

***Trash and Debris Management Plan***

***for***

***Wuhala Woods***

***prepared***

***for the***

***Environmental Commission***

***Borough of Chatham, NJ***

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***by***

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# ***Trash and Debris Management Plan for Wuhala Woods Borough of Chatham, NJ***

## **I. INTRODUCTION:**

All too often, open space lands in urban and suburban environments alike become the dumping grounds and repository for trash and litter. This indiscriminant and mostly illegal dumping activity leads to the deterioration of the natural habitats of these areas and actually pose a threat to the animal populations inhabiting the areas. In addition, the areas become unsightly and casual hikers, bird watchers and school children that might want to use these areas become discouraged and disheartened from these unsightly and unsafe trash materials and debris.

## **II. EXTENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Each sectors of the Wuhala Woods are unique in topography, habitat and recreational usage. In the Western Sector, the area most accessibly to the citizens of Chatham, the acreage is much less than the Eastern Sector. However, the problem with dumping and trash is so much more evident.

### **Western Sector**



**Construction debris in Western Sector of Wuhala Woods Yard wastes in Western Sector of Wuhala Woods**



**Yard debris in Western Sector of Wuhala Woods Remains of a party in the Western Sector of Wuhala Woods**



**Remains of an old washing machine in Western of Wuhala Woods**

**Remains of an old lawn mower in Western Sector of Wuhala Woods**

## Eastern Sector

The nature of the trash problem associated with the Eastern Sector is limited to floatables transported on to the site during flood events and the occasional discarded beverage container. The problem is not nearly as extensive as in the Western Sector. However, the Eastern Sector is a much larger tract and will have to be surveyed very carefully each year after the flood waters have receded as a new crop of floatables is very likely.



**Remnants of a pool liner in the Eastern Sector of Wuhala Woods**

**Beverage container in the Eastern Sector of the Wuhala Woods**

## III. RECOMMENDATIONS

### Western Section

Before embarking upon a physical removal of the trash and debris, a group of concerned citizens should be formed e.g. **Stewards of Wuhala Woods** that could serve as the core for all activities including trash removal but more importantly to provide vigilance on a regular basis.

A management plan for dealing with the existing trash and debris should incorporate citizens and potential future visitors and users of Wuhala Woods. Physically removing the trash and debris is easy once the user public is educated to the problem. In fact, the unsightliness and ecologically deterrent aspects of the trash, particularly the lawn wastes and household chemical containers should be pointed out to all ages, parents and children during tours for the sole purpose of using the various kinds of trash and debris piles as teaching moments. Hopefully, tours of the Woods in its present status will engender interest that can be channeled into a long term involvement and commitment to the overall stewardship of the entire Wuhala Woods Tract.

Once the user public has been identified that can serve as a source of volunteers; personal safety gear, bags and carts can be obtained as donations from local hardware supply stores. Disposal

receptacles would have to be provided by the Department of Public Works or a local disposal vendor.

### **Eastern Sector**

The task of collecting all these items is a great activity for volunteer groups e.g. civic organizations, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and Church Groups with some sort of recognition being given to the individuals or groups who are able to collect the most individual items, the most unique items in terms of age, shape or origin.

All of the materials collected will have to be taken off site as having on-site trash receptacles may not be practical because of the flood inundation problem. Any receptacles will have to be secured and not be able to float.

All of the activities associated with this sector should be under the direction of the **Stewards of Wuhala Woods** under the auspices of the Borough of Chatham Environmental Commission who serve as the Open Space custodians for the Borough of Chatham.