

IN-PERSON WORKSHOP SESSIONS – FRIDAY, OCTOBER 13th

Workshop Session 1 – 10:30 a.m.

A 2050 vision for land protection and urban greening in NJ

One (1) NJ Community Forestry CEU Available



As a national leader in land preservation, New Jersey has already preserved one-third of the state's land area. A new report lays out a vision for preserving 50% of the state by 2050 while making a major commitment to greening the state's urban areas over the same timeframe.

Speakers:

Michele Byers, former Executive Director, NJ Conservation Foundation

Tom Gilbert, Co-Executive Director, NJ Conservation Foundation

New Jersey's New Inland Flood Hazard Protection Rules

Hear all the details on the new Inland Flood Hazard Protection rules and regulations. Presenter from NJDEP will present to help answer questions and explain the requirements and actions required of municipalities.

Speaker:

Michael Sheehan, Environmental Engineer, NJDEP, Division of Watershed Protection and Restoration, Bureau of Flood Hazard and Stormwater Engineering

Navigating NJ's Policy Landscape: Flood Policy & Open Space Funding Updates and Resilience Strategies

Join us for an informative session on the latest New Jersey Flood Policy Updates. Our expert speakers will dive into critical topics such as Flood Defense strategies, Stormwater Utilities, and the NJ Keep It Green Initiative. Discover how new policies affect your community and gain valuable insights to navigate the evolving landscape of flood management and resilience. Don't miss this opportunity to stay ahead of the curve in flood policy awareness.

Speakers:

Ed Potosnak, Executive Director, NJ League of Conservation Voters

Lindsey Sigmund, Program Manager, NJ Future

The Poisoned Well - Addressing Water Quality Locally in a System Designed for Polluters

Over 50 years after the passage of the Clean Water Act, New Jersey waterways remain staggeringly impaired (95% of NJ rivers and streams according to one report released in 2022) with even more hidden dangers not yet fully understood. Learn about some of the many contributors to the poisoning of our water and what actions local governments and environmental commissions can take now to take back control of this precious resource.

Speakers:

Laura Norkute, Director of Water Quality and Environmental Compliance, New Jersey American Water

Jim Waltman, Executive Director, The Watershed Institute

Hydrogen on the Renewable Energy Horizon

Clean Hydrogen energy has the potential to help NJ meet renewable energy goals and reduce greenhouse gases. Join us for this workshop that will provide an overview of clean hydrogen technology and the path ahead for making it available as a renewable energy source in New Jersey.

Speaker:

Lathrop Craig, Senior Vice President & Chief Commercial Officer PSEG

Workshop Session 2 – 11:45 a.m.

Warehouse Sprawl has arrived in New Jersey!

Across our state, there has been a surge in warehouse proposals. Sprawl in the form of warehouses and other harmful activities are popping up in places that can't handle the impact: undeveloped farmland, communities that already suffer terrible air pollution, and places that will make flooding worse.

Learn about resources for local officials and local volunteers to help control sprawl. Hear about grass roots projects around the state that can be effective in the process of preventing harmful development activities in your community.

Speakers:

Colleen McGurk, AICP/PP, Senior Planner, Office of Planning Advocacy, NJ Business Action Center

Jason Howell, Public Lands Advocate, Pinelands Preservation Alliance

How Environmental Leaders Can help Restore Biodiversity

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Our planet is suffering from a biodiversity crisis: we are losing butterflies, bees, and birds at an unprecedented rate. As commissioners, you are in an important position to help! Learn about native plants, invasive species, and public pollinator gardens, as well as ordinances to promote native plants or limit polluting gas-powered leaf blowers. Learn how to encourage Volunteer Stewardship Teams to care for local parks through invasive species management and restoration. The talk will include guidance on how to create and implement concise stewardship plans.

Speakers:

Deb Ellis, Leader, Essex Co. Chapter, Native Plant Society of NJ

Michael Van Clef, Program Director, New Jersey Invasive Species Strike Team

Climate Mapping - A Hands-On Computer Lab Training

Hear about Rutgers University's Climate Resource Center's tools for Municipalities. The tools include NJ FloodMapper, NJ HazAdapt, and Climate Snapshots. This hands-on training will be an introduction to the platforms that communities can use to help plan for climate change vulnerability and increase resiliency.

Speakers:

Ashlyn Spector, Unit Manager at Rutgers University Bloustein School of Public Policy and Planning

Jonathan DeLura, Graduate Student/Research Assistant, Climate ADAPT, Rutgers University—Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy

Land Use Tools for Environmental Commissions

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Learn about a variety of model ordinances your municipality can use to protect natural resources in your community. Examples will include tree, riparian buffers, steep slope and other land use ordinances. These are critical tools in reviewing site plans and providing impactful feedback. We will also discuss stormwater ordinances to prevent flooding and other protect our water resources.

Speaker:

Christopher C. Obropta, Ph.D., P.E. Extension Specialist in Water Resources, Rutgers Cooperative Extension Water Resources Program, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

Workshop Session 3 – 3:00 p.m.

The new MS4 permit is here. Are you ready?

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As of January 1, 2023, all New Jersey municipalities are “Tier A” for the purposes of MS4 (Municipal Separate Stormwater System) permits. The new Tier A MS4 permits require all municipalities to implement actions that will reduce polluted stormwater runoff and support improved water quality. This includes requirements for developing a watershed improvement plan, prohibition of herbicide application near waterways, adoption of a tree protection ordinance, inspection and maintenance of storm drains/catch basins, stormwater infrastructure, and enhanced public outreach and education. Find out what you need to know from a NJPDES (New Jersey Pollution Discharge Elimination Discharge) expert at NJDEP.

Speaker:

Dan Kuti, Supervisor of the Municipal Stormwater Permitting Unit, NJDEP

Striving Towards Zero Waste in NJ through Reducing Consumption

What do food waste, recycling and plastics have in common? All these materials end up downstream. What upstream, local solutions can help reduce this waste? Join us for a discussion on the importance of education, current and pending legislation, and examples of community engagement. We'll discuss the benefits of the Recycled Content Law, the future of reducing plastic with the Packaging Reduction Bill, opportunities for food waste/donation, the importance of data metrics and the unveiling of Sustainable Jersey's new Waste Task Force Initiatives. Please come ready with your questions and projects!

Speakers:

Gary Sondermeyer, Vice President of Operations, Bayshore Recycling

N.Dini Checko, Project Director, ANJEC

Access to Solar Through the Community Solar Energy Program

Community Solar allows all NJ residents to have affordable access to renewable energy. After a successful two-year pilot program, the NJ Board of Public Utilities voted in August to establish a permanent program. Learn about how Community Solar works, ways to access a project, and how you can work with your municipality to increase access to residents in your community.

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Speakers:

Tracey Woods, Energy Program Manager, Sustainable Jersey

Sawyer Morgan PhD, Research Scientist, Division of Clean Energy, New Jersey Board of Public Utilities

Improving Your Community with the Farmland Preservation and Green Acres Programs

As New Jersey – the nation’s most densely populated state – continues to grow and develop, community leaders, environmental commissions, and land trusts are increasingly concerned about the loss of open space and productive farmland. These resources are important since they provide natural areas and quality parks close to where residents live and work and support local agricultural production. Does your community have a current Open Space & Recreation Plan and Farmland Preservation Plan? Do you know where and how to apply for funding assistance? Learn how the state’s Green Acres Program, Urban Parks Program, and Farmland Preservation Program can help.

Speakers:

Andrew Szwak, Mid-Atlantic Program Manager, Land Trust Alliance

Cecile Murphy, Local & Nonprofit Assistance Bureau Chief, NJDEP Green Acres Program

Cindy Roberts, Outreach and Training Coordinator, State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC)

VIRTUAL SESSIONS

Tuesday, Oct 17 7PM Virtual Webinar:

Tackling Climate Change in NJ’s Urbanized Coastal Communities

In response to increasing sea level rise and more severe storm events affecting NJ’s highly urbanized coastal regions, the coastal team at Kean University are researching three major issues: 1) shoreline erosion and shore protection; 2) water quality assessment and chemical-biological interactions; and 3) social-environmental inequities in climate adaptation and urban redevelopment initiatives. Their team will present findings and case studies of several coastal towns, highlighting the importance of integrating scientific knowledge, social equity, and policy to comprehensively tackle NJ’s coastal issues.

Speakers:

Jun Cheng, Ph.D. Assistant Professor at Kean University - Department of Environmental and Sustainability Sciences

Shuting Liu, Ph.D, Assistant Professor at Kean University - Department of Environmental and Sustainability Sciences

Gailia Shokry, Ph.D, Postdoctoral fellow in Environmental & Sustainability Sciences at Kean University

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 18 NOON:

Collaborative Land Conservation

Successful partnerships are critical to preserving and stewarding open spaces in NJ. Join us to learn more about how successful collaboration between land trusts, municipalities, and other partners leads to land protection in New Jersey. We will share an inspiring example of collaborative conservation and provide information on how environmental commissions can play an important role in fostering partnerships that lead to successful land conservation.

Speaker:

Jennifer Coffey, Executive Director, ANJEC

Mara Tippet, Associate Director, Raritan Headwaters

Wednesday, October 18, 7 pm:

We're going to need a bigger boat: funding stormwater management in the age of increasing, intense rainfall

Do you have stormwater challenges in your town? Does it seem like the challenges are only becoming greater? Over 2,000 communities across the country have established stormwater utilities as a tool to help with water quality compliance, flood mitigation, and to manage and maintain stormwater infrastructure.

This session will highlight how your community can explore available options, starting with analyzing how you are meeting your present challenges, the benefits of enacting a stormwater utility; and the impact this could have on your municipal budget and stormwater control practices.

Speakers:

Elizabeth Treadway, Senior Vice President WSP USA

Andrew Nowick, Mayor, Lambertville

Thursday, October 19 7pm:

PR-moting Greenery: Mastering Environmental Policy Communications

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Want to reach wider audiences, engage with your community, and raise awareness on crucial environmental policies? Discover the power of Virtual Environmental Policy Communications in this insightful session. Our expert speaker will explore effective strategies for amplifying your environmental message by engaging the press, utilizing social media, and harnessing digital tools to drive positive change.

Speaker: Sunni Vargas, Campaign Manager, NJ League of Conservation Voters