

Inside:
ANJEC Congress highlights
EVs in NJ – Startup to scale-up
Environmental Achievement Award winners



### **Director's Report**

# **Cleaner water ahead?**

We're planning ahead at ANJEC and making our New Year's resolutions a little early. We're recommitting to supporting you in your hard work and actions to protect and restore New Jersey's waterways.

We know that New Jersey has a few water problems. We simply have too much of it, which we see through repetitive and increasingly damaging floods. Except, that is, for when we just don't have enough water. New Jersey was in a state of drought watch for more than four months last summer and fall, and this declaration is becoming more common. And, many of New Jersey's waterways are too dirty. According to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP's) most recent 2018/2022 Integrated Water Quality Assessment Report, the majority of monitored waterways in the State fail to meet at least one water quality standard.

The good news is that the DEP is launching an improved approach to clean up New Jersey waterways. ANJEC is supportive of the DEP's new requirements proposed for the Municipal Separate Stormwater System (MS4) permits because the actions required in the draft permit are directly linked to water quality impairments in monitored waterways. The MS4 permit is expected to be adopted and effective in January 2023 for all municipalities.

#### How improved MS4 permits will help

Previously, MS4 permits were divided into tier A and tier B permits with Tier A affecting most municipalities in New Jersey, specifically urban and suburban areas, and Tier B being reserved for more rural communities. Tier A permits include stronger requirements and actions to protect water quality. The DEP has proposed that, as of January 2023, all permits will be Tier A. The reasoning for this is that water quality is either not improving or not improving quickly enough.

Among the water quality issues the new requirements will address are harmful algal blooms (HABs). In 2019, 60 water bodies across the State were closed for recreation due to HABs, which have recurred with varying intensity and geographical breadth each summer since. HABs are problematic because, despite their name, they are produced by cyanobacteria. These single-celled organisms have caused toxic neurological and intestinal effects when ingested. Children, compromised adults and dogs are particularly sensitive. HABs are exacerbated by warmer temperatures and increased amounts of phosphorus in waterways. Pervasive and persistent water quality violations, according to the latest integrated report, include elevated levels of nitrate, total dissolved solids, fecal/e-coli bacteria, higher temperatures and low levels of dissolved oxygen.

The new Tier A MS4 permits will require all municipalities to implement actions that will reduce polluted stormwater runoff and support improved water quality. The draft MS4 permit includes requirements for:

- street sweeping;
- prohibition of herbicide application near waterways;
- adoption of a tree protection ordinance that is applicable to private and public property;

- proper roadside vegetative management and erosion control;
- regular inspection and maintenance of storm drains and catch basins;
- stormwater infrastructure; and
- enhanced public outreach and education. The proposed MS4 permit includes

simple, common sense maintenance requirements that will go a long way to ensure our stormwater systems are functioning properly to protect water quality and reduce impacts of flooding.

Some changes in the permit may occur between the publication date of this issue and the adoption of the final permit. Tune into ANJEC's Fundamentals for Effective Environmental Commissions training in March 2023 (page 29) for the most up-todate information on the final permit requirements.

Jennifer M. Coffey (she/her)

Executive Director



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On the cover: The American mink is native to NJ Photo by Karel Bock

# From startup to scale-up: the EV evolution in NJ

By **Mark Warner**, Vice President of Gabel Associates and Cofounder of ChargEVC

n 2015, the electric vehicle (EV) market was beginning to heat up – but you wouldn't have known it in New Jersey. At that time, there were well less than ten thousand plugin vehicles on the road, EV market development policies were almost nonexistent, and EVs accounted for less than half of a percent of vehicle sales. A lot has changed in seven years!

Since then, New Jersey has evolved to become an EV hotspot, with marketleading goals, policies and programs in place to address key EV-adoption barriers. The Garden State is now at a critical inflection point, making the transition from market startup to a focus on long-term scale-up.

#### How did we get here?

Of course, much of this good news is a result of the maturation of plugin vehicles themselves. Today's plugin vehicles now offer the features, range and convenience that modern drivers demand. This technical advancement has been reinforced by growing recognition of the economic, environmental and public health benefits of plugin technology. New Jersey-specific studies<sup>1</sup> quantified that plugin vehicles reduce the emissions that cause climate change and harm public health by 70 percent or more, cut the cost of fueling by roughly half, and reduce the many risks

### NJ towns revving up for an EV future

By Julie Lange Groth, ANJEC Report Editor

As the State races to meet its goals for adopting electric vehicles and charging infrastructure, municipalities are jumping on board by electrifying their fleets, installing public charging stations and encouraging local drivers to go electric. Here are three examples.

#### Madison

The Borough of Madison has set a goal of having 1,200 plugin vehicles on local roads by 2025, and 6,000 to 8,000

electric cars by 2023, according to Peter Fried of the Sustainable Madison Advisory Committee. The town already has 10 Level 2 public charging ports located at convenient locations where people shop, dine and spend time. The police department has added four hybrid cruisers and one plugin electric vehicle, and the municipality has committed to converting 25 percent of its fleet to plugin electric vehicles (PEVs) by 2025. In April, the Environmental Commissions of Madison, Chatham Borough and Chatham

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Electric Vehicles in New Jersey: Costs and Benefits, January 2018. By Mark Warner of Gabel Associates (et al), funded by ChargEVC. See www.chargevc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/ ChargEVC-New-Jersey-Study.pdf.



associated with dependence on global petroleum supplies, among other benefits. As these advantages became more widely understood, NJ began to implement policies and programs specifically focused on EV market growth.

Widespread collaboration helped make these policies and programs a reality. Enhanced coordination among State agencies, especially the Partnership to Plug-In (between the Board of Public Utilities (BPU), Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), and Economic Development Authority) has helped create a more effective "all of government" approach to EV market

development. Critical State plans, including

Township hosted their second annual EV Expo, where area car dealers showcased their latest EV models and residents shared their experiences driving them.

#### Jersey City

In a community where cars and trucks are major sources of air pollution, Jersey City Mayor Steven

Fulop says he intends to transform NJ's largest municipal fleet into the most expansive EV fleet in the country. Jersey the BPU's *Energy Master Plan* and the DEP's "*80X50 Report,*" identified widespread vehicle electrification as one of the biggest opportunities for achieving the State's ambitious clean energy goals.

ChargEVC, a not-for-profit coalition (www.chargevc.org) of stakeholders with a shared interest in accelerated EV adoption, came together to develop policy recommendations, to educate policy makers, and to engage directly with key decision makers. (ANJEC is a proud member of ChargEVC.) These actions led to the enactment of landmark EV legislation, signed into law by Governor Murphy in January of 2020.



A public EV charging station in Jersey City

City was the first municipality on the East Coast to purchase five fully-electric continued on page 6 That law set aggressive but attainable adoption goals, established initiatives to overcome key adoption barriers, such as the development of fast, convenient, ubiquitous public charging infrastructure, and created critical programs such as a \$300M EV purchase rebate program.



Just as importantly, the electric utilities in New Jersey proposed programs to support development of the charging infrastructure that will be needed by the State's growing population of EVs.

#### Making widespread vehicle electrification a strategic priority

New Jersey has now become one of the strongest EV markets in the country, with 64,307 plugin vehicles on the road by the end of 2021. That was a milestone year for the State, with more than five percent of new light-duty vehicle sales being electric, over one percent of the vehicles on the

road having a plug, and EVs now registered in every New Jersey ZIP code. But a strong start does not guarantee long-term success, and much work remains to be done.

Current State goals call for roughly a third of all light-duty vehicles on the road to run on electricity by 2035, and market leaders such as California and New York (and many countries in Europe) are planning for 100 percent of light-duty vehicle sales being zero emissions by then. The Advanced Clean Truck rules recently adopted by DEP in New Jersey set similar new goals in the medium- and heavy-duty segment.

Focus is shifting from the details of getting the first EVs on the road, to

#### continued from page 5

garbage trucks that utilize charging stations powered by solar panels on the Department of Public Works campus. The City has installed 24 EV charging stations for municipal and public use across the community, and four of the Police Department's vehicles are PEVs. Jersey City's Via rideshare service is one of the first transit services in the country to use EVs with over 10 percent of the current fleet being fully electric.

#### Hoboken

With 22 publicly accessible charging stations installed across the city, Hoboken has instituted its Green Pass

program that offers residents reducedrate parking for their registered electric or plugin hybrid electric vehicles at certain municipal parking facilities. In the first year the charging ports became active, more than 3,330 people have charged their vehicles over 4,000 times, according to City officials.

The municipal fleet now includes 19 electric or hybrid vehicles, including an electric bus and garbage truck, which provide cost benefits while advancing Hoboken's *Climate Action Plan*. The City estimates it will save \$1.1 million in fuel costs over the next 15 years by switching to electric alternatives. sustaining the strong growth required to meet these goals, and making sure that the transformation of the transportation sector to run on electricity is both optimal and equitable.

What are the key priorities for the scaleup phase of the New Jersey EV market, and how will this next period of market development be different from the last few years? To paraphrase Peg Hanna, Assistant Director of Air Monitoring and Mobile Sources at the DEP: "The initial period of growth was a sprint, the next phase will be more of a marathon."

#### A focus on execution

One top priority is to continue the programs that make New Jersey an attractive market for EV suppliers. Taking the development of public fast charging to the next level is also critical, which will address persistent consumer concerns about range anxiety and the lack of public charging. Addressing barriers in key segments – especially those potential EV buyers living in multi-family settings where at-home charging is scarce – will be important, as well as explicit programs targeted at ensuring equitable electrification for all residents.

There will be important new opportunities for municipalities, both for electrification of their fleets and removing barriers for residents. Electric utilities will also play a critical role – in conjunction with the competitive market and private investors – in developing charging infrastructure, as well as making needed reinforcements to the public energy grid to support increased load.

New Jersey is off to a strong start, and the many benefits that result from widespread vehicle electrification are now within reach. The next few years will demand new levels of focus, collaboration and efforts related to scale, optimization, and equity. Ten years ago, a mere one thousand plugin vehicles were sold in New Jersey annually. Ten years from now, over half of the new sales in the State will likely be electric – if New Jersey can transition to market-leading scale. As a result, our air will be cleaner, public health will be dramatically improved and transportation operating costs will be lower.

#### Editor's note:

Visit a recorded webinar of a discussion between Peg Hanna from DEP and Mark

### Why I give to ANJEC ...

"ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP ON IMPORTANT ISSUES"

ANJEC takes the lead on many environmental issues and provides support to environmental commissions throughout the state of New Jersey. Before the pandemic they held workshops and during the pandemic they did webinars to continue to educate the public about environmental issues.



Marion McClary is a member of the ANJEC Board of Trustees and Biology Professor at Fairleigh Dickinson University Warner from Gabel Associates regarding the transition of New Jersey's EV market from startup to scale-up at www.youtube.com/ watch?v=FFKX-KGPOIA.



By Michele Gaynor, ANJEC Resource Center

### **Cleaner streets thanks to New Brunswick teens**

New Brunswick residents had local teenagers to thank for cleaner, litter-free streets last summer. When Julian Nicholas, now a junior in high school, was concerned and wanted to do something about the trash and litter in his New Brunswick neighborhood, he wrote to Mayor James Cahill. Julian suggested the city employ teenagers over the summer to collect the litter and help beautify the city.

Julian was elated when the Mayor's office reached out to inform him that the town would implement his plan and dubbed it the Teen Litter Patrol.

Teens could apply for 15 paying jobs, and 14 of those hired lasted for the entire six weeks of the project (a 93 percent retention rate). The work hours were 9 am to noon, Monday through Friday with some Saturdays. The teens were placed in small groups to cover assigned areas throughout the city.

There is hope that what was initially a summer program could be restarted as an after-school project in the spring and it will likely be reinstated this summer.

According to New Brunswick Recycling Coordinator Erin Maguire, "We got many shoutouts from happy residents on the street while we were cleaning, thanking us for taking care of the community. There was much positive feedback for the program, and we fielded many calls into the Mayor's Office asking the Teen Litter Patrol to go and clean up their block in New Brunswick".

The participating teens completed a survey after they finished their summer work. Their responses showed that they felt

they made a positive difference in their community through the program. Not only did the teens learn hard work, they also had educational opportunities provided to them by the Recycling Coordinator, such as field trips to the local landfill, Edgeboro in East Brunswick, and Bayshore Recycling Center in Woodbridge.

Julian said he enjoyed working under the leadership of Ms. Maguire as well as peers



New Brunswick's Teen Litter Patrol was the brainchild of Julian Nicholas. Erin Maguire

who cared for New Brunswick neighborhoods and he is grateful to the Mayor for the opportunity to see his vision come to fruition. He also expressed gratitude to both Mayor Cahill as well as Ivan Adorno and the entire staff at the Mayor's Office for their kindness, consideration and help. – Michele Gaynor



A class of third graders from Phillipsburg Elementary School work together in pairs to build the school's new rain garden. ANJEC, the Highlands Coalition and Rutgers partnered up to work with the Phillipsburg middle and elementary schools to build sustainable rain gardens at each location. Students learned about cooperation, stewardship and the ecosystem while planting native species and getting the hands-on opportunity to see the growth and positive outcomes of their own projects.

# Planning & Policy 💋 Updates

### Environmental advocates hail signing of law to preserve renowned New Jersey School of Conservation

By Jennifer M. Coffey, (she/her), ANJEC Executive Director

The New Jersey School of Conservation (SOC) is now open for the business of fun, exploration, learning and wonder! Governor Murphy has signed legislation sponsored by Senator Smith and Assemblymen McKeon and Benson designating the Friends of the School of Conservation as the group responsible for management of SOC.

When the School was threatened with permanent closure in the early days of the COVID pandemic, the Friends stepped in and continued to provide critical programming. They've worked tirelessly to bring the school back up to a state of good repair and have forged an impressive coalition of stakeholders ready to expand programming and research opportunities, with a special focus on children of color and others who have been traditionally excluded from outdoor education.

"The School of Conservation is internationally known as a center for education and research that has helped inspire generations of students to pursue careers in environmental advocacy," said Ed Potosnak, Executive Director of the New Jersey League of Conservation Voters. This legislation will ensure that the Friends of the School of Conservation remain longterm stewards of this incredible resource."

ANJEC is thrilled that the School of Conservation will now be in the rightful care of the Friends of the School of Conservation. The Friends represent generations of those who learn from and are committed to NJSOC. They will ensure that the School remains a place for New Jersey's diverse population to explore the natural wonder of our shared environment.

### The nation's first environmental education center

Located on a 240-acre tract of land in Stokes State Forest in Sussex County, the School of Conservation is our nation's oldest and largest environmental education center. NJSOC has a long and celebrated history, beginning in 1949 when officials from the Department of Higher Education, college presidents, the Department of Conservation and Economic Development, politicians and conservationists worked together to realize the promise of a worldclass outdoor education center in an abandoned Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp. The School played a key role in the development of the environmental education movement, and has served as a model for environmental centers throughout the world. The SOC's resident programs and summer camps have served more than 400,000 students, teachers, masters and doctoral candidates, faculty and visiting professionals from every walk of life through the nearly 40,000 workshops and environmental education programs offered at the SOC over its 71-year history.

For over 50 years, the NJ School of Conservation has provided three- to fiveday resident environmental education programs for school groups from throughout New Jersey. Over its long history, the School has served school groups from 19 of New Jersey's 21 counties, some returning for more than 40 years, and others who travel over two hours by bus to access a program for their students available nowhere else in the State.

With the reopening of the School by the Friends of NJSOC in 2021, school groups have been invited back for a single-day program that offers the same quality learning and all the magic of the NJSOC experience within a shorter timeframe. The Friends are currently conducting necessary renovations and repairs on NJSOC's CCCera buildings in order to ready them for overnight lodging. The goal is to reinstate the resident environmental education program once permission is granted to do so by the site's owners, the NJ Department

NJ School of Conservation



of Environmental Protection.

Portions of this article are reprinted with permission from materials supplied by the Friends of New Jersey School of Conservation and New Jersey League of Municipalities.

#### 2022 ANJEC Environmental Congress highlights

# DEP Commissioner: The time to prepare is now

By Jack McCausland, (he/him/they/them) ANJECProject Director

he urgency of establishing stormwater utilities in communities throughout the State was one of the themes stressed by NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Shawn LaTourette at ANJEC's 49th Environmental Congress in October. He explained that New Jersey's infrastructure is "woefully underprepared" for the increasing amounts of rainfall in shorter windows of time cause by climate change.

A stormwater utility collects a modest fee from property owners for the sole purpose of managing water that comes off a property. This runoff is often polluted because motor oil and lawn pesticides are picked up by large rains from roadways and driveways. It then runs directly into local waterways and harms

fish populations and prevents communities from recreating in these natural areas.

LaTourette noted that in many cases, if a property owner already has rain gardens or other green stormwater infrastructure in place, the stormwater utility fee can be waived. As of October 14, only three entities had applied for the technical assistance grant funds established to help communities across the State create stormwater utilities.

#### What's good for the environment is good for the economy

The Commissioner stressed the interconnectedness of environmental protection and economic health, mentioning that both must be prioritized,

and one does not outweigh the other. If New Jersey's natural resources are protected, that is good for the economy. It is not good for the economy when major storms hit and much of the infrastructure in a community is destroyed because it was not climate resilient. He highlighted the Department's stewardship of \$1 billion per

year for water infrastructure, and the need for municipalities around the State to apply for and make use of that money.

The Commissioner stressed the fact that the DEP is more of a public health agency, and less interested in resolving neighbors' tree disputes. The Department protects the State's natural resources because they serve the public, he stated.



Shawn LaTourette



DEP Commissioner Shawn LaTourette chats with ANJEC Trustee Lee Farnham at the ANJEC Environmental Congress on Oct. 14.

Commissioner LaTourette highlighted DEP's primary priorities: combatting climate change, environmental justice, increasing high quality state parks and ensuring access to clean and affordable water. He acknowledged that a patchwork of solutions will be needed to achieve these goals. Important among them is updating the flood zones with more up-to-date data, enabling more resilient structures to be built in these areas and lessening the human and financial harm during big storms such as Hurricane Sandy. Establishing stormwater utilities in municipalities across the State is another solution, the Commissioner repeated, along with planning, enhancing existing infrastructure, strategic community buyouts, modernizing standards, and optimizing land development for maximum use in the minimum footprint.

The Commissioner closed by reminding the audience that the health of the

environment needs to be a cause that everyone rallies around, regardless of political affiliation. He urged all attendees to navigate to their social media of choice and follow him @shawnlatur to stay up to date on DEP's many opportunities and initiatives, all aimed at helping New Jersey communities to become more resilient in the face of climate change and, specifically, the increasing rainfall that has already begun.

#### 2022 ANJEC Environmental Congress highlights

# Meishka Mitchell: an accidental environmentalist

By **Sheila Baker Gujral**, (she/her) ANJEC Resource Center Director

n the eve of ANJEC's first inperson Environmental Congress in three years, Meishka Mitchell gave an inspiring speech and addressed environmental inclusivity, equity and justice.

Speaking via Zoom to an audience of local environmentalists, Mitchell mused, "What does it mean to be an environmentalist? What does it mean to work here in this space? Does someone like me, who looks like me, belong at a conference like the Environmental Congress?"

Growing up in Camden, she approached environmentalism from a different angle. "It wasn't until I was an adult that I really understood that I had made some assessments even about my hometown because of the lack of green space and what that meant. How a person's physical environment and access to open space really makes a difference." nation; the median household wealth is \$322,500 for white New Jerseyans vs. \$17,700 for black residents and \$26,100 for members of the Latinx community. The report looks deeper – at health and crime statistics, political education, access to power – all of the things that impact the future health of these communities.

Mitchell pointed to Maslow's hierarchy of needs<sup>1</sup>, "How do we get people to think about the crisis when often their

## It's about local leadership

As an ANJEC Trustee, Mitchell was involved in the recent development of ANJEC's new mission statement. "We thought really hard about what equity and inclusivity means for New Jersey and working with communities. ANJEC's new



Meishka Mitchell, AICP, PP

mission statement puts that front and center – it's about that local leadership, your environmental commissions, it's about the communities. the residents and being able to give voice to people in New Jersey to advance these equitable and inclusive communities through partnerships, through education, through advocacy, to make sure that the natural resources in New Jersey are going to be here for today and in the future."

#### The two New Jerseys

Mitchell discussed the report, "Making the two New Jerseys one: Closing the \$300,000 racial wealth gap in the United States," which was published in February 2022 by the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice. This report shows that the racial wealth gap in New Jersey is among the highest in the very basic needs are not being met? ... How do we get beyond these basic needs to begin to think about crisis? The climate crisis can't only be met by those who have the means to think about it. In order to get to the clean energy future we want to see, it's going to take the entire society to be able make those

changes." These changes can come in the form of focusing on workforce development to transition to a clean, green econo-my; connecting disadvantaged communities to jobs, business opportunities and community prosperity; increasing participation by women- and minorityowned businesses; and reclaiming green spaces.

A project that took up most of Mitchell's 18-year career was the Cramer Hill Waterfront Park in Camden, where an 86-acre municipal landfill was transformed into a community asset. It involved shoreline protection, landfill closure, natural resource restoration and park construction. The transformation of the park not only restored and enhanced lost ecosystems, but also restored the community's access to the waterfront and the ability to provide educational

# ANJEC mission statement

ANJEC's board has voted to update our mission statement to reflect our ongoing work and commitment to equity and inclusion.

The mission of the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC) is to promote local action to protect and restore New Jersey's natural resources and to ensure healthy communities for today and the future. ANJEC advances its mission by engaging in equitable and inclusive practices through leadership, partnerships, education, advocacy for strong public policy and in support of environ-mental commissions, public officials, and communities throughout New Jersey.

opportunities. Learning to fish or kayak in the community could lead residents to pursue future careers in environmental and educational fields.<sup>2</sup>

# Securing the future of the movement

Mitchell has found that one of the biggest challenges is trying to figure out ways to connect with the younger generation, particularly around thinking about future environmental careers. "I'd say one of the things I really care about that has helped me to move a lot of my work forward - I spend a lot of time building relationships and working on partnerships. Not one thing have I done alone. Bringing partners together, leveraging funding sources, leveraging relationships, access to power. Let's get out of our silos and be open to working with other people. Let's get rid of the competition mindset so we can all work together."

You can find Meishka on Twitter @blkgirlkindagrn, on Instagram at blackgirlkindagreen.

#### Resources

- 2022 Congress Keynote Address Meishka Mitchell, President and CEO of Emerald Cities Collaborative www.youtube.com/ watch?v=lC7\_MDP5SWM
- "Making the two New Jerseys one: Closing the \$300,000 racial wealth gap in the United States," New Jersey Institute for Social Justice, February 2022, https://bit.ly/3SW5VV6

Mitchell is president and CEO of Emerald Cities, has a Master of City Planning from the University of Pennsylvania, is certified by the American Institute of Certified Planners and maintains a Professional Planners license with the State of New Jersey. Before joining Emerald Cities Collaborative, she served as vice president of Camden Community Partnership, where she cultivated a resident-driven approach to neighborhood planning and development of parks and open spaces, historic preservation, and placemaking. ANJEC is honored to have Mitchell serve on its Board of Trustees.

# Thanks to ANJEC member communities

We are grateful to the thousands of volunteers serving as local officials in more than 300 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!

<sup>1</sup> www.researchhistory.org/2012/06/16/maslowshierarchy-of-needs/

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> https://www.nj.gov/dep/nrr/cramer-hill.htm

### 2022 ANJEC Environmental Congress highlights

# ANJEC recognizes environmental excellence

By **Amanda Brockwell**, ANJEC Director of Development and Donor Relations

ach year, ANJEC's Environmental Achievement Awards recognize exemplary environmental projects and successes throughout New Jersey. This year's awardees represent significant environmental accomplishments, once again proving the incredible impact that volunteer-led local actions have in tackling New Jersey's biggest environmental challenges – one project at a time.

#### Environmental Commission (EC) Achievement Awards WESTVILLE – Open Space Inventory

The Westville Environmental Commission recognized the need to document flora and fauna located within the natural areas in their town. In response, they conducted a Botanical Assessment of public lands and a Wetlands Assessment. The results of both assessments were integrated into Westville's Environmental Resource Inventory (ERI).

#### BERKELEY HEIGHTS – Adopt a Drain Program

After the interruption of litter cleanups due to the COVID pandemic, the Berkeley Heights Environmental Commission recognized the amount of litter that was piling up around town. They decided to take action by launch-



Berkeley Heights – Adopt a Drain program

ing an Adopt a Drain Program that allowed residents to offer meaningful engagement in keeping their community clean. The EC used a webpage and GIS mapping to offer an engaging and interactive program that was widely promoted within the community.

#### NEWARK -

#### **Environmental Resource Inventory**

After successful passage of the Environmental Justice Cumulative Impacts Ordinance in the City of Newark, the Environmental Commission was tasked with producing an ERI. Through professional expertise provided by the Newark Office of Sustainability and funding through the Victoria Foundation, the Newark ERI was completed and launched in April 2022. It consists of a set of digital interactive maps with an EJ lens covering the important environmental features relevant to Newark.

#### SUMMIT – Tiny Forest

The Summit EC transformed a meadow behind the Community Center into what will become a native forest. The Commission followed a Japanese method to plant the Tiny Forest that contains over 500 native trees, shrubs and bushes. Many professionals were consulted for the project and hundreds of volunteers helped to prepare and plant the area. Funding was secured through several grants and donations. The area also includes a Medicine Garden that integrates indigenous wisdom and native species into the garden that will be used for education and community engagement.

#### FLORHAM PARK – Spring Garden Lake Pollinator Garden

Through a partnership between an Eagle Scout Project and the Florham Park EC, a previously vacant plot of land along Spring Garden Lake was transformed into a pollinator garden. The initiative included invasive species removal, construction of raised beds, installation of fencing and planting of native species. Through the vision and work of many volunteers, the garden now attracts an array of pollinators and wildlife.

#### ALLAMUCHY – Certified Wildlife Habitat

The Environmental Commission created a rain garden that also serves as habitat for wildlife. The Commission partnered with NJ Audubon to create a Certified Wildlife Habitat. The garden now features a diversity of native plants that people and wildlife enjoy, and plans are underway to create similar gardens around the town.



#### MANALAPAN – Native Plant Sales

Plant sales have been held by the Manalapan Environmental Commission since 2015. The increased development within the municipality continues to underscore the critical need to provide for native plant habitat for wildlife. In response, the EC continues to offer native plant sales on an annual basis with two sales in 2022. Events also include an educational component and leveraging the support of many partners and advocates that have embraced the effort.

#### Nonprofit Achievement Awards Moorestown STEM – Swedes Run Pollinator Garden

Save the Environment of Moorestown, (STEM) designed, installed, and maintains a native plant pollinator garden on preserved open space in Moorestown. After receiving grant funds and approval from the municipality, work began with site preparation. The garden was then designed to allow for "adoption" of small sections by volunteers, who agreed to maintain them. Planting was made possible through many volunteers, support from the town and donations from a local nursery. Installation of signage at the garden and the location of the site near a dog park have made this garden a popular place for enjoyment and education in the community.

#### NJ Audubon, Cape May – Ocean Fest

Through a partnership of NJ Audubon, the Cape May Environmental Commission and many other groups, the first annual Ocean Fest happened in June 2022. The educational event included many partners offering activities and information to the community around climate awareness and its impacts to the ocean. The Cape May EC looks forward to making this an annual event to continue educating the community and celebrating the importance of protecting our oceans around World Oceans Day each year.

#### Friends of Drew Forest – Establishing the Conservation Value of a Local Forest

When a 53-acre forest that is part of the Drew University campus was threatened by development, local residents formed the Friends of Drew Forest, a newly established nonprofit organization dedicated to permanent protection of the forest. Through widespread advocacy and outreach efforts, six resolutions of support to save the forest were passed by neighboring towns and numerous nonprofits. Although the future of the forest remains uncertain, significant progress has been made to establish support for protecting the forest throughout the community with an exceptional educational awareness campaign.

#### Friends of Jackson Woods – Jackson Woods Park Revitalization

After a 13-acre city-owned park fell into disrepair, a group of local residents formed the Friends of Jackson Woods with a vision of revitalizing the unique wooded park located in an urban coastal area. Their goals are to bring environmental education, the arts and local history to the community through increased involvement and stewardship at the park. In the past year, significant improvements have been made at the park through successfully leveraging grant support and countless hours of time donated by the community.

#### Ridge Ranch Elementary School – Native Plant Garden

Established through a project led by the Cub Scouts with strong support from the school leadership, the Ridge Ranch Elementary School created a native plant garden. The garden serves as a habitat for native wildlife and a tool for teachers to create lessons about natural resource conservation and resiliency. The garden serves as an outdoor classroom that meets an important need for outdoor learning space, especially during the pandemic. After successfully securing outside funding to further improve the garden, the school has integrated many partner organizations into the effort.

#### Kiwanis Club of Caldwell-West Essex – Planting Native Trees (Nonprofit Collaboration Award)

The Kiwanis Club of Caldwell-West Essex provided a grant that enabled the Caldwell EC to host an educational community event about how and why to plant native trees. Many partners from different faith communities have worked together with the EC to educate the



Jackson Woods Park Revitalization

community about the critical role that native trees play in protecting pollinators and reducing climate emissions.

#### **Municipal Leadership Awards**

ANJEC recognized seven municipal officials at the 49th Annual Environmental Congress for their inspiring environmental leadership roles in communities throughout New Jersey.

#### Deputy Mayor Cathy Wilson – Environmental Commission Champion Award, Morris Township

Deputy Mayor Cathy Wilson serves as the Township Committee liaison to the Environmental Commission. Wilson provides constant support and encouragement for EC projects that have led to their many environmental accomplishments, such as a do-not-plant list, a farmer's market, distribution of an EC newsletter, and recruiting new EC members.

#### Village Trustee Bill Haskins – Natural Resources Hero

South Orange Village Trustee, Bill Haskins, an advocate for environmental efforts in South Orange, is also known for being a hands-on executer who rolls up his sleeves and gets physical work done. Bill is a former chair of the EC and has continued to champion environmental issues such as a leaf blower ban, Adopt a Drain Program, and many recycling improvements.

#### Madison Borough Councilwoman Rachel Ehrlich – Climate Advocate Award

Madison Borough Councilwoman Rachel Ehrlich has taken action to embed municipal climate action into borough planning practices. Among her many environmental accomplishments is launching a committee to set goals and measure progress towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions in Madison.

#### Councilman David Contract – Renewable Resources Star Westfield Councilman David Contract

has served as an advocate for renewable energy in Westfield that led to the successful adoption of a resolution to support local community solar projects. Contract led an educational effort about community solar that helped enroll many residents in the program that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Westfield.

#### Councilman Phillip George – Municipal Environmental Leadership Award – Highland Park

Councilman Phillip George is the liaison to the Environmental Commission, Shade Tree Advisory Committee and Sustainable Highland Park. He wrote the Borough ordinance to ban single-use plastic bags, champions the conversion of gas-powered vehicles to electric vehicles and advocates for solar energy in the Borough.

#### Mayor Zachary Mullock – Mayor's Honorary Circle – Cape May Mayor Zachary Mullock is a compre-



Cape May Mayor Zachary Mullock

hensive champion for environmental protection in Cape May. He has approved the expansion of the Environmental Commission, served on the Green Team and successfully advanced

numerous environmental efforts.

#### Deputy Mayor Jonathan Heller – Clean Water Hero – Readington

Deputy Mayor Jonathan Heller has been a leader on key environmental issues in Readington Township. He has championed stormwater management, riparian restoration and open space preservation, and he recognizes the importance of balancing growth sustainably.

#### 2022 ANJEC Environmental Congress highlights

### Judith Enck receives Candace McKee Ashmun Environmental Legacy Award

By Elizabeth Ritter, ANJEC Deputy Director

NJEC presented its annual Candace McKee Ashmun Environmental Legacy Award to Judith Enck at the 2022 Environmental Congress in October. This award is named in honor of ANJEC's first director, Candace McKee Ashmun, who served in a leadership role at ANJEC for

over 40 years. She steadfastly supported ANJEC's goal of achieving responsible and sustainable use of New Jersey's natural resources.

Candy's dedication and expertise empowered ANJEC to provide leadership, education and support for environmental commissions and other local officials who are advocating

for strong State and regional environmental protection and restoration. Candy was also a tireless leader for New Jersey's environment, a long-standing founding member of the New Jersey Pinelands Commission and a mentor and inspiration to generations of environmental advocates and stewards.

Judith Enck is an environmental policy expert who founded Beyond Plastics in 2019 to end plastic pollution through education, advocacy and institutional change. Passionate about protecting public health and the environment, she teaches classes on plastic pollution as a senior fellow and visiting faculty member at Bennington College and was recently a



Judith Enck

visiting scholar at the Elisabeth Haub School of Law at Pace University.

Judith has held influential positions in state and federal government. Appointed by President Obama, she served as the Regional Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, overseeing environ-

> mental protections in NY, NJ, eight Indian Nations, Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands – in addition to managing a staff of 800 and a \$700 million budget.

Judith previously served as Deputy Secretary for the Environment in the New York Governor's Office, and Policy Advisor to the New York State Attorney General. She was Senior

Environmental Associate with the New York Public Interest Research Group, served as Executive Director for Environmental Advocates of New York and the Non-Profit Resource Center, and she is a past President of Hudson River Sloop Clearwater. Judith appears on The Roundtable, a weekly public affairs radio show on WAMC, a local NPR affiliate in Albany, NY.

Judith lives in upstate New York with her husband, where they built their passive solar home with their own hands and with lots of support from friends and family. She designed her town's rural recycling program. She is a proud parent and enjoys reading and following the news in her spare time.

# Moments from the 2022 AN.



# **JEC Environmental Congress**



# To turf or not to turf

By Randi K. Rothmel, ANJEC Project Director

ynthetic or natural – NJ towns face off as they debate installing playing surfaces at school and municipal athletic fields. Maplewood, Westfield, Princeton, Milburn, Holmdel, Belmar, Glen Rock, East Orange, West Orange, Ocean City and numerous other towns have grappled with this issue. Artificial turf proponents site reliability, quality and accessibility while anti-turfers worry about health, environmental and social justice factors.

In Maplewood, strife sparked after the Township Committee approved installing synthetic turf at the DeHart Park athletic fields used by school and recreational teams. The decision led to more than 1,000 residents signing a petition demanding the project be put to a public vote. In the end, grass won out; about 55 percent of voters were against the artificial turf project.

In Westfield, a study commissioned by the town providing guidance on installing artificial turf fields behind a local school did not quell public controversy. While many residents petitioned against the use of synthetic turf, Councilman Scott Katz, the liaison to the Recreation Commission, defended the assessment of CME Associates, an engineering firm hired by th town: "...turf fields will offer us many qualitative benefits that must be noted."

For Princeton, a turf-field project at Hilltop Park was temporarily put on hold after the town's Environmental Commission (EC) recommended against the use of synthetic turf. East Orange, pushed forward with its plans despite environmental and social justice concerns from members of the community. Ocean City also approved use of artificial turf despite the Environmental Commission's advice, citing possible harm to nearby wetlands.

A growing number of US cities are legislating artificial turf use: Boston has banned its use in city parks, citing the presence of toxic "forever chemicals;" California and Arizona have protected its use in homeowners' association (HOA) communities, while NY has banned HOA use. There are numerous issues of concern as ECs and municipalities weigh in on whether to turf or not to turf.

#### Field accessibility and quality

- Accessibility Artificial turf fields tend to be more accessible than grass because they allow broader access and can be used yearround, reducing the incidence of game cancellations due to weather.
- **Quality** Both natural and artificial turf require maintenance to preserve quality. Natural turf needs mowing, watering and possible fertilizer or weed killer, all with environmental impacts, although organic soil amendments are available. Artificial turf systems require fluffing, redistributing and shock testing infill, periodic chemical disinfection, seam repairs and infill replacement.

#### Injuries and health

Injuries – Injuries happen on both natural and artificial turf. Ankle sprains are more prevalent on natural grass with a higher incidence of lower body injuries on artificial turf. A 2019 study published in the *American Journal of Sports Medicine* points out, "Field surface has a causal effect on injury rates due to synthetic turf's lack of ability to release an athlete's shoe."

- Heat hazard The heatabsorbing properties of an artificial field can make it dangerously hot, up to 180°F. A Brigham Young University study found that the "surface temperature of synthetic turf was 37°F higher than asphalt and 86°F hotter than natural turf."
- Increased MRSA risk Studies have shown that athletes who use synthetic turf are seven

times more likely to receive turf burns than those who play on grass. These open lesions are often the source of contracting and spreading dangerous infections such as MRSA.

- Bacterial breeding ground Medical experts have found that bacteria like staphylococci and others can survive on polyethylene surfaces (used in turf) for more than 90 days. Blood, sweat and skin cells can remain on the synthetic turf because the fields are not washed or cleaned.
- Lead exposure Some medical experts believe that there is enough lead in artificial turf to pose serious health hazards, especially to children.

#### **Ecological impacts**

- Emissions While gas power mowing of natural grass releases carbon monoxide, VOCs and nitrogen oxide, synthetic turf offgases potent greenhouse gases – methane and ethylene – with increasing volume as the blades break down from UV light, weather and age.
- Plastics and microplastics The manufacture of synthetic turf produces a significant amount of carbon emissions. Turf also likely contributes to the microplastic contamination of waterbodies, food and air. The plastic waste generated by artificial turf is another ecological concern as most turf is not recyclable and ends up in landfills at the end of its lifespan.



Runoff – Turf surfaces are impervious compared to natural grass; runoff from heavy rain can therefore transport toxins found in artificial turf, such as heavy metals, volatile organic compounds, phthalates and PFAS to local watersheds. Natural grass on the other hand filters stormwater and reduces sediments and pollutants from flowing into water bodies, although use of fertilizer and herbicides also pose a water pollution risk.

#### **Environmental justice**

- Green space Environmental Justice communities often lack cooling green space and are subjected to heat islands created by impermeable, over heated surfaces such as synthetic turf.
- Accumulative effect Excessive pollution and stormwater runoff issues already impacting overburdened communities are exacerbated by installation of artificial turf. Exposure to toxic chemicals also presents elevated health risks in communities where access to care is difficult.

As communities continue to debate synthetic vs. natural fields, all voices should be heard and the needs of all segments of the community be considered.

#### References

- www.turi.org/Our\_Work/Community
- www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/sep/30/ boston-bans-artificial-turf-toxic-forever-chemicalspfas

# Honoring a waterway while engaging the community

By Georgia Madiba, ANJEC Membership Manager

n 2011, South Orange's former Downtown Association approached the Environmental Commission (EC) to take on a cleanup of the municipality's section of the Rahway river, and soon after it became a town tradition with families returning year after year. Each spring the EC hosts

South Orange community members improve the health of the Rahway river at the annual River Day. Photo by James McGowan

"River Day," and while trash removal is at the core of the event, River Day also includes a celebration of the waterway and what people can learn from it.

Armed with boots, buckets and grabbers, participants of all ages descend into the river, on the lookout for all types of trash. At the conclusion, organizers tally bucket loads of garbage to calculate the year's collection, and stories are shared of unusual items found. (One year a bowling ball and ladder were unearthed!) As for the more commonplace items, the EC hopes to see a reduction of plastics due to NJ's *Plastic Pollution Reduction Law*.

River Day offers the opportunity to help the river in a hands-on way while at the same time imprinting images of real-life water pollution that will hopefully inspire participants to improve their local environment. Simply put, the activity encourages residents of South Orange to hold a "sense of guardianship of the river," explains Walter Clarke, long-time Environmental Commissioner and former Village Trustee.

#### Lessons from the river

A few years after the inaugural River Day, the EC added an educational component by involving the South Orange Middle School (SOMS), which is located steps from the river. A river curriculum provides lessons on the larger concept of a watershed, water quality and other topics. As a culmination of

To learn more about River Day, please read James McGowan's beautiful piece titled "Our Watersheds, Ourselves." (www.dark-mountain.net/our-watersheds-ourselves/) McGowan, a former South Orange Environmental Commissioner, was one of the founders of River Day. At River Day 2014, a theater company called Arm of the Sea honored the waterway with a performance. Photo by James McGowan

the program, students exhibit their projects at River Day, providing outreach and education from students to attendees. In November the school received River-Friendly Certification for the curriculum through a partnership with the Rahway River Watershed Association. Certification is achieved through lessons and



hands-on projects in any of four categories (water quality, water conservation, wildlife habitat and education and outreach.) SOMS is the first school in Essex Country to receive this certification.

Cleanup events can naturally build and increase membership within environmental groups, and for South Orange, River Day has done that. Interactive activities like these give people a greater awareness of their own environment, what it takes to keep it healthy and a starting point to become involved.

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

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Barbara Vadnais is the President of the ANJEC Board of Trustees and accomplished environmental professional.

# The land rush for mega-warehouses

By **Cheryl Reardon,** ANJEC South Jersey Project Director

V ith many towns across New Jersey seeing increasing interest in mega-warehouse development, ANJEC is receiving many inquiries from environmental commissions and municipal leaders questioning the role of State agencies and municipal governments.

The NJ State Planning Commission (NJPC) Office of Planning Advocacy adopted a guidance document in September giving municipalities tools to address the sprawl of warehouse development across NJ that has accompanied the rise of e-commerce. This document includes input from meetings with stakeholders such as municipal officials, real estate executives/ developers, business entities, conservation organizations and community groups.

# What's in the guidance document

While the NJPC document contains recommendations rather than mandates, it does provide municipalities detailed

recommendations to control and appropriately site warehouse development. As online shopping companies compete to bring shipments to doorsteps quickly, New Jersey is a much-desired area for logistics hubs because of its proximity to seaports, airports and large populations. With little room left for development in North Jersey (near New York City, the country's mostpopulous municipality) new warehouses have been springing up in more suburban and rural areas, raising concerns from residents and environmentalists about loss of important farmlands, woodlands and important natural resources as well as increasing stormwater runoff, noise, traffic and pollution.

The guidance aims to help local governments update master plans, zoning and development standards; review development applications, and take a regional approach to warehouse projects. The guidance essentially says that towns need to update their zoning and master plans in



Photo courtesy of NJCF

order to address a new era of industrial development in designated parts of town. Most municipal planning documents were drafted when there were relatively small warehouses being built, not today's giant logistics hubs, so they don't distinguish which types of industrial properties would be appropriate for different areas.

According to the guidance document's summary, the development of large warehouses in the past "occurred in urban cores and nodes near major ports and highway interchanges, in designated redevelopment areas, contaminated sites and brownfields... At the same time, largescale regional warehousing can, if not properly sited and scaled, result in significant negative impacts, from the intensive consumption of undeveloped land to the degradation of habitat, air and water sources, quality of life, public health, safety, infrastructure, and transportation networks."

In New Jersey's more rural, less-developed areas, "large warehouse projects are encroaching deeper into remaining unprotected agricultural and forested areas... With only a finite amount of available land near major ports, highway interchanges and accessible freight rail lines, warehouse development is occurring in outlying locations that have limited infrastructure and capacity to support them, particularly along local roads and related infrastructure that was not designed to handle heavy truck traffic," the summary says.

#### What has changed...

The document also warns of situations that have developed in some municipalities that could have been avoided with updates in zoning laws. "Many towns in New Jersey are finding that their communities are particularly vulnerable to poorly-sited and scaled warehousing projects because they zoned large areas of their community, particularly farmland in rural areas, for broadly applied 'light industrial' uses without consideration or limitation on the size and intensity of today's distribution warehouses... As a result, many land-use plans and zoning ordinances may be inadequate in their present form, to address the pace and scale of new warehousing proposals and their impacts on neighborhoods, local roads, adjacent communities, and finite resources."

It points out that much of the current outcry relates to projects that largely conform to local zoning standards. Zoning that simply permits generic warehousing may not be sufficient to address the varying types of warehouse uses, and fails to provide the performance standards municipalities need to adequately review an application or require developers to properly minimize and mitigate adverse impacts.

The guidance is meant to encourage regional planning and facilitate a proactive approach by towns, providing factors to consider and balance when developing or updating a master plan and reviewing applications, set land use and development requirements.

The guidance includes detailed separate documents addressing:

- types of warehouses
- municipal considerations
- the role of redevelopment and brownfields
- public health and overburdened communities
- transportation, traffic and road safety
- sustainable design.
- mitigation best practices
- community involvement and public engagement
- regional approaches
- special resource area considerations
- role of state agencies

The NJ Planning Organization document can be viewed in full at: https://nj.gov/state/ planning/assets/pdf/warehouse-guidance.pdf For more information, contact ANJEC's Resource Center at info@anjec.org.

# Plastic pollution law racks up successes

By N. Dini Checko, ANJEC

he *Plastic Pollution Reduction Law* went into effect May 2022 and by October 2022, there already has been a fantastic reduction of single-use bags from NJ's solid

waste stream. It is estimated that 688 million plastic bags and 13.7 million paper bags per month are being eliminated. In just a few short months, that adds up to approximately 4 billion plastic bags and 82 million paper bags! More metrics are being collected and additional reporting will be shared in Spring 2023.

People are also pleased and supportive of the new *Law*. In honor of Plastics Free July, ANJEC partnered with the NJ

League of Conservation Voters and the Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed on a survey to better understand how the new *Law* is working for NJ residents and what we can do to make the transition easier. Thank you to all those that took the survey!

Things are looking pretty positive! The majority of respondents support the *Plastic Pollution Reduction Law*. Most people also seem to find the shift to reusable grocery bags fairly easy. In fact, more than a third of respondents were already using reusable bags before the *Law* went into effect!

www.delriverwatershed.org/ news/2022/9/9/newjersey-has-plasticreduction-in-the-bag

#### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS What can be done with excess reusable bags?

For some folks who use home grocery delivery, reusable bags About 688 million plastic bags and 13.7 million paper bags per month are being eliminated.

have been piling up. Fortunately, this only affects two percent of all sales, and there's a simple solution – donate for reuse. Local food pantries/shelters need CLEAN reusable

> bags. Encourage donation: https://cfbnj.org/donatereusable-shopping-bags

### Why ban paper bags at the grocery store?

Single-use paper bags also have a negative environmental footprint. The manufacturing, disposal and recycling of paper requires a substantial amount of wood, water, energy and chemicals, which also creates waste and greenhouse gas emissions that must be

controlled and treated.

Paper bags take three times as much energy and four times as much water to manufacture as plastic bags. Paper bags are not durable, being more likely to split or tear, especially if they get wet. In a landfill, paper bags often do not biodegrade for decades due to lack of oxygen. Bag for bag, they cost more to landfill than plastic bags because they take up much more space by weight and volume. In addition, the State uses about 1,300 football fields of trees worth of paper bags every year!



# 2023 Fundamentals for Effective Environmental Commissions

This year's annual training for environmental commission members will feature both virtual and in-person components, with six unique sessions.

#### Virtual sessions

#### **Environmental Commission Powers & Responsibilities**

• Tuesday, March 21, 7:00 PM

#### Creating/Updating a Municipal ERI/NRI

• Wednesday, March 22, Noon

Stormwater Regulations – The New Permitting Rules & More

• Wednesday, March 22, 7:00 РМ

#### Land Use Planning: The Municipal Master Plan, Municipal Ordinances

• Thursday, March 23, Noon

#### Site Plan Review, Stormwater Overview

• Thursday, March 23, 7:00 РМ

#### In-person session

#### Advanced Environmental Commission Strategies plus networking

• Details pending – check the ANJEC website for details.

#### Register

ANJEC Members: No charge to participate Non-Members: \$35 to participate in any/all sessions Email ANJEC (*info@anjec.org*) to register. Login details will be emailed.

### What can we do to address the issue of foam packing peanuts?

Good news! This problem was recently addressed by NJ's *Recycled Content Bill* (S2515) that was signed into law in January 2022. This Law prohibits the sale of polystyrene (Styrofoam) packing peanuts in the Garden State within two years. The *Law* also requires more recycled content (paper, plastic and glass) to be used in various products in the State after two years, including plastic and glass containers, plastic and paper carryout bags, and plastic trash bags.

### What else can NJ do to reduce plastic pollution?

- Enforce the current Law This requires all of us to stay vigilant and continue to educate consumers and store/restaurant managers. Say YES to reuse! Resources are available on https://njnoplastics.org/ resources and https://litterfreenj.com.
- Enact the extended producer responsibility bill and hold manufacturers responsible and accountable for packaging waste.
- Improve municipal recycling programs.

# ANJEC remembers Governor James J. Florio

By Julie Lange Groth, ANJEC Report Editor

champion of the environment, tireless public servant and a true friend of ANJEC, Jim Florio will be remembered for many things. As governor he signed into law NJ's *Clean Water Enforcement Act* (1990) and the *Pollution Prevention Act* (1991) to reduce discharges from industrial and other sites.

As a Member of Congress, he authored the *Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act*, known as the "Superfund" law, our nation's primary program for cleaning up hazardous waste sites. As Chairman of the House Subcommittee with jurisdiction over environmental matters, he was involved in the drafting or passage of virtually every major piece of federal environmental legislation, and he worked closely with Governor Brendan Byrne and the Department of the Interior to create America's most creative and powerful regional conservation program, New Jersey's *Pinelands Protection Act*.

ANJEC honored Gov. Florio with the Candace McKee Ashmun Legacy Award in 2019. A decade ago, as keynote speaker at ANJEC's 2012 Environmental Congress, Gov. Florio shared his thoughts on the vital role that local environmental commissions play in protecting clean water in their communities.

In words that still ring true, he said leaders with intellectual courage are needed to raise the uncomfortable questions that nobody else wants to address for fear of being asked to provide solutions. "We must have leaders willing to say that our policies are not working, and willing to get citizens and organizations engaged in identifying solutions." Governor Florio died in September at age 85.



Governor James Florio (top), with ANJEC pioneer Candace Ashmun and former NJ Governor Tom Kean at an NJCF event honoring Candace.

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