation has increased substantially from 1999 to 2022, so much so that the stormwater management systems being approved by municipal land use boards are undersized for the storms they are expected to manage and are woefully inadequate to manage increasingly intense storms in the upcoming decades.

In January 2020, Governor Murphy signed Executive Order 100 directing the establishment of regulations known as NJPACT – Protecting Against Climate Threats – within two years. For the past two years, under Governor Murphy's orders, ANJEC staff as well as other environmental and community advocacy nonprofits, locally elected officials, utility representatives and developers have diligently met with the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to incorporate climate science into updates to many regulations, including the Flood Hazard Area Protection rules. In June 2022, DEP held multiple meetings to announce that their scientists and lawyers had finalized review and that they would publish the regulations before the end of the month as an emergency rule to protect public health and safety.

Then, a coalition of 19 developer organizations representing economic interests and advocating for the construction of affordable housing and other buildings in floodplains lobbied the Governor, and the rules have been stuck in a void ever since.

We urge Governor Murphy to adhere to his original pledge to fight the climate crisis and take action to protect New Jersey residents now. We implore Governor Murphy to adopt the Flood Hazard Area Regulations as an emergency rule immediately. By doing so, the Governor will recognize climate science and incorporate it into State policy that will protect an untold number of lives and avoid billions of dollars in damage to individuals, communities, and our shared infrastructure. There is zero time to waste now in making us more resilient to the climate crisis.

  
Jennifer M. Coffey  
Executive Director

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**564 MUNICIPALITIES ..... ONE ENVIRONMENT**

Executive Director ..... Jennifer M. Coffey  
Editor ..... Julie Lange Groth

The Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions is a private, non-profit educational organization serving environmental commission and open space committee members, concerned individuals, non-profits, and local officials. ANJEC's programs aim to promote the public interest in natural resource preservation, sustainable development and reclamation and support environmental commissions and open space committees working with citizens and other non-profit organizations.

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*On the cover: A box turtle makes itself comfortable in a patch of prickly pear, NJ's only native cactus.*  
Photo courtesy of NJ Audubon



# Creating certified wildlife habitats in NJ

By **Kristin T. Hock** (she/her/hers),  
Habitat Outreach Coordinator, New Jersey Audubon

**F**or over 30 years, New Jersey Audubon (NJ) has been promoting wildlife gardening, planting native Certified Wildlife Habitat species and managing small and large tracts of land as a way to connect all people with nature and steward the nature of today for all people of tomorrow. Since becoming the State affiliate of the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) in 2012, NJA has officially adopted NWF's Garden for Wildlife program which includes a pathway to certifying your garden or other outdoor space by providing animals with food, water, cover and places to raise young while using sustainable practices.

Creating a wildlife habitat is possible for any outdoor space, big or small. From a large farm to an apartment balcony, providing just a few resources for wildlife goes a long way for their survival while offering enjoyment to the gardener. Meet the requirements below to certify your garden and join this nationwide movement.

## **Food (3 sources needed)**

Plant native trees, shrubs and other vegetation that produces flowers, seeds, berries, cones and nuts. Keep in mind that throughout their lives, some wildlife will change their diet depending on their life stage so plant accordingly. For example, many caterpillars eat only leaves, but in their adult form, the butterfly or moth sips on nectar. Planting natives for all life stages is crucial to survival.

## **Water (1 source needed)**

Splish, splash, birds enjoy taking a bath! But water is needed for more than just

cleanliness. Butterflies will drink from puddles, so if you only have a small balcony, put out a shallow lid and fill it daily with water. Frogs and toads lay eggs in water as do dragonflies and damselflies. If space allows, consider putting in a small pond for these animals.

## **Cover (2 sources needed)**

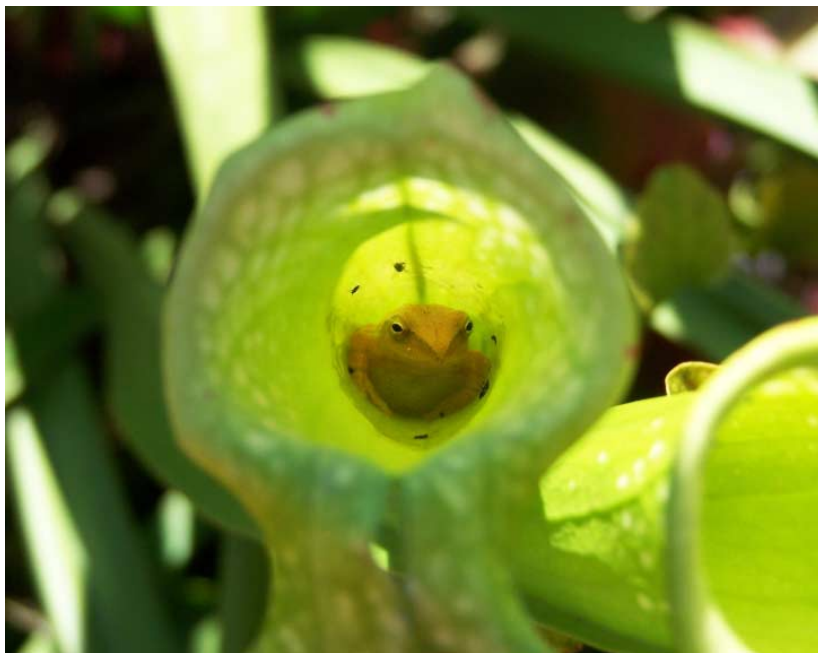
Although wildlife lives outdoors, they also need "inside" spaces for survival: a shelter from the rain or a tree hole to keep warm; a space to hide from predators or a blind to use while hunting. Creating cover for animals can be as simple as leaving a dead tree on the ground for salamanders to live underneath, creating a rockpile for animals to hide in or building a bat box to house resident mosquito eaters.

## **Places to raise young (2 sources needed)**

Maintaining or creating safe spaces for young animals is essential for survival of a species. Create shrub thickets to protect fledgling birds from cats and other predators. Put up bird boxes for those cavity nesters that visit your yard. Have a small space? Plant butterfly weed in a pot so that Monarch caterpillars have something to eat once their eggs hatch.

## **Sustainable wildlife-friendly practices**

Keep cats indoors, compost leftover vegetable and fruit matter and reduce or eliminate the use of chemicals on your lawn. Don't just keep all the fun to yourself! Encourage friends, family members and



*A bog spring peeper taking shelter in a pitcher plant*

neighbors to get gardening for wildlife and invite them to have their properties become Certified Wildlife Habitats as well!

## Join the movement!

There are almost 9,000 Certified Wildlife Habitats in NJ! Each habitat provides necessary resources for pollinators and songbirds and, if we are lucky, reptiles and amphibians too! Any outdoor space can be certified, including an apartment balcony, home, school, business, place of worship or nearby community park.

To make an even bigger impact to benefit wildlife, a whole town can become a certified Community Wildlife Habitat. This certification is based on population and utilizes a point system that includes engaging the community in education and outreach activities. New Jersey currently has five certified Community Wildlife Habitats as well as 17 registered communities that are currently working toward certification. Community members are encouraged to become a Certified Wildlife Habitat and earn points by organizing activities such as garden tours and seed swaps, certifying a park and installing a kiosk with native gardening information, hosting a green fair,

maintaining an online logbook, and inviting speakers to educate the community about gardening for wildlife.

NJ certified communities currently include: Cape Island, High Bridge, Montclair, Lambertville and Cherry Hill. Registered communities working toward certification as Community Wildlife Habitats include: Collingswood, Ewing Township, Hamilton (Mercer), Island Heights Borough, Mendham Township and Mendham Borough, Monroe Township, Morris County Monarchs, Red Bank Borough, Smoke Rise, Stillwater Township, Washington Township (Morris), West Windsor, Colts Neck, Atlantic Highlands, Howell Township, Vineland, and Allamuchy.

If your community is interested in the Community Wildlife Habitat program, reach out to [Egarden@njaudubon.org](mailto:Egarden@njaudubon.org) or visit our website: <https://njaudubon.org/garden>. Enjoy a free 15-minute virtual presentation about the Garden for Wildlife programs and get any questions answered. If your community decides to sign up, we'll be there to offer guidance and support throughout your process. 💧





# Acting Locally

By **Rachel Funcheon**, Chair, Watchung Environmental Commission;  
**Randi K Rothmel**, ANJEC South Jersey Project Director;  
**Michele Gaynor**, ANJEC Resource Center;  
**Georgia Madiba**, ANJEC Membership Manager

## Planting for stream protection in Watchung

Towns throughout NJ are facing stream erosion and local flooding challenges. The Watchung Environmental Commission (WEC) took on a riparian planting project to help mitigate flooding and improve a local stream. EC member Doug Speeney spearheaded this project by developing a

and arrowwood viburnum) were planted along the stream. The understory plantings will complement the tree plantings by improving the habitat for pollinators and birds.

On a beautiful Earth Day weekend, the WEC, Watchung Mayor Keith Balla,

*Watchung volunteers plant trees as a pollution buffer along the East Branch of the Stony Brook.*

riparian planting plan for land along the East Branch of the Stony Brook, just before it enters Best Lake. This area was devoid of trees and native riparian vegetation, which normally serves as a pollution buffer, an erosion control measure and a habitat enhancement.

The Mayor and Council approved and supported the project with money from the Borough's Tree Bank Fund. Six, 2 ½-inch caliper native trees (swamp white oak, river birch and silver maple) and 50 understory native shrub saplings (silky dogwood

Council member Wendy Robinson, Council President Ron Jubin, the DPW, and over 35 volunteers dug holes, planted trees and shrubs, and added deer protection around the plantings. Once established, the roots will absorb excess water during flooding, help stabilize the stream bank, and slow erosion and the flow of sediment to the lake. The shade will also help keep the stream cool in summer to support a healthy fish population. Although this plan alone is not enough to eliminate area flooding, it's an important step in the right

direction, and the WEC hopes to build on it in the future.

This project helped create more public support for the WEC and increase public awareness about the issue of flooding and the importance of a healthy stream buffer. The Commission expressed gratitude for the support of the Borough and especially all the resident volunteers who made this effort possible. For more information email [rfuncheon@gmail.com](mailto:rfuncheon@gmail.com). — Rachel Funcheon



*Rachel Funcheon with Watchung Mayor Keith Balla at a tree planting*

## Towns are 'bizzy' creating pollinator habitats

Low maintenance, water conservation, stormwater management and creating habitat are some of the benefits of using native plants. They provide nectar for pollinators including hummingbirds, native bees, butterflies, moths and bats. Environmental Commissions (ECs) across NJ are stepping up to beautify their communities with these indigenous species.

In Tuckerton, the EC with help from local Cub Scouts have been creating mini-gardens along Main Street (Route 9) utilizing native plants in planter boxes. These gardens planted in May feature seaside goldenrod, butterfly weed, coastal panic grass and beardtongue. The EC hopes

that the public will be inspired to purchase some of these species for their own native gardens. Other areas along Route 9 were planted last fall to determine whether the plants could handle salt spray from snow plowing during the winter. Additional planting and maintenance of these gardens are in the works, according to the town's Facebook page.

To the north in Passaic County, the Wayne Environmental Commission used native plants in their first installed rain garden. With the help of an ANJEC open space grant, EC members, volunteers, Rutgers Master Gardeners and the town's Parks and Recreation Department installed a 400-square-foot rain garden in the Winding Way Park to capture rainwater runoff from the adjacent sidewalk. The land on Winding Way was sold to the Township through FEMA-backed buyouts, and the flood-prone homes that stood there for five decades were demolished.

The installation of the rain garden is part of a larger undertaking to turn the property into a passive park. According to Fran Ritter, one of two council members who attended the event, "We love that Wayne Township is a lake community and we want to protect it. Rain Gardens are an essential step to stormwater management to capture, filter and infiltrate stormwater runoff in an attractive way, which protects the health of Wayne's natural environment." The demonstration garden will serve as an example for any resident to install one on their own property.

Great work, EC's, and keep on going native.  
— Randi K Rothmel

## Bernards Twp. traps spotted lanternflies

The spotted lanternfly has plagued NJ since 2018, causing devastation to roughly 70 species of trees and plants. They have few predators and, although the word is out to stomp and smash them, they continue to flourish in many counties throughout the State.



The Bernards Twp EC had previously focused on educating residents about the lanternfly but felt they could do more, so they launched the Spotted Lanternfly Park Project. Three members of the EC worked with Dan Ross, Environmental Stewardship Coordinator at the Somerset County Environment Education Center.

The three phases of the project included planning, building and installing traps to capture the invasive insects. In the planning stage they wanted to compare the complexity of building the Penn State Extension trap vs. the trap advertised by Duke Farms. It was determined that the Duke Farms model was easier to build, with improvement modifications made during the process.

For several hours, 12 volunteers (three from the EC and nine residents, including students) built traps at the Bernards Twp. Community Center. Once ready to install, several members of the Shade Tree Commission (STC) walked the town's three largest parks and marked vulnerable trees. Many of the tagged trees were near parking areas, sports fields and walking trails. The following day the EC and STC broke into teams to oversee the installation by students who volunteered for their school's Give Back Day.



*A good day to build spotted lanternfly traps in Bernards Twp.*

Twenty traps were installed in each park, and they started catching nymphs immediately.

EC Chair Debra DeWitt had information cards made that discussed the life cycle of the nymphs and what could be done to eradicate the pests at each phase. It also included a QR code that could be scanned to view a DIY trap video. She noted that the parks in Bernards Twp. are pesticide-free and it's encouraging to know that some lanternflies can be successfully eliminated without the use of pesticides.

Watch the Duke Farms video on making spotted lanternfly traps at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=f5AW3oVG100](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f5AW3oVG100).

– Michele Gaynor

## A new watering hole for pollinators

A project called "work crew" is one of the signature initiatives of the South Orange Environmental Commission (SOEC). Each Sunday, members weed invasive plants, aid in tree maintenance and install native plants, usually in the corridor near the South Orange section of the Rahway River. The all-ages group is a mix of Environmental Commissioners, Green Team members and individuals motivated by strong environmental stewardship. The crew often involves other local groups, such as Scout troops and religious organizations, to join them in what SOEC Chair Linda Beck considers a civic duty.

In an effort to populate an insect's journey with more places to pollinate, Beck began scouting out alternative spaces to demonstrate the beauty and benefit of native plants, while at the same time showing that they can occupy commercial settings. She approached the owner of the local Buy Rite, a wine and spirit store, with a plan to plant foxglove beardtongue, swamp milkweed and eastern columbine in the two green plots along the path to the store's entrance. The owners were enthused and the planting took place in May.

Planting day was akin to the perfect potluck. Plants were ordered from the Great



*Dedicated members of the South Orange EC work crew install native plants at Buy Rite.*



Swamp Watershed Association's native plant sale and Buy Rite gladly reimbursed the cost. The South Orange Department of Public Works donated mulch, a friendly neighbor contributed a hose he no longer needed and the work crew volunteered their labor.

The South Orange EC regularly posts on Facebook and Instagram (@sogreenteam) as well as to their blog site (sogreenteam.wordpress.com).

— Georgia Madiba

*On July 16th, the City of New Brunswick, Lower Raritan Watershed Partnership and ANJEC hosted an education and celebration event for the City of Water Day. It was part of an annual regional NY-NJ Harbor & Estuary project to bring public awareness to the current and future impacts of climate change and sea level rise. ANJEC provided reusable bags with a QR code to NJNoPlastics.org that has free printable resources such as a leave-behind tent card explaining why it's illegal to hand out single-use plastics. (English/ Spanish)*



# Harnessing the power of youth for a healthier environment

By **Sheila Baker Gujral**, ANJEC Resource Center Director

*"We cannot always build the future for our youth,  
but we can build our youth for the future."*

– Franklin Delano Roosevelt

**F**DR's words resonate today as we educate our youth for climate leadership and environmental careers. As the global climate continues to deteriorate, the youth of New Jersey are arming themselves with knowledge, training, and experience as they prepare to battle climate change.

In Newark, the Office of Sustainability and the Green Team developed the Climate Justice Ambassadors Program, a five-week program designed to give youth the confidence to talk to others about climate change and the impact it has on their urban community. With support from the Urban Sustainability Directors Network and the Victoria Foundation, they offer a robust curriculum. Mondays and Tuesdays are in the classroom with guest speakers teaching about their fields of expertise. Wednesdays are field trip days. Thursdays have virtual instruction on a variety of topics: greenhouse gas emissions; the urban heat island effect; environmental justice and air quality; food and waste; recycling, nature services (trees); green infrastructure and energy. Field experiences include an environmental justice tour, port tour, eco-cruise, Camp Watershed and a closeup view of solar panels on a roof. Toward the end of the program, the students will be at the Newark GreenFest, where they can put their training to work as they reach out to the community to discuss climate change and its effects on their community.

Another ambassador program is offered

through Newark Science and Sustainability, Inc, where they focus on five pillars – urban agriculture, eco art, wellness and nutrition education, renewable energy, and ecological building and construction.

"Agriculture lays the foundation for the program, and we are heavily engaged in horticulture and urban farming," says Tobias Fox, founder and managing director of Newark Science and Sustainability, Inc. In addition to the agricultural and horticultural focus, they train their ambassadors to be "food detectives" by teaching them how to read food labels and understand product placement in the supermarket. A typical exercise is to plan a meal and then go to the market with a challenge: figure out how to feed a nutritious meal to a family of four for \$20. These valuable life skills have myriad benefits, from the personal to the global.

The Watershed Institute in Pennington has also been hard at work developing environmental youth leadership programs. The Hightstown Environmental Youth Leadership Program is a collaboration between the Watershed Institute, the Hightstown Environmental Commission, the nonprofit NJ Rise and the Peddie School. They learn about a variety of topics, as evidenced by their final projects, which covered green infrastructure, advocacy, transportation, lead in drinking water, wastewater treatment, porous pavement and beach cleanups.

The Watershed Institute is also collaborating with Mercer County Parks Commission and Isles, Inc (a community development and environmental organization in Trenton) on the Trenton Environmental Youth Leaders Program. In addition to getting training on environmental issues and advocacy, it functions as a job readiness training program and exposes youth to various career opportunities in the environmental field. Sophie Glovier, assistant director of policy at the Watershed Institute says, "If ECs are interested in engaging youth, we now have a model that we can share," and she encourages environmental commissions to reach out to her if they would like to start an environmental youth leadership program in their municipality. She can be reached at [sglovier@thewatershed.org](mailto:sglovier@thewatershed.org).

In addition to these collaborative youth environmental leadership initiatives, the Watershed Institute offers the Watershed Academy for High School Students, which has one-week sessions on a variety of topics. "Each five-day session engages students in a world of science where they ask questions and identify problems, gain skills and knowledge, propose solutions and learn about career opportunities."

Ms. Glovier said they took on this work because they had "an interest in getting teenagers involved in working on climate change. We see the impact of when students come to EC or Council meetings, so we started doing trainings."

**More information**

- Hightstown Environmental Youth Leadership <https://thehzoshed.smugmug.com/2022-Events/2022-Events/Hightstown-Environmental-Youth-Leadership-Program/>
- Newark Science and Sustainability Ambassadors Program <https://www.sasglocal.com/ambassadors/>
- Newark Climate Justice Ambassadors Program <https://www.newarkgreenteam.org/post/introducing-newark-climate-ambassadors>
- Watershed Academy for High School Students <https://thewatershed.org/academy/>
- The Watershed Institute Environmental Youth Leadership Programs <https://thehzoshed.smugmug.com/2022-Events/2022-Events/Hightstown-Environmental-Youth-Leadership-Program/>
- Watch the Trenton Environmental Youth Leaders in action on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AzWc8ksLgak>





# Floodplain management and the National Flood Insurance Program

By Kunal P. Patel, Ph.D., P.E., CFM, NJ NFIP State Coordinator

The NJ State National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Coordinator's Office provides technical assistance to 553 municipalities and the NJ Sports and Exposition Authority on floodplain management through FEMA's Community Assistance Program. One of the important responsibilities of this office is to assist FEMA and NFIP participating communities with the implementation and adoption of the flood damage prevention ordinances. Ordinance adoption formalizes a community's responsibility to manage their floodplain in exchange for the sale of flood insurance and eligibility for FEMA public assistance after a federally-declared disaster.

Over the past two years, the Office developed and introduced a model code coordinated ordinance, which integrates NFIP floodplain management regulations with the higher standards of The NJ Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP's) *Flood Hazard Area*

*Control Act* and NJDCA's Uniform Construction Code building regulations. Currently, Atlantic, Cape May, Ocean, Monmouth, Middlesex and Hudson counties are in the process of transitioning their ordinances. Additional counties will transition over the next year.

This ordinance adoption process also presents an opportunity for municipalities to consider higher regulatory standards beyond the NFIP minimum and the State's standards. Potential higher standards include adopting additional freeboard (elevation of a building's lowest floor to a height above the minimum base flood elevation) and regulating to the 500-year floodplain. Other higher standards such as those requiring repetitive loss properties, substantially damaged and substantially improved properties to be elevated at



certain thresholds will help municipalities transition new and existing structures towards becoming more resilient. Municipalities might also consider adopting more stringent regulations for new and substantially improved structures in areas prone to erosion, flash flooding and other geotechnical hazards.


Providing technical assistance takes on even more importance as the climate changes. Strategy 1.2 of New Jersey's Climate Change Resilience Strategy mentions municipalities' floodplain management challenges stemming from the high turnover rate among local floodplain administrators and reinforces the Office's technical assistance efforts. To provide a resource for both experienced and new floodplain administrators, the Office recently released a draft Floodplain Administrator Guidebook for comment. This Guidebook provides an overview of floodplain regulations and FEMA technical guidance documents that floodplain administrators and even the general public can use to gain insight into compliant floodplain management practices.

The Office also announces free training opportunities and addresses technical issues in its newsletter the Floodplain Communicator. The Summer 2022 newsletter

announced a free, self-paced online NFIP 101 training offered jointly by FEMA and the Association of State Floodplain Managers. More technical resources on the Office website include a model Flood Damage Prevention Permit, a Local Design Flood Elevation Worksheet (including examples), and a Substantial Damage Management Plan template for municipalities.

Communities interested in proactively adopting ordinances in advance of a scheduled transition or in need of technical assistance with floodplain management regulations are encouraged to contact [Rebecca.Jones@dep.nj.gov](mailto:Rebecca.Jones@dep.nj.gov) and [Kenya.Lovill@dep.nj.gov](mailto:Kenya.Lovill@dep.nj.gov) for more information.

#### More information

- Floodplain Administrator's Guidebook [www.nj.gov/dep/floodcontrol/guidebook.htm](http://www.nj.gov/dep/floodcontrol/guidebook.htm)
- NJ Model Code Coordinated Ordinances [www.nj.gov/dep/floodcontrol/modelord.htm](http://www.nj.gov/dep/floodcontrol/modelord.htm)
- NJ Climate Change Resilience Strategy [www.nj.gov/dep/climatechange/docs/nj-climate-resilience-strategy-2021.pdf](http://www.nj.gov/dep/climatechange/docs/nj-climate-resilience-strategy-2021.pdf)
- Floodplain Communicator [www.nj.gov/dep/floodcontrol/newsletters.htm](http://www.nj.gov/dep/floodcontrol/newsletters.htm) 

## New Jersey releases landmark environmental justice rules

*From a statement by Ironbound Community Corporation, New Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance, Clean Water Action, and South Ward Environmental Alliance*

Environmental justice (EJ) communities throughout New Jersey are on the brink of change as the landmark Environmental Justice Bill S232 comes closer to being realized. The recent release of long-awaited rules that accompany this new law is a critically important milestone.

The law and now proposed rules tackle the decades-long pattern of dumping polluting facilities in communities of color and low-income communities. Under these new rules, polluting facilities will be required to undergo a robust environmental justice review before being permitted in


overburdened, i.e., environmental justice, communities. These precedent-setting rules will arm New Jersey regulators with the right to deny further harmful pollution in these neighborhoods.

Environmental justice communities will finally have a chance to have what many people take for granted – clean air and a safer environment in which to thrive. The just-released rules would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of New Jersey environmental justice advocates and organizations, as well as State Senator Singleton, State Senator Ruiz, Assemblyman McKeon, Governor Murphy, NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) Commissioner LaTourette and staff that led to the passage of the bill in the first place.

This rule reflects two years of continued hard work, expertise and community knowledge of EJ advocates who worked alongside the NJDEP staff to develop a strong set of rules that reflect the ambition, significance and promise of the landmark EJ law. We are eager to see these rules adopted as written as soon as possible and finally put to use in the communities that have been sacrificed for far too long.

New Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance, Ironbound Community Corp. Environmental Justice, South Ward Environmental Alliance, and Clean Water Action will be making sure that communities understand and are engaged with the public hearings regarding the proposed regulations. Too often when a historic bill such as S232 is passed, people stop paying attention after the bill is signed. It is imperative that our communities stay engaged. Until the final rule adoption occurs later this year, we urge the NJDEP

to act in the spirit of the law and as we continue to fight our current battles for environmental justice in New Jersey, including: a fourth fracked gas power plant proposed by Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission, threat of a sludge facility proposed, and waste facility expansions in Camden.

The draft rules require the NJDEP to evaluate the environmental and public health impacts of various polluting facilities on overburdened communities when reviewing specific types of permit applications. It lays out a process for assessing the burden that new facilities may pose to communities that are already overburdened and directs the State to deny those permits that contribute to the existing stressors in those census blocks. It requires additional reviews of existing facilities in overburdened communities that undergo a renewal or expansion process and can apply more stringent conditions to those existing facilities. It also offers a robust set of public participation processes for local input. 

A full copy of the proposal is available on the NJDEP's webpage at: [www.nj.gov/dep/rules/proposals/proposal-20220606a.pdf](http://www.nj.gov/dep/rules/proposals/proposal-20220606a.pdf)



# ANJEC awards 2022 open space grants

By Elizabeth Ritter, ANJEC Deputy Director

For the ninth consecutive year, ANJEC is pleased to announce the Open Space Stewardship Grants. It's exciting to see that environmental commissions (ECs) are still moving forward and planning projects that their communities will appreciate and enjoy for years to come. While the pandemic has mostly abated and people are less reliant on outdoor gathering spaces, enjoying nature is still vital to promote physical and mental health of NJ residents.

The projects awarded grants for 2022 were varied and show how unique and energetic our NJ environmental commission members are! Projects include: trail maintenance, pollinator gardens, osprey nesting habitat, demonstration gardens, educational signage, a Monarch Waystation, remediation projects and more. ANJEC looks forward to sharing more information about these projects with other communities in the months to come, so check our social media platforms for photos and updates throughout the year.

For 2022, the following communities were selected for grants: Califon, Clinton Twp., Closter, Colts Neck, Cranford, Florham Park, Glen Ridge, Hackensack City, Lambertville, Little Silver, Mendham Twp., Morris Twp., Ocean City, Pequannock Twp., Point Pleasant, Teaneck, and Tinton Falls.


ANJEC is pleased to announce that the 2022 grant program was partially funded by a partnership with the New Jersey Licensed Site Remediation Professionals Association Foundation, Inc. (LSRPA Foundation). We



*A 2020 grant funded a pollinator garden planning event at Bergen Hill Park in Jersey City.*

are excited about this new partnership that allows us to expand funding to more municipalities as they continue their work to protect local natural resources.

No cash match is required for the grants, which range from \$600 to \$1500. Projects require an in-kind labor contribution from the commission or other volunteers totaling at least 80 hours. Projects often bring in many times that amount in support from community groups and individuals, who help with physical labor or even donate professional skills. The funded projects are often part of larger initiatives that may include funding from additional sources.

Receiving a grant can sometimes encourage the community to plan even more activities to protect the environment. ANJEC remains committed to these worthwhile projects and all the enthusiasm and community goodwill they generate. The primary objective of the Open Space Stewardship Grant Program is to increase residents' awareness and appreciation of local open space, ultimately increasing public support for open space stewardship. 

# 2022 ANJEC Lechner Scholarship winner

By Georgia Madiba, ANJEC Membership Manager

A NJEC is pleased to announce that Brianna Casario has won the 2022 Lechner Scholarship. Brianna first began her environmental work while in elementary school in Moorestown. She was a child who enjoyed collecting leaves and exploring the natural world, and when she learned about the process of recycling at school, that same day she urged her parents to start at home. Much later, in a high school environmental science course, she found herself completely engaged, which led her to major in Ecology, Evolution, and Natural Resources at the Rutgers School of Environmental and Biological Sciences.

In her studies at Rutgers, Brianna took a course entitled Principles of Natural Resource Management, where the final project was the creation of a site management plan. Students were encouraged to select among nearby sites where class time had already been spent but, instead, Brianna scouted out possibilities in her hometown. She made contact with Burlington County's lead park naturalist who introduced her to an Important Bird Area called Barker's Brook. Because many threatened and endangered birds use Barker's Brook, it had been closed to the public, but since these species were fascinating to bird enthusiasts, trespassing became commonplace.

Determined to make the project comprehensive, Brianna hoped to establish ecotourism on the site so that funding would become available for park maintenance and preservation of the species. Brianna's Barker's Brook Management Plan describes the ecological importance of protecting the site, with potential issues and solutions at each stage: 0-5 years, 5-10 years and 10+ years. Her plan met with an

enthusiastic response, and Burlington County intends to institute it along with specific habitat recommendations.

After graduation, Brianna intends to try various seasonal work gigs in environmental protection, to see what fits her best. We wish her great success!

ANJEC awards this scholarship biannually in memory of Hermia Lechner to honor her commitment to the preservation of open space and natural resources in New Jersey. ●



*Brianna is a true environmentalist, and urges us to stop and digest the fact that, "We are all part of the ecosystem, even in this modern world."*



**Friday, October 14**

**9:00 am to 3:30 pm**

**Mercer County Community College**

**West Windsor, NJ**

Join us as we come back together for a day jam-packed with information and resources you can use, with exciting speakers, informative workshops, an array of exhibitors, Environmental Achievement Awards, and much more. Virtual programming will be offered through the week, leading up to the in-person event on October 14.

Check the ANJEC website [www.anjec.org](http://www.anjec.org) for details and registration info.

For sponsorship and exhibitor opportunities contact [abrockwell@anjec.org](mailto:abrockwell@anjec.org)




## Candace McKee Ashmun Memorial Fund

The ANJEC family honors the memory of our founding executive director, friend, colleague and mentor Candy Ashmun, who was our most loyal supporter and volunteer right up to her last days.


ANJEC has established the Candace McKee Ashmun Memorial Fund in her honor. Donations to the fund will

be used to support the ANJEC Open Space Stewardship Grant Program, an annual program for municipal environmental commissions to carry out local stewardship projects.

Candy's support of ANJEC's mission and her unwavering belief in the power of the local environmental commission makes this program a perfect way to remember her legacy for years to come.

**To donate,** mail a check to ANJEC, PO Box 157, Mendham NJ 07945. 





# Tackling the impacts of increased flooding in overburdened communities

By Jocelyn Tapia, Rutgers University student and Newark resident


When it rains, twenty-one New Jersey cities and towns are affected severely as raw sewage water spills onto rivers and streets. The flooding is known as Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO), which pours a combination of stormwater, untreated human and industrial waste and other stormwater pollutants into waterways and streets.

Stormwater CSOs have detrimental health, social and economic impacts on overburdened communities. The mixture of domestic, industrial, and commercial wastewater is responsible for high levels of suspended solids, toxic pollutants and pathogenic microorganisms entering waterways. This toxic brew poses a health risk to the people living in these municipalities because of waterborne transmission, a common way of spreading disease to the population.

During a storm, people whose homes are in basements are forced to seek shelter elsewhere due to flooding. I have seen firsthand the impact CSOs have on overburdened communities such as Newark, where I live. The fear that rainfall will cost homes and health is profound.

Several months ago, my family took in a woman after a storm had flooded the basement where she lived. Her face was filled with tears and she was still shivering from having to run out with only what she was wearing. I will never forget the image of her face when she returned to her home to find everything ruined. How could rainfall have left this woman and her family without anything? How many other families had lost their homes? As they tried to go to work, many residents found water damage to their cars. My car was unsalvageable, along with many others because the engine was filled with water.

Small businesses, such as the bakery I worked for, experienced water damage to their property. For others, it



cost a large sum of money to fix what the storm had caused. This storm cost people their homes, cars, small businesses, and health. In overburdened communities like Newark, many people do not have the resources to purchase a new car or to rebuild their homes.

The municipalities with CSOs are among the oldest urban places in New Jersey and with the highest population densities. Municipalities with CSOs are generally less wealthy than the New Jersey average. In some municipalities over 20 percent of households live below the poverty line, meaning people in these communities do not have the financial resources to restore the damage to their property.

## Communities working toward solutions

Sewage-Free Streets and Rivers Community Leadership Fellowship Program (SFSR Fellowship) initiatives are being launched to raise awareness and help find solutions to these issues. The SFSR Fellowship hosted a six-session, biweekly program that helped local leaders within municipalities with CSOs to increase their understanding of water system issues, and to seek and advocate for solutions. The Fellowship Program seeks to empower community organizations to engage residents and small business owners to shape the solutions to reduce flooding.

Leaders from all over New Jersey who live in communities that have CSOs were exposed to the water policies that impact their communities and were equipped with information on how to proceed with their advocacy work.

The fellowship gave me the opportunity to share water stories where I discovered how similar my experience was to others. The realization settled that this is not only occurring in Newark but in places around me like Paterson, Camden and Jersey City. All these overburdened communities are trying to stay afloat from being flooded and destroyed. At the end of the program, everyone shared their testimony on how CSO had impacted their lives. From this experience, I hope to become an advocate for my community and the communities around me

Sewage-Free Streets and Rivers (<https://sewagefreenj.org/>) is an action-oriented campaign that empowers community organizations to engage residents and small business owners to shape their communities' solutions to reduce localized flooding and the raw sewage dumped into rivers and streams due to combined sewer overflows. 💧





# Storm clouds on the horizon: What's in store for NJ?

By Julie Lange Groth , ANJEC Report Editor

**T**he past six years have seen unusually active hurricane seasons in the US, and 2022 will continue that trend according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). There were 21 named storms last year, using up all the names on the National Hurricane Center's list, and in 2020 a record 30 named storms formed. Together, those two years broke the record for the most landfalling storms on record in the US.

This year NOAA predicts 14 to 21 named storms, with three to six major hurricanes rated Category 3 or higher. The NOAA estimates that annual damages from climate change could measure in the hundreds of billions of dollars by the end of the century.

Climate change is the driving force behind the increasingly frequent and severe storms. And the impacts are widely felt. According to a recent national study, "More than three-quarters of adults in the US say they have experienced extreme weather in the last five years, including

hurricanes, wildfires, floods and heat waves."<sup>1</sup>

With more than 1,800 miles of coastline, the ramifications are especially alarming for New Jersey, where 53 percent of the population resides in the coastal zone. According to NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Shawn LaTourette , New Jersey is ground zero for some of the worst impacts of climate change, which are projected to escalate through the 21st century and will fall heaviest on New Jersey's most vulnerable populations. (page 18)

According to two studies by the Northeast Regional Climate Center, precipitation in NJ is likely to increase by more than 20 percent from the 1999 baseline by 2100, with some northwestern counties seeing as much as a 50 percent increase. NJ is also anticipating increasing rates of sea-level rise. By 2100, even under a low-emissions scenario, the sea level along New Jersey's coast is projected to rise 1.7 to 3.9 ft.<sup>2</sup>




## Preparing for future storms

"As New Jersey continues to experience more extreme weather events, we must become proactive in our approach to protect the communities and businesses that continue to bear the brunt of flooding and damage from these storms," said Governor Phil Murphy at a May press conference in Lambertville at a location where Hurricane Ida's flood waters swept two houses into Swan Creek in 2021. Some of the measures being taken in NJ to address the damaging impacts of climate change include:

- New Jersey released its first statewide Climate Change Resilience Strategy<sup>3</sup> late last year. It recommends measures to promote the long-term mitigation, adaptation, and resilience of the State's economy, communities, infrastructure, and natural resources.
- To cut climate heating greenhouse gas emissions, Governor Murphy has signed two landmark laws to boost the use of plug-in electric vehicles in New Jersey through various financial incentives and changes to the Municipal Land Use Law.
- To address issues specific to New Jersey's coastal zone, DEP has developed the Coastal Resilience Plan (CRP) and prepared draft emergency rules that would increase the number of inland

areas designated as flood plains, raise non-tidal design flood elevations by two feet and require the use of updated projections of precipitation rather than historical data. (See page 2)

## What towns can do

The DEP has created a comprehensive toolkit to help municipalities plan for climate change impacts, including increased temperatures, shifts in precipitation, rising sea levels and drought. It provides guidance on how NJ communities can proactively plan and build resilience into their local governance and integrate equity considerations into climate resilience planning. (<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/9daab51c2f5542969d50437522e012c4>) 

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<sup>1</sup> "The impact of extreme weather on views about climate policy in the United States," a study conducted by NPR, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health

<sup>2</sup> 2020 New Jersey scientific report on climate change at-a-glance: [www.nj.gov/dep/climatechange/pdf/scientific-report-on-climate-change-at-a-glance.pdf](http://www.nj.gov/dep/climatechange/pdf/scientific-report-on-climate-change-at-a-glance.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> NJ Climate Change Resilience Strategy: [www.nj.gov/dep/climatechange/resilience-strategy.html](http://www.nj.gov/dep/climatechange/resilience-strategy.html)

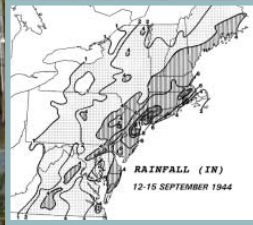
# Severe storms

*What does the past show*

Hurricane Felix



The Great Coastal  
Hurricane of 1806



Great Atlantic  
Hurricane of '44

1806

1903

Hurricane Floyd



The Passaic  
Flood



Twin Hurricanes  
Diane and Connie

This timeline includes only named storms that hit New Jersey.



# of New Jersey

How about the future?



Hurricane Irene



Hurricane Isaias

1944

1955

1995

1999

2011 2012

2020 2021



Superstorm Sandy

Hurricane Ida



1806

### **The Great Coastal Hurricane of 1806:**

21 passengers on a ship called Rose-in-Bloom died when the vessel was rocked by the storm.

1903

### **The Passaic Flood:**

A slow-moving storm dropped 11.4 inches of rain over Paterson in 24 hours. The Passaic River at Little Falls crested at 17.5 feet, still a record. Total damages in North Jersey reached \$7 million. After 10 days of downpour, 17 laborers died while trying to repair the drowned bridges at Washington Crossing.

1944

### **Great Atlantic Hurricane of '44:**

This Category 3 storm killed eight people in NJ, destroyed about 500 homes, and caused \$337 million in damage in today's dollars. In total, the storm killed 390 people, mostly in shipwrecks.

1955

### **Twin Hurricanes Diane and Connie:**

Hurricane Diane poured 10 to 20 inches of rain on areas soaked by Connie just a few days before, producing some of the most destructive flooding the region had ever seen, with up to \$1 billion (1955 USD) in damage. Among the 26 New Jerseyans killed were 15 children and six adults who were hit by a 30-foot-high wall of water that struck Camp Davis in Stroudsburg, PA.

1995

### **Hurricane Felix:**

This Category 4 hurricane caused severe beach erosion along the New Jersey coast and led to the deaths of five people in NJ.

1999

### **Hurricane Floyd:**

The worst drought in NJ in decades ended in mid-September when remnants of Hurricane Floyd swept up the East Coast, killing four New Jerseyans and unleashing torrential rainfall across the State. More than a foot of rain was recorded in the hardest-hit areas of North Jersey.

2011

### **Hurricane Irene:**

This massive storm killed seven people in NJ and caused almost a billion dollars in damage. Flooding continued for days after the storm.

2012

### **Superstorm Sandy:**

Hurricane Sandy claimed the lives of 40 NJ residents from 13 different counties. The deadliest storm in State history caused \$36 billion dollars in damage to the State. Power outages from the combined effects of wind and surge left some coastal communities in New Jersey without power for months. Thousands went days without power, gas was rationed statewide, and many towns were devastated by the storm.

2020

### **Hurricane Isaias:**

Isaias marked the earliest date on record to see the ninth named storm in a year. It spawned two tornadoes and caused two deaths in NJ.

2021

### **Hurricane Ida:**

After first making landfall 1,300 miles away, the remnants of Ida killed at least 30 people in NJ, making it the State's second-deadliest storm on record. Over about 18 hours, six to eight inches of rain fell across most of New Jersey with more than 10 inches observed in some North Jersey towns. Record river flooding levels were broken. Three tornadoes touched down in NJ, the most intense of which – an EF-3 twister that caused heavy damage in Mullica Hill – was New Jersey's strongest recorded tornado since 1990.

# Rutgers online tools support local efforts to build resilience against climate change

By **Jeanne Herb**, Co-Director,  
New Jersey Climate Change Resource Center

**A**cross New Jersey, the effects of changing climate conditions are being felt, with Garden State communities experiencing heavier rains, warmer temperatures and more frequent and intense flooding. Scientists, including those at Rutgers University, expect these trends to escalate into the 21st century.

More and more, New Jersey municipalities are finding themselves on the frontlines of addressing the impacts of climate change on residents' health, critical infrastructure and facilities, natural resources and cherished cultural and historic assets. In 2020, the State Legislature established the New Jersey Climate Change Resource Center at Rutgers University to undertake applied research, develop guidance and provide technical assistance to support efforts throughout the State to reduce risks and hazards faced by changing climate conditions.

A team at Rutgers University, under the umbrella of the Resource Center, has developed a suite of online data and mapping tools, NJADAPT, that are designed to assist communities and others in assessing climate risk at scales ranging from neighborhoods to municipal and county levels and to the entire State. Free and available for use by anyone, the online tools provide end users with the ability to overlay data about climate trends and futures with information about community assets, critical infrastructure and facilities, and

demographics. In doing so, NJADAPT provides an important tool in local officials' "toolbox" to characterize and communicate potential risks and hazards associated with climate conditions.

## Authoritative, scientifically sound data

The Rutgers team works closely with State and federal agencies to ensure that the data incorporated into the NJADAPT tools reflect the latest science, standards and guidance so that end users are assured that, when they use the NJADAPT tools, they are accessing authoritative and scientifically sound information. The team also works very closely with end users to enhance and improve the tools in ways that meet the needs of local officials, community leaders and decisionmakers.

## Current tools in the NJADAPT suite include:

- NJ Floodmapper concentrates on flooding impacts in the State's 239 coastal municipalities. NJ Floodmapper provides interactive flood exposure maps using the latest scientific projections on sea-level rise along with other data related to hurricane surge, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood zones and guidance and standards available from State agencies.



- Municipal Snapshots have been designed with municipal decision makers in mind. The snapshots summarize a variety of risks and hazards at the municipal level, including climate impacts to built infrastructure, critical assets, natural and working lands, public health and vulnerable populations.
- NJ ForestAdapt generates municipal snapshots that summarize key climate change-related data, including impacts to plant hardiness zones, canopy cover, impervious surfaces, pests and diseases and wildfire fuel hazards, among others.

All of the Rutgers tools have a strong focus on assessing climate change impacts to populations that are especially vulnerable to changing conditions. Demographic data taken from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Social Vulnerability Index as well as data identifying census block-level overburdened communities compiled by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection are incorporated into the NJADAPT tools to allow end users to better understand disproportionate climate impacts.

## New and improved!


End users will find constant enhancements and improvements to the tools, including summer 2022 efforts to:

- Build a "dashboard" delivering easily accessible data on climate trends and futures, including historical climate data and future projections for seasonal precipitation, minimum/maximum daily mean temperatures, heating and cooling degree days and other parameters;
- Expand current data on climate change impacts to health through improved

tools that facilitate the integration of climate data into community health planning; and

- Automate easy access to data needed by counties and municipalities to develop local hazard mitigation plans consistent with FEMA guidance.

Recognizing that some municipalities, community leaders and others have limited capacity to deploy use of tools such as NJADAPT to characterize climate change-related risks and hazards, Rutgers has launched the New Jersey Climate Corps, which is a group of highly skilled graduate students who provide technical assistance to municipalities throughout New Jersey.

Rutgers is also working to enhance the NJADAPT suite of tools by working closely with organizations, such as ANJEC, to offer tailored NJADAPT trainings to encourage routine use of the tools by Environmental Commissions, Green Teams and others at the municipal level. The virtual two-hour training conducted in collaboration with ANJEC was held on July 27. End users are encouraged to sign up for news from the NJ Climate Change Resource Center to hear about more training opportunities in the future. 

## More information

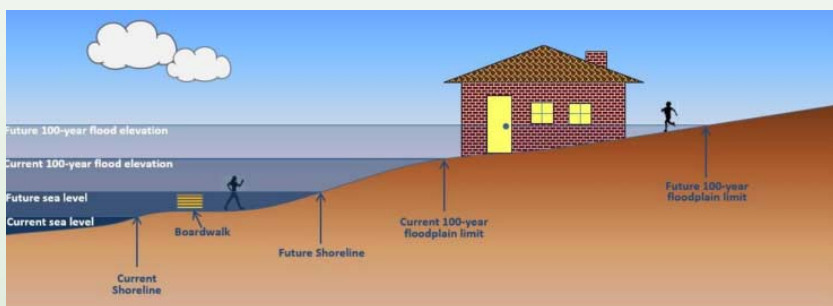
NJADAPT – [https://](https://njclimateresourcecenter.rutgers.edu/nj-adapt/)

[njclimateresourcecenter.rutgers.edu/nj-climate-change-resource-center/](https://njclimateresourcecenter.rutgers.edu/nj-climate-change-resource-center/)

NJ Climate Change Resource Center – [https://](https://njclimateresourcecenter.rutgers.edu/)

[njclimateresourcecenter.rutgers.edu/climate-resilience-corps/](https://njclimateresourcecenter.rutgers.edu/climate-resilience-corps/)

CDC/ATSDR Social Vulnerability Index – [www.atsdr.cdc.gov/placeandhealth/svi/index.html](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/placeandhealth/svi/index.html)



*NJ communities must adapt to the impacts of sea level rise*  
NJDEP

# NJ poised to be nation's leader in offshore wind

By Jack McCausland (he/him/they/them),  
ANJEC Water Outreach Specialist



Offshore wind energy is coming to New Jersey's coast as soon as 2024, and it's arriving as the climate crisis continues to mount. The State's first offshore wind project, Ocean Wind 1, is inching closer to becoming a reality each day. This project will entail 99 turbines off the coast of South Jersey, with future projects planned to continue up the coast – poised New Jersey to become one of the nation's few leaders in offshore wind development.

Wind energy is a clean, renewable energy source that is locally sourced and available for use right now as an alternative to fossil fuels. This is one of the reasons it is largely considered to be the future of energy as the need to ratchet down our carbon emissions grows stronger each day. Europe

has made massive strides in developing wind energy with over 6,000 wind turbines in operation off their coasts. They provide a much-needed bedrock of examples that we can learn from to ensure NJ's upcoming projects are installed with the most efficiency and the least environmental impacts to the State's bountiful biodiversity.

Although there are currently no active commercial windfarms in the US, offshore wind projects are being greenlit all around the country as the Biden administration announced last year its goal of 30GW of offshore wind energy produced by 2030. New Jersey is among the leading states to adopt these wind projects, making this an extremely exciting time to be a New Jersey resident! In addition, New Jersey has set its



own goal at 7.5 GW by 2035, one of the most ambitious goals in the nation. The Board of Public Utilities (BPU) has already greenlit three projects across the State, with Ocean Wind 1 being the first planned project. These first three projects that have received the go-ahead account for over half of that 7.5 GW goal.


New developments are happening near daily regarding Ocean Wind 1 – the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) released the draft environmental impact in late June with public comments taking place this summer during public hearings. The BOEM will then conclude the environmental review process next spring with the release of a final environmental impact statement.

Ørsted, the developer of Ocean Wind 1, is a leader in the global offshore wind sector with “more offshore windfarms across the globe than anyone else,” according to Madeline Urbish, Head of Government Affairs and Market Strategy at Ørsted. The company has experience around the globe in offshore wind and working with communities to aid in the transition from fossil fuels to clean, renewable wind energy.

## The crucial connection

One of the most crucial elements to developing offshore wind projects along

## Thanks to ANJEC member communities

We are grateful to the thousands of volunteers serving as local officials in more than 260 municipalities and counties that are members of ANJEC. These dedicated people – from municipal and regional environmental commissions and green teams to open space committees, planning boards, governing bodies, shade tree commissions and zoning boards – dedicate their time and efforts to assure a clean environment and high quality of life in their communities throughout our State. Thank you! 


the New Jersey coast is the methodology by which the transmission lines will reach the shore and ultimately power homes. The first three projects will use what is called a “radio connection” to reach the shore, with the individual wind fleets being tied into the coast separately. The BPU and PJM, the utility servicer in the area, are currently evaluating 80 proposals from utilities and developers to determine how best to bring the power ashore via the transmission lines, with an announcement scheduled for this fall.

While there is much to be considered when thinking about Ocean Wind 1 and the





projects to follow, one critical question to keep in mind – posed by Kris Ohleth, executive director of the Special Initiative on Offshore Wind – is: "If not offshore wind, then what?" This question couldn't be more poignant. Offshore wind is extremely promising in terms of the benefits it will bring to our country. It is a clean energy that will help us cut down our

carbon emissions for generations to come. The need to shift away from nonrenewable, carbon-emitting fossil fuel sources is loud and clear. Offshore wind is an investment in future generations, and it couldn't be coming at a better time. 



### Why you should visit the ANJEC YouTube channel

You can find recordings of ANJEC webinars, workshops and trainings from the past two years, including Environmental Congress presentations, on ANJEC's YouTube channel - ANJEC Views. This is your opportunity to:

- view presentations you may have missed;
- provide training for new environmental commission members; or
- share valuable content with municipal officials.

You can find it all at [www.youtube.com/channel/UCCEuWtY-juaDStB-22S5SpQ](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCEuWtY-juaDStB-22S5SpQ).

## ANJEC's 2022 Environmental Achievement and Municipal Awards

To be presented at the ANJEC's 49th Annual Environmental Congress

- This is your municipality's chance to show off your accomplishments!
- Also, nominate elected officials that have been environmental leaders in your community.

Entry deadline: Entries must be received by Monday, September 12th at 5:00 pm.

Email entries to [info@anjec.org](mailto:info@anjec.org)

For categories, application form and additional details go to [www.anjec.org](http://www.anjec.org)  
or email ANJEC at [info@anjec.org](mailto:info@anjec.org).

# Community Solar: Help your town shine

By **Brendon Shank, VP, Community Engagement, Solar Landscape**

When it comes to fighting climate change, New Jersey's environmental commissioners are often faced with a balancing act.

National attention to climate change can be thwarted by legislative stalemates. Locally, ambitious programs often compete for limited municipal resources. And in many cases important initiatives require years of public engagement and education to get off the ground. That's why community solar has been so appealing to many municipalities across the Garden State. It can deliver sustainability dividends without requiring intensive time or resource investments.

Community solar empowers New Jersey residents to use solar energy without installing panels on their roofs. The concept involves a developer like Solar Landscape building a large solar installation on a commercial rooftop, a parking canopy, a landfill or a brownfield - no open space, greenfields or agricultural lands are ever threatened in the community solar model. The power generated by the installation is delivered directly into the local energy grid. Then, nearby residents subscribe to buy that power through their utility company and receive a guaranteed monthly discount in the process.

Approved by the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (BPU) in 2019, this new statewide program promotes environmental justice and energy equity by expanding access to renewable energy for those who previously could not use it for reasons like high costs, lack of roof control or a shaded property. Already more than a dozen community solar projects are energizing communities in New Jersey, with over 100 more coming soon.

Most inspiring: At least 51 percent of a community solar project's subscribers must be low- or moderate-income. This ensures inclusion for those who have been historically left out of meaningful climate solutions, like the electric vehicles and residential solar panels from years ago.

*Gathering residents around these renewable energy projects - at events like this Earth Day "Cleanup and Sign Up" event in Perth Amboy involving Mayor Helmin J. Caba - is one of the ways municipal leaders can drive support for community solar projects.*



# Momentum growing

As the program has grown within the State, it has also been a model other states are already following. California’s legislature is considering adding the same provisions to include low- and moderate-income households into its community solar program. And New York, Illinois and Maryland are also incorporating more clean energy equity elements to their existing programs, following New Jersey’s lead.

There are a few common challenges that threaten sustainability initiatives, like cost, the difficulty of rallying collective action from citizens, and a growing mandate to ensure equitable access. Community solar is an antidote to all three of these challenges. It guarantees lower monthly energy bills and eliminates the hassle and expense of installing solar panels on private rooftops. This makes community solar a simple, safe way for residents - especially those in lower-income households – to meaningfully ease the use of fossil fuels, reduce carbon emissions and accelerate our transition to renewable energy.

The result? Cleaner air and healthier, stronger, more resilient and sustainable communities.

Secaucus was one of the first New Jersey communities to rally around community

# Bringing community solar to your area – four tips for getting started

1 Reach out to a developer like Solar Landscape that has community engagement professionals who can help you activate your neighbors around the project.

2 Earn Sustainable Jersey points for municipal-level community solar support. The organization has resources to help you get started.

3 You can either lead a community solar project through Sustainable Jersey, or support it in various ways, such as being a project ambassador or outreach partner.

4 The BPU's Community Energy Plan Grant also aligns itself with community solar and encourages municipal support of the renewable energy sites.



*This community solar site located on a commercial property owned by Bhasin Properties is one of several Solar Landscape projects in Secaucus that will power hundreds of nearby homes.*



solar and reap the benefits. The town worked with Solar Landscape on two community solar projects that empowered residents to access renewable energy, save money on their utility bills, play a role in reducing their carbon footprint and fight climate change. As Secaucus Mayor Michael Gonnelli put it in a recent article for the NJ League of Municipalities, “Community solar requires no construction or investment from the municipality and immediately conveys benefits to our residents.”

Community solar can engage everyone in the area. Nonprofits and other community organizations benefit by partnering with the developer to recruit subscribers and generate grant support. It gives commercial real

estate owners an opportunity to connect and give back to local residents. And local workforce development groups and schools will jump at the chance to create jobs and host career training sessions about jobs in green energy, which Solar Landscape offers whenever possible.

New Jersey’s environmental commissioners have always been advocates for meaningful environmental change. Now, with community solar, they can bring real value to their towns and fight climate change at the same time. 🌱

# Check out the latest ANJEC Resource Papers

**E**volving issues, emerging trends, new laws and regulations - the environmental landscape in New Jersey is ever changing. To help satisfy your need to know, ANJEC Resource Papers provide authoritative information on a wide variety of topics important to local governments.

Some of our new or recently updated publications include:

- Electrifying transportation in NJ, and in your town
- Open Space Plan: Charting a course for your town's green assets
- Site Plan / Subdivision Review: Protecting the environment during development
- Remediating & redeveloping brownfields in New Jersey
- Stormwater Management for Municipalities: Green infrastructure designs and options
- Municipal Techniques: Long term control plans, stream daylighting and combined sewer overflow programs
- Septic Systems, Clean Water and Your Municipality

Most ANJEC Resource Papers can be downloaded from our website free of charge at <https://anjec.org/publications/>. Some are also available for purchase in printed form by contacting us at [info@anjec.org](mailto:info@anjec.org). 🌱



# The power of legacy:

## Blanche Hoffman

### (1923 - 2020)

By **Amanda Brockwell (she/her)**, ANJEC Director of Development and Donor Relations

**M**any have described Blanche Hoffman's boundless enthusiasm for greening her community. It was this passion and zeal that led her to establish the Old Bridge Environmental Commission (EC) in the 1970's. The community came to know that Blanche's only true agenda was protecting the environment, and it was that integrity around her purpose that helped her complete many EC projects over the years. Her service to her community and the environment gave her life added meaning that defined her personal values.

### Creating a legacy

Years before Blanche passed away in 2020, she decided to leave a gift to ANJEC in her will. As the founding environmental commission chair, Blanche saw greening her community as a legacy of her life's work that she wanted to ensure continued long after she was gone. She took comfort in knowing that her gift would help environmentalists like herself find the support and resources they need to grow their environmental commissions and protect natural resources in the towns they call home. She felt it was important to leave something of herself behind to continue the work she was so passionate about.



*Blanche Hoffman*

### The impact of Blanche's gift

A legacy gift, like the one made by Blanche in her will, helps ensure environmental commissions endure long into the future. The effectiveness of environmental commissions around the State requires continued education, support, strong advocacy and unified oversight. Resources provided by ANJEC will continue to be critical in the years ahead.

Planned gifts provide diverse funding streams to keep ANJEC financially fit and poised to focus resources on empowering the New Jersey environmental community towards impact and action.

### Consider a legacy gift to ANJEC

Designating funds for charitable donation in your will can be as easy as including one sentence of language to specify your gift. Should your life circumstances change, there are ways to build flexibility into your plans as well.

*ANJEC encourages consultation with your financial and estate planning professional for additional details regarding this process. For more information about the impact and importance of Legacy Giving to ANJEC, please contact Jennifer Coffey, Executive Director, at [jcoffey@anjec.org](mailto:jcoffey@anjec.org).* 🌊

ANJEC depends on our business members to help pay for the cost of printing the *ANJEC Report*. Please let them know that you saw their ad here. Remember, however, that ANJEC does not necessarily endorse any of these firms.

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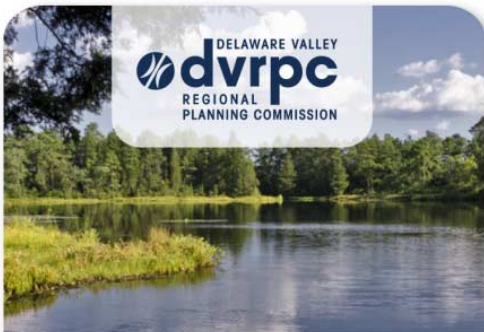


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