



Oct. 15, 2015

For Immediate Release

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## **ANJEC Recognizes Towns for Environmental Achievement**

**Mendham** – The Association of NJ Environmental Commissions (ANJEC) presented five of its prestigious Environmental Achievement Awards to local environmental commissions at the organization's 42nd Annual Environmental Congress on Friday, Oct. 9, where a capacity crowd gathered at Raritan Valley Community College in Branchburg, NJ.

ANJEC, a 45-year-old nonprofit based in Mendham, organizes the day-long, annual event to provide opportunities for local environmentalists and organizations to share knowledge on a wide range of topics affecting New Jersey communities, such as: water supply issues, pipelines, clean energy, habitat protection, open space preservation, and plastic pollution. This year's theme was "Fixing Our Water Woes: New Jersey's Bucket List," and the keynote speaker, George Hawkins, Esq., shared his experiences leading the Clean Rivers infrastructure project as CEO and General Manager of the District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority (DC Water).

The ANJEC Environmental Achievement Award program recognizes exceptional projects carried out by environmental commissions to protect natural resources, health and open spaces in their towns. Environmental commissions are comprised of volunteers appointed by their municipalities or counties to advise on environmental issues, lead programs to protect natural resources and educate community members about conservation.

This year's Award winners include Environmental Commissions from the Townships of Bridgewater, Waterford and West Windsor as well as two collaborations by environmental commissions, one from Cresskill, Closter, Norwood and Old Tappan, and the other from Franklin Lakes, Oakland and Wyckoff.

An awards committee comprised of ANJEC Trustees and staff members selected the winners based on project impact, originality, educational value, innovation, and response to a need. ANJEC has been presenting the coveted annual awards since the mid-1970s.

ANJEC President Nancy Tindall and Vice President Ray Cywinski presented the awards. "It's truly inspiring to witness the innovation and enthusiasm demonstrated by these award winning projects," Tindall said after the awards ceremony. "New Jersey's environment faces many

challenges, and these environmental commissions are leading by example to find solutions and raise awareness in their communities.”

Descriptions of the award-winning projects are provided below. For contact information for the winners and more details, please email Julie Lange Groth at [jlange@anjec.org](mailto:jlange@anjec.org) or call (973) 539-7547.

### **Award winning projects**

#### **Bridgewater Environmental Commission**

##### ***Sustainable Bridgewater Birdhouse Project***

As part of Bridgewater Township’s 2015 Eco-Blast Fair, a joint initiative of the Environmental Commission and Sustainability Task Force, the Commission partnered with Home Depot and Bridgewater-Raritan High School wood shop students on a birdhouse activity for children. Home Depot supplied scrap wood and reused shipping materials that the shop students used to build 300 birdhouses and other fair items. At the event, children aged ten and under learned about birds and had the opportunity to decorate a birdhouse and take it home. Mayor Daniel Hayes commended this activity for combining environmental awareness, civic responsibility and sound economics.

#### **Franklin Lakes, Oakland and Wyckoff Environmental Commissions**

##### ***The FLOW Green Film Festival***

FLOW is an ongoing collaboration of the Environmental Commissions and Green Teams in three Bergen County towns -- Franklin Lakes, Oakland and Wyckoff. In 2014 and 2015, FLOW hosted Green Film Festivals on four Thursday nights in May at the Wyckoff Public Library. FLOW members developed a form for grading films to help select the ones they would show, which included *Groundswell Rising*, *Blue Gold*, *How to Boil a Frog*, *Dirt* and *The Resilient Ones*. They developed discussion panel topics, brought in speakers to lead discussions after each film, and created a marketing campaign to publicize the events, which each attracted 35-75 people. They donated the films to the Library. The three towns shared all work and expenses, and are planning another festival in 2016.

#### **Cresskill, Closter & Norwood Environmental Commissions, Old Tappan**

##### ***Northern Valley Earth Fair Collaboration***

The Environmental Commissions of Cresskill, Closter and Norwood and the Borough of Old Tappan joined forces to host a regional Northern Valley Earth Fair in 2015. By pooling resources and talents, they attracted 65+ environmental or green exhibitors, arranged for participation by local schools, live musical performances and flash dances, offered paper shredding and e-waste disposal, distributed hundreds of reusable bags and bottles, and raised money for future environmental projects and educational activities. They plan to repeat this successful collaboration in 2016.

#### **Waterford Township Environmental Commission**

##### ***Atco Lake Fishing Tournament***

For the past three summers the Environmental Commission has hosted the Atco Lake Fishing Tournament. In addition to providing a fun, free educational community event, the tournament is

also the backdrop for an annual environmental assessment of the health of the lake. Participants take a break from their catch and release fishing to scoop a variety of snails, larvae, freshwater shrimp, etc., from the lake. All are recorded and studied by Michael Hogan of South Jersey Land & Water Trust, who educates participants about how macroinvertebrates help to maintain water purity, and how the presence or absence of various species is an indicator of water quality. The participants release all wildlife and also clean up the lake banks. Local businesses sponsors donate money, supplies, concessions and trophies. Businesses and trophy winners receive certificates during a televised town committee meeting. The data from the assessment is added to the town's ERI.

## **West Windsor Environmental Commission**

### ***Climate Action Plan***

The West Windsor Environmental Commission released the *West Windsor Climate Action Plan (CAP)* in July 2015. Working in partnership with Rutgers Climate Institute and consultants funded by a grant from Sustainable Jersey, Commission members framed and shaped the CAP document. The principal value of the Plan is educational and to motivate the public to take action. It summarizes the science and associated risks of climate change, estimates the quantity of greenhouse gas emissions from the town (overall), sets reduction goals, proposes a plan of action to achieve reductions, and initiates discussion on how residents should plan/adapt climate change. The Commission made presentations, tabled at public events and hosted public meetings to obtain input from residents and officials for the CAP, and have also publicized and shared the final report widely. First phases, such as an anti-idling program and energy audit recommendations, have already been implemented.

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**More about ANJEC:** <http://www.anjec.org/>