

**Township of West Milford  
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**

**2010  
ANNUAL REPORT**

The West Milford Environmental Commission was established by the Township of West Milford in 1973 “for the protection, development or use of natural resources, including water resources, located within the territorial limits of the Township” and is an advisory body to the Township’s Planning Board and Township Council and Administration. The Environmental Commission has a long history, not only within West Milford, but also in the surrounding areas as being a truly proactive group dedicated to environmental issues within our own and neighboring States. We have worked very closely with the Mayor and Township Council, as well as our primary partner, the Planning Board, for almost forty years, to ensure that the environment of the Township is a priority when considering development applications, projects, and local legislation, and we are very proud of our accomplishments.

With the advent of the Highlands Legislation our duties reviewing development applications has lessened somewhat, but many other important issues have arisen that have required our attention and expertise. We have continued, however, to review all pertinent applications for the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment, concentrating on environmental impacts of site plans, subdivisions, and variances, for residential, commercial and telecommunication applications, in addition to making site visits to verify that plans conform to the actual nature of the subject property. Wetland delineations, property lines, lot sizes, environmental constraints, etc. have all been verified during these site visits.

At the request of the Township Council, Planning Board or Administration, the Commission has also reviewed certain projects within the Township borders for their environmental impact, including the high school artificial turf field, replacement of the High Crest Lake water tower, the Apple Valley Estate remediation project, and the Tennessee Gas Pipeline 300 Line and Northeast Upgrade Projects.

The Commission has volunteered its time and expertise through appointed representatives that serve on subcommittees with the Planning Board, e.g. Master Plan Subcommittee, in addition to the Open Space Subcommittee, Green Team and Sustainability Subcommittee, Sustainable West Milford, and the Lakes Committee.

The following is a brief overview of some of the issues that the Commission has addressed in the past year, and some of the activities that we have been involved with.

**Open Space Prioritization**

We have established a Committee to meet regularly with the Township Administrator and Representatives from the Township Council and Recreation Department to review and discuss potential open space property acquisitions. These properties would serve both the Township’s needs for recreation and fulfill the need to extend the environmentally sensitive areas that need to be protected, as well to add to the Green Belt to allow for unrestricted wildlife movement. The Green Belt or Greenway, which are identified

properties that surround the Township's central commercial district and connect open space parcels, help to assure the preservation of the rural character of the Township. Even though our primary concern is preservation of sensitive property and the extension of the Green Belt, we understand the economic benefits of combining those needs with that of recreation. We hope this communication remains open and allows the Commission to contribute to the final decision about properties that are ultimately purchased for open space.

### **DEP Storm Water Quality Regulations**

The Environmental Commission has continued to be the primary education component in this area through the distribution of pamphlets and brochures to the public at the annual Autumn Lights Festival and the Green Fest, and through information on our website. We have completed most of the projects that began several years ago, however, we need more concentration on mapping areas of concern if the funds become available. Also, there has been progress made in protecting the waters of Greenwood Lake through the implementation of the 319h Grant funds, which will be discussed further in the Grant section of the report.

### **Septic System Pumping Permit**

Now that it has been adopted and implemented, this ordinance (Ordinance No. 2008-50 – Individual Subsurface Sewage Disposal System Management) appears to be very successful and has been embraced by the community and residents. The Health Department has informed us that many of the residents have complied with this ordinance and realize the importance of maintaining a well functioning septic system, both economically as well as for the environmental health of the Township.

### **Fertilizer Ordinance**

This ordinance, originally adopted in 2007 and amended in 2009 has also has been embraced by the residents and appears to be very successful since it's enactment. West Milford is a Township of almost 60 lakes and water bodies and the pollution caused by improper use of nitrate and phosphate fertilizers is extremely harmful to the water quality we need to preserve nature, wildlife, and the environment as a whole. This legislation also adds to the quantity and quality of recreation on our lakes while providing a social and economic benefit to our Township.

### **Sustainability**

With the efforts of the Environmental Commission and the Mayor and Council we have become a member of Sustainable Jersey. The Township has created a Green Team in which the Commission acts as the Agent. In turn, the Commission has created a Sustainable Sub Committee that works in conjunction with us to accumulate "points" which are needed to enable the Township to become certified and be eligible for grants and gain status within the State as a Green and Sustainable Community. Some of the recent projects our Sub Committee has worked to accomplish include a recent Energy Audit of Township Buildings to save valuable tax dollars by saving energy, and completing an inventory of Township vehicles to evaluate how we can save energy when the existing

vehicles need to be replaced. Sustainability is more than just thinking "Green." It also includes spending and shopping locally with our merchants and keeping our resources here in West Milford. We are fortunate to live in such a beautiful and bountiful area, and we should utilize the services and commodities that are available within our own community. West Milford is privileged to have these resources as well as the numerous residents who are willing to donate their time to enhance this concept. Local groups such as Sustainable West Milford and Ample Harvest are well known not only locally, but also nationally, for their ability to make sustainability a reality. The Environmental Commission applauds their efforts and will continue to work with them for the betterment of the Township.

### **Grants**

We have been very fortunate to have been awarded numerous Grants through ANJEC and the NJ DEP to accomplish the needed work to preserve our environment and water quality. Without their assistance many of the projects we have been able to accomplish would not have occurred.

### **319h Grant**

We are finally coming to a conclusion for the implementation of the 2004 Greenwood Lake 319H Grant and the 2007 Stormwater Implementation 319H Grant that had been combined into one overall project. This grant project involves the installation of storm water filtration or BMP devices at various storm sewer locations around Greenwood Lake which will filter and remove a major portion of phosphorous entering from storm water. Phosphorous is the main contaminate which enhances and promotes weed growth, and a recent analogy by Dr. Fred Lubnow, environmental specialist for this project, notes that one lb. of phosphorous creates about 1,100 pounds of the green algae that often plagues our lakes. These storm water devices will filter out about 20 to 30 lbs. of phosphorous a year, which will be a substantial aid in the overall quality of the water in Greenwood Lake. Work should commence in the early spring and be completed by late summer or early fall. Princeton Hydro and Dr. Lubnow are overseeing the project, its design and implementation, and it is being done in conjunction with the Greenwood Lake Bi State Commission.

### **604b OWTS Grant**

The next grant which should be completed this year is the 604b Grant which will use the Township's aging septic system as a model to collect data and analyze how well onsite wastewater systems function. That information will be used to assist an Onsite Wastewater Management Plan, both in the Township and throughout the area. Dr. Lubnow of Princeton Hydro, also assigned with this project, has noted that this is a groundbreaking project that has never been attempted, and will be used to develop national standards for septic systems. Work had commenced in the fall, but will continue in the early spring.

### **Streetscape Grant**

It appears that our Streetscape Grant project is starting to move forward as the final concept plans have been revised and are being submitted to the County for final approval. The next phase will commence in the spring.

### **Trails Master Plan Grant**

The Trails Master Plan Grant is an ANJEC sponsored project. We will be working with White Environmental Services, NY/NJ Trails Conference, a Sub Committee of the Commission which I have appointed, and ANJEC to conduct a study and produce a plan for connection of our existing trails to other trails and publicly used areas within the Township. West Milford has been blessed with a beautiful natural landscape and environment, and providing trails for our residents to enjoy can also become an economic benefit as others outside of West Milford come to enjoy the beauty of this region.

### **Trails Signage Grant**

The NY/NJ Trails Conference is working along with the Commission on development and construction of signage and kiosks at various trailheads throughout the Township with the assistance of a NJDEP Division of Parks and Forestry grant with matching funds (in the form of services) from the Township. The design has been completed and some prototypes are completed and have been installed. The balance of the approved signage and kiosks will be built and assembled this year.

---

The Commission requests that the list of 2011 ANJEC Planning Grants for matching grants up to \$15,000. be considered by the Mayor and Council for projects that may not otherwise be available. These grants enable projects to be completed that enhance the quality of life for all the residents in the Township.

### **Tennessee Gas Pipeline 300 Line and North East Upgrade**

This is a rather immense project which has a great environmental impact upon West Milford as well as the other towns and states that it passes through. We have been closely following its progress and have requested information, as well as documentation, additional maps and locations of environmentally sensitive areas within its path. When a negative impact is discovered we will recommend and request deviation in its route so that there is a less negative impact upon our environment. Meetings are currently in progress and will continue until the project is complete. Representatives of Tennessee Gas Pipeline will be attending our next Environmental Commission meeting this month to provide an overview of the continuation of the gas line construction through our Township. TGP has been very cooperative in meeting our concerns and we hope that relationship will continue. We will keep a close watch on this project and inform the Mayor and Council through the Township Administrator of any concerns we may have in the future. We advise all residents and other Townships affected to attend any and all pre-construction meetings for this project in order to eliminate any possible adverse conditions after approvals from the NJ DEP are already given. Changes made after the permitting process is completed are more difficult and costly for all involved.

### **Contamination Issues**

I appointed a Liaison to the Health Department in 2010 in order to meet with the Health Officer regularly to discuss and evaluate all ongoing environmental contamination hazards. We receive quarterly reports, as appropriate, to keep us advised of those environmental issues such as septic problems and unauthorized dumping, especially when near water ways or drinking supplies, and any chemical spills that may occur. I feel we have a good working relationship with the Health Department and its Staff in our combined effort to promote a clean environment for all.

### **Wind and Solar Energy Ordinances**

The Environmental Commission, along with the Planning Board, have recommended local legislation be formulated to address the growing interest and use in solar and wind energy systems. Draft ordinances are being developed for consideration as the Commission continues to encourage safe alternative energy use.

### **Recycling Coordination**

The Commission has worked with the Township's Recycling Coordinator to promote increased recycling awareness in the Township. We have joined in an educational outreach, and hope that residents will see the benefits to the Township, both economically and environmentally.

In conclusion I feel that the West Milford Environmental Commission along with its partners, Township Departments, outside organizations such as the NJDEP, ANJEC, Sustainable West Milford, Sustainable Jersey, Ample Harvest and the NY/NJ Trails Conference have served the Township well in 2010. All of our combined efforts have resulted in a very productive year as guardians of our environment.

Respectfully,

Stephen J. Sangle, Chairman  
West Milford Environmental Commission