



# Liberty Township Environmental Commission

## 2020 Annual Report

### **Roster**

Chairman Doug Hankin (Resigned Nov.), Vice Chair Richard Larsen, Dan Kurela, Maureen Bonner, Jess Howk (Resigned Oct.), Larry Supp, first alternate Diane Gonski (resigned Nov.), second alternate John Demarco, Secretary Shannon Schaaf

Meetings are held the third Thursday of each month, 7 PM at the Municipal Building. Membership in the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions was maintained.

### **Aquatic Weed Control**

The agreement with Solitude Lake Management was approved for biweekly assessment and treatment. However, due to the Harmful Algae Bloom (HAB), funds were used to support two treatments and water sampling.

### **Smart Lighting Solutions**

The brochures were made available to the public in the building vestibule.

### **Cabin Fever Workshop**

Cancelled. Event was supposed to be an intro to birding workshop with NJ Audubon Society.

### **Arbor Day**

Free Trees were given away to residents and the surrounding communities on June 6<sup>th</sup>. The event was held as a drive-thru tree pickup. Event was promoted online and through social media, local blogs, etc. Commissioners gave away 500 tree seedlings, successfully.

### **ANJEC Grant**

The wildflower meadow was named by the Environmental Commission as Peaceful Garden. Commission members spent time weeding in the spring. Our May dedication event is postponed for spring 2021. The grant is complete and community education documents have been created for future publication and events.

### **Native Seed Garden**

Dan Kurela has been working on reseeding some areas where erosion washed away some seeds. Both this garden and the Peaceful Garden has established very well; providing an array of flowers, colors, and heights to the area, while providing habitat for wildlife and reduced maintenance for public works.

### **Fish Habitat at Mt. Lake**

The remaining porcupine cribs will be installed in 2021.

### **Trex Recycling Challenge**

In April, the LTEC completed its final 500lb. plastic recycling challenge and received the bench. This bench was donated to Free Union Methodist Church.

### **Welcome to the Watershed Bags**

Welcome to the Watershed bags were updated and distributed to 4 new homeowners in Liberty Township.

### **Septic Awareness Month**

LTEC has prepared a septic education plan to support clean water in Liberty Township; promoting septic education online during the month of September for Septic Awareness Month. A Septic Pump Challenge was held in October. Residents who pumped their septic received a thank you prize. Prize was a crocheted

pumpkin donated to the LTEC. One resident received the prize. LTEC purchased and posted 4 sandwich board signs throughout the community: 2 around Mountain Lake and the other two posted near the Municipal Building. These signs were used to promote proper septic maintenance, encourage regular pumping, and enhance awareness about how people impact our waters.

### **HAB Subcommittee**

LTEC members have been participating on a Lake Subcommittee to partner with members from the Township Committee and the Mt. Lake Community Association in order to strategize best efforts to reduce HAB's and treatment at Mountain Lake. Proposed recommendations for studies as well as management strategies and projects have been proposed. Many studies and projects will need sources of funding. One major undertaking was weed harvesting and hydro-raking, partnered by Liberty Twp. and Mt. Lake Community Association, took place this summer; removing almost 1 million tons of plant material from the lake for composting.

### **Educational Expenses**

Due to Covid-19 and social distancing rules, many events, programs and workshops that the LTEC would have attended or hosted, were cancelled. In order to continue to boost environmental education within the community, the LTEC purchased 4 sandwich board signs with 16 inserts (septic awareness, dark skies, wildlife, water quality, etc.). These inserts will change to broaden the message shared with the community during these times. The LTEC also purchased the following items for future workshops and resident education: eco-activity books for kids, additional Welcome to the Watershed tote bags, seeds and envelopes for native wildflower giveaways, and a postcard to be direct mailed to every door (EDDM) to enhance communication with the community and Township. The postcard will be mailed out in the beginning of the year to every resident in Liberty Twp. – encouraging participation, building community, and enhancing stewardship and conservation.

Approved 12/17/20