



CHATHAM BOROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
54 FAIRMOUNT AVENUE
CHATHAM, NEW JERSEY 07928



ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2012

The **Environmental Commission (EC)** was very active during calendar year 2012, engaging in numerous activities that improved and enhanced awareness of the Chatham Borough Environment. Below is a summary of the highlights of 2012.

Using grant funds from the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC) and numerous volunteer hours, the EC developed a **Complete Streets Policy**. The Complete Streets Policy lays the groundwork to help Chatham Borough develop a network of safer streets, crosswalks and pathways that will encourage more people to walk and bike all over town. Complete Streets accommodates all citizens including pedestrians, bicyclists, public transit users, drivers, senior citizens, and people with disabilities. The Policy was completed and adopted by the Borough Council as an amendment to the Borough Master Plan in March 2012. The Complete Streets Policy can be reviewed by navigating the Borough website at the following link: <http://www.chathamborough.org/chatham/Plans-Reports>

In March, the EC coordinated with Troop 8, a local Boy Scout Troop chartered by Ogden Memorial Church, to complete a **Cleanup at the Boat Launch in Shepard Kollock Park**. The boat launch and surrounding area at Shepard Kollock Park was badly affected by winter storms and the cresting river. Large amounts of debris, tree limbs and leaves were deposited on the ramp and at the shoreline on either side, making the launch unusable and blocking it from view of approaching boaters. Star Scout Andrew Ziegler was assigned this cleanup for his Life Rank service project. Under the direction of the EC, Andrew led some 20 plus scouts from Troop 8 and several other volunteers on April 14th and completed the project with outstanding results. The cleanup resulted in approximately 40 cubic yards of trash and brush debris being removed. Within an hour of the launch being cleared, 2 kayaks were launched and a family that came down to the river to fish chose a spot alongside the launch that was previously inaccessible.



BEFORE



AFTER



On Earth Day, April 21st, the EC held our **Annual Spring Trail Cleanup**. Assisted by local Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Kiwanis Club, CHS Environmental Club, Chatham Borough Department of Public Works and other volunteers we cleaned and cleared the trail along the river at Shepard Kollock Park. Debris and trash were picked up from the trail and surrounding woods. Fallen trees and limbs were cleared from the trail and wood chips were placed along the trail from the trail head at Shepard Kollock Park to the trail exit at Tallmadge Avenue. The trail was again made passable and available for residents to use and enjoy.



In May 2012, the EC updated several components of the Borough's **Environmental Resource Inventory (ERI)**. Various EC members worked on different outdated components of the ERI to make it more contemporary and consistent with newer Sustainable Jersey requirements. The changes to the ERI were adopted by the Borough Council as an amendment to the Borough Master Plan. The ERI can be reviewed by navigating the Borough website at the following link: <http://www.chathamborough.org/chatham/Plans-Reports/>

The **Fishawack Festival** was a great way for the EC to further publicize our mission. A manned booth was set up at the festival on June 9th at which Environmental Commissioners handed out information pamphlets, answered environmentally related questions and solicited volunteers to assist with various EC projects throughout the year.

The EC engaged Borough residents Andrew Holloway and Charles Ross to work as Summer College Interns. Along with Environmental Commissioner and Former Mayor Dick Plambeck they developed the "**Explore Chatham**" program. This web based program was constructed from scratch. Using their unique skill sets, with assistance from Borough and County resources, Andrew and Charles were able to complete GPS mapping of various trails, and compile interesting information about the paths including historical facts and pictures. Through their diligent work the site went live in October. Explore Chatham provides information about walking trails throughout the Borough and includes maps, descriptions and trail ratings that residents and non-residents can use to experience Chatham's natural beauty and historical importance. Explore Chatham is a great way to familiarize oneself with the Borough's wooded, urban and hybrid paths and the points of interest along those paths. To set out on a walking or hiking adventure in the Borough consult Explore Chatham on the Borough website under **LIVING IN CHATHAM, OUR TOWN, EXPLORE CHATHAM** or use the following link: <http://www.chathamborough.org/chatham/Living%20in%20Chatham/Explore%20Chatham/>

On September 22nd, the EC again collaborated with the Chatham Township Environmental Commission and the Chatham Borough Green Initiatives Committee in hosting the **Fifth Annual Green Fair of the Chathams** at Reasoner Park (Gazebo). Months of planning and organization went into bringing various Green Organizations and vendors exhibiting ecofriendly products and services together to inform Borough residents of greener options. Food vendors and activities for children, including Rizzo's Reptiles, along with soothing music from the Chatham Community Band made the Green Fair a pleasant and informative way for residents to enjoy a day outdoors and learn how to be a little greener. A good time was had by all and the Green Fair received rave reviews.



The Berm at Shepard Kollock Park, an elevated area built up with soil and planted with shrubs, was installed several years ago as an EC project. It is intended to keep the runoff from the fields from eroding the top soil and spilling into the river. It also serves to keep rising flood waters from entering the field. As a result of the harsh winter storms, several of the plantings died. In late September, the EC contracted with Coviello Bros. Horticultural Services to plant 2 verbena shrubs on the berm to replace the dead plantings. The berm is now fully planted and can continue to serve its primary function as well as be a home for birds and butterflies.



The EC, with its many activities throughout the year assisted in obtaining sufficient SJ points necessary for Chatham Borough to upgrade our prestigious **Sustainable Jersey Certification** from Bronze to **Silver Status**. This is a major accomplishment as Chatham Borough is 1 of only 11 municipalities to be awarded the Silver Certification of the 378 registered municipalities throughout the State.

The EC remains active and informed on issues of potential environmental impacts within the Borough and our surrounding areas through its liaisons to the Borough Council and Planning Board. The EC also maintains contact with other entities with environmental interests, including: The Shade Tree Commission; the Green Initiatives Committee; the Open Space and Historic Preservation Trust Advisory Committee; the Community Gardens Advisory Committee; the Department of Public Works; Environmental Commissions from neighboring municipalities; Borough civic and religious groups; local watershed, surface water and groundwater protection groups; State and County road maintenance departments; and others. The EC continues to conduct research on environmental issues of local interest, including air quality, wellhead and aquifer protection, and municipal land use ordinances.

The Commission thanks the Mayor, Borough Council, Borough Administrator and Department of Public Works for their ongoing support of the Commission's programs. The Commission would also like to thank the many individuals and community groups that volunteer their time to make the EC programs successful.

Respectfully submitted,

John A Tancredi

John A. Tancredi, Chair