



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



ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2013

The **Environmental Commission (EC)** was very active during calendar year 2013, engaging in numerous activities that improved and enhanced awareness of the Chatham Borough Environment. Below is a summary of the highlights of 2013.

The EC and Chatham Borough Green Initiatives Committee (GIC) have worked hand in hand since the inception of the GIC. The mission of the GIC was to obtain and maintain **Sustainable Jersey (SJ) Certification** and keep Borough residents informed on Environmental Issues. The EC performs many of the activities required to obtain certification points for SJ while the GIC undertook the daunting task of assembling the information and submitting the application. Since both entities had common goals it made sense for the EC and GIC to merge. The EC adopted the GIC as a subcommittee of the EC thus allowing us to share resources and better serve the community. Through this partnership Chatham Borough was able to maintain our **Silver SJ Certification**. Chatham Borough is 1 of only 22 municipalities to be awarded and maintain the Silver Certification out of the 405 registered municipalities throughout the State.

On Saturday, April 20th, the EC held our **Annual Spring Trail Cleanup** in conjunction with the **Borough Spring Clean 2013**. This year thanks to the help of individual and group volunteers we cleaned and cleared the trail along the Passaic River at **Shepard Kollock Park**. Wood chips were placed along the trail from the trail head at Shepard Kollock to the trail exit at Tallmadge Avenue. The trail was remarked and made passable for residents to walk and enjoy. The EC was also able to tackle a large scale cleanup project at **Stanley Park**, with the assistance of 12 Boy Scouts and 2 adult leaders from **Troop 8's** "2013 Philmont Crew". This scout crew was able to unearth and remove approximately 12 cubic yards of debris that was buried and then level the ground by the picnic area. They also cut back dead trees and shrubs and picked up trash in the park.



Stanley Park after cleaning embankment

In May the EC again coordinated with Troop 8 BSA to **install a new trail head for the trail at Shepard Kollock Park**. The original trail head went up a steep incline and out onto the remnants of the old bridge abutment. The abutment served well for many years but had become increasingly deteriorated. Star Scout Landon Paulson volunteered to install the new trail head

for his Life Rank service project. Landon and a group of fellow scouts from Troop 8 installed a new trail head parallel to the old trail head but on level ground making it easier to traverse. The volunteers cut in a new trail approximately 150feet long from the new trail head to the existing trail filling in holes and chipping the finished trail. The new entrance is a great addition to this beautiful trail along the river.

The EC continually updates the Borough's **Environmental Resource Inventory (ERI)**. With the assistance of our summer interns, EC members worked to enhance components of the ERI to make it more contemporary and consistent with newer Sustainable Jersey requirements. The ERI can be reviewed by navigating the Borough website at the following link:

<http://www.chathamborough.org/chatham/Plans-Reports/>

On June 8th EC volunteers manned a booth at the festival **Fishawack Festival**. Volunteers handed out information pamphlets, answered environmentally related questions and solicited residents to assist with various EC projects throughout the year. It was a great venue for the EC to publicize our mission and solicit additional volunteers.

The EC sponsored T8 Eagle Scout Brian Goldstein to embark on an ambitious Environmental Project for his Eagle Scout Service Project. Working closely with the EC, Brian designed, funded and brought to fruition an Environmental Educational Center in the woods behind Milton Avenue School. Brian led a group of volunteers to clear a large area approximately 7,500sf in the wooded area and installed 2 - 35ft x 15ft deer exclosures. Brian and his team removed all the vegetation from the exclosures. One exclosure was replanted with native species while the second was left barren. The experiment is to see if the native species will flourish and repopulate in one or possibly both of the exclosures. To make it more accessible Brian mulched the entire area around and between the exclosures. Several benches and an information kiosk were installed to enhance its use. The area dubbed "Brian's Classroom" is an interactive outdoor classroom actively being used by Milton Avenue School for science classes. This project is a great example of what can be accomplished by a motivated individual with the help of dedicated volunteers and the support of his benefactors.



Milton Avenue students enjoying a class outdoors

On September 21st, under sunny skies the EC in collaboration with the Chatham Township Environmental Commission hosted our **Sixth 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 green options. Food vendors and activities for children, including Rizzo's Reptiles, along with fun environmentally themed music from Big Jeff made the Green Fair a great way for residents to enjoy a day outdoors and learn how to green up their lives. Powerflow Yoga held a class on the lawn and local resident Beekeeper, Al Tomaro was there with a demonstration hive and other educational materials. The girl Scouts were represented as were the Boy Scouts. Troop 8 set up a demonstration of some of their scuba crew gear. A good time was had by all and the Green Fair received rave reviews.



Kids watching Rizzo's Reptiles



Power flow Yoga had adults and children participating



Boy Scouts proudly displaying the American Flag



Scuba gear used by Troop 8 High Adventure Scuba Crew



Display of different types of bees



Active demonstration hive

The EC and the Open Space and Historic Preservation Trust Advisory Committee jointly sponsored **The Explore Chatham Photo Contest**. The contest was designed to educate residents and connect them with the ecology and history of the Borough. Four subject categories were set up: Animals, Plants, Landscapes and Historic Places. Entries were submitted in October, judged in November and the winners were announced in December. Winners in the various categories in the youth and adult divisions were given gift certificates. The winning photos have been framed and are on display in Borough Hall.

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 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 Tancredi, Chair