Sustainable Jersey Actions and their Ecosystem Role

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June 10, 2015

Current Natural Resource Actions

- NRI
- Water Conservation Ordinance
- Environmental Commission
- Environmental Commission Site Plan Review
- Open Space Plan
- Water Conservation Education Program
- Easement Inventory and Outreach
- Easement Inspection and Evaluation
- Clustering Ordinance
- Environmental Assessment Ordinance
- Habitat Conservation Ordinance
- Tree Protection Ordinance
- Community Forestry Plan and Tree Cover Goal
- Tree Hazard Inventory
- Tree Maintenance Programs
- Tree Planting Programs
- i-Tree Assessment of Municipal Trees

Natural Resource Inventory

- Geology
- Geography/ Topography
- Climate
- Air
- Hydrology
- Soils
- Wetlands
- Vegetation
- Wildlife (including Threatened and Endangered Species habitat)
- Existing Land Use and Transportation maps
- Regional relationships

ERI and Land Use Decisions

- As a factual basis for municipal land use planning
- As a resource in the preparation of the land use element of the municipal Master Plan
- As a comprehensive guide in the Site Plan review process
- As a basic tool in determining zoning regulations, municipal ordinances, or other land use management techniques
- As a basis for a land capability analysis and for determining the intensity and location of development
- As an indicator of sensitive areas and areas suitable for certain kinds of development
- As a tool to increase understanding of natural systems, and their limitations and opportunities for use
- As a long-term planning tool to identify potential land use and natural resource problems
- As an educational tool for residents to learn more about their community and its environment
- As a way to save dollars by avoiding future problems and mitigation costs
- As a tool for making decisions about the placement of infrastructure, roads, sewers, schools, etc

Environmental Commissions

- The development and update of an ERI is usually completed and/or coordinated by the Environmental Commissions.
- They serve an important role as the local expertise on local (and regional) environmental resources.

Environmental Assessment Ordinance

- An Environmental Assessment Ordinance, sometimes called an 'Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Ordinance, is a tool that helps planning and zoning boards predict potential impacts of proposed development on wildlife and habitat, vegetation, soil, water, and other resources.
- An Environmental Assessment Ordinance or other natural resource protection ordinance(s) may require measures to avoid or mitigate any environmental impacts, but this is not required for this action.
- It is recommended that municipalities take the information gathered from environmental assessments and develop ordinances or require mitigation to avoid/minimizing the impact of development on natural resources.

Open Space Plans

- An Open Space and Recreation Plan, OSRP, (also referred to as the Open Space Plan, OSP) is a comprehensive document that guides municipal, county, and/or regional open space protection and preservation.
- The State's Green Acres Program requires a specific format and content for a municipal OSRP if a town or county wishes to apply for participation in the Green Acres Planning Incentive Program for enhanced open space funding.
- The Plan tells how and why open space will be protected and provides a framework for implementation.
- An OSRP identifies and examines open space, recreation needs and other resources that are important to the municipality, and lays out a plan of action to protect and maintain these places.

Other Natural Resource Actions

- Easement Stewardship Actions
- Tree Protection Ordinance, Tree and Woodland Management
- Clustering Ordinance
- Water Conservation
- Wildfire Protection Measures and Wildlife Action Plans found under other SJ categories

Questions?

New Actions to Consider?

How can you get involved?

- Contact info@sustainablejersey.com for more information on getting involved.

Ecological Integrity: Risks & Responses
2015 Sustainability Summit
June 10, 2015

Ecological Integrity

Environmental Commissions on the Job

ANJEC
Local Environment Matters

Background

- What's an environmental commission?

- Enabled by legislation (NJSA 40:56A)
- Established by municipal ordinance
- 5 – 7 members, 2 alternates
- Appointed by mayor
- Common member with planning board
- 3-year terms

Background

- What do ECs do?
  - "Study and make recommendations on water, air, waste, noise, landscape protection, environmental appearance, flora and fauna"
  - Create an Open Space Index and make recommendations
  - Develop the town's Environmental Resource Inventory (ERI)
  - Review development applications for environmental impacts
  - Carry out initiatives to protect natural resources
  - Education & outreach

Background

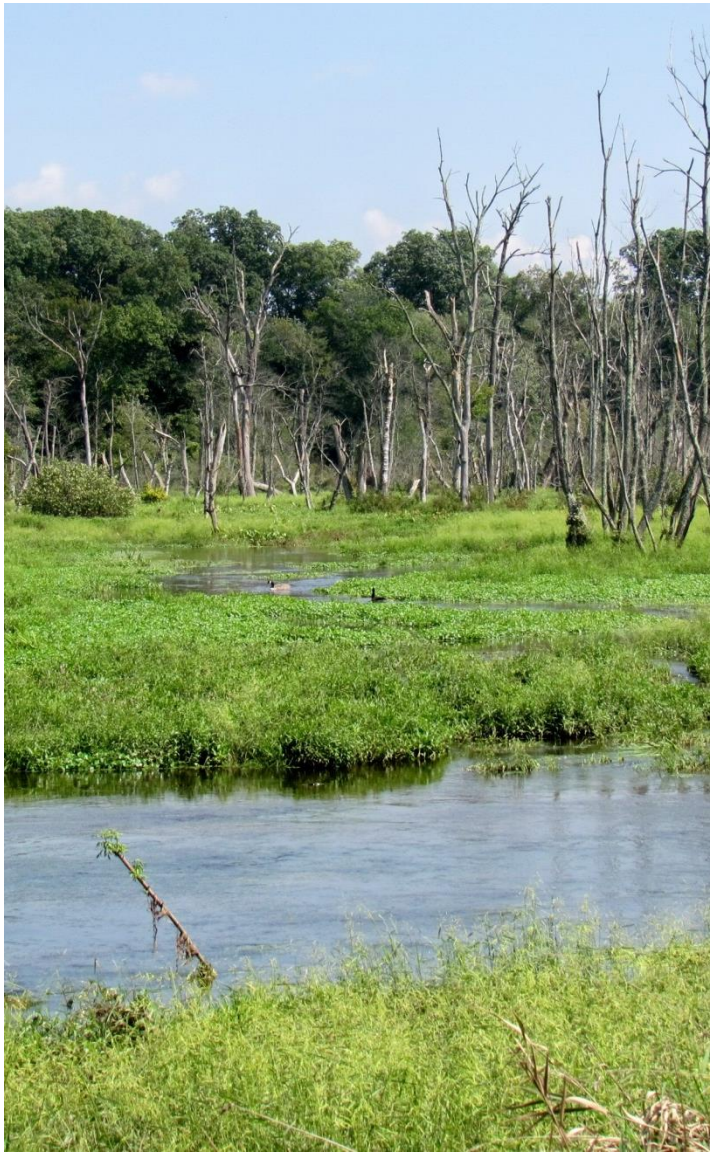
- How ECs and green teams work together
  - Green Team is subcommittee of EC
  - EC & Green Team have common members
  - EC & Green Team officially combined by ordinance

ECs and municipal land use

- Environmental Resource Inventory (ERI)
- Master planning
- Ordinances
- Site plan review
- Open space planning & stewardship
- Community education & outreach

ERIs at work

- Oakland (Bronze)– assessing environmental impacts of proposed pipeline
- Highland Park EC (Silver) – identifying archeological resource areas in need of protection during site plan review
- Mountain Lakes (Silver)- educational tool to encourage stewardship of indigenous plants and wildlife.



Woodstown-Pilesgrove

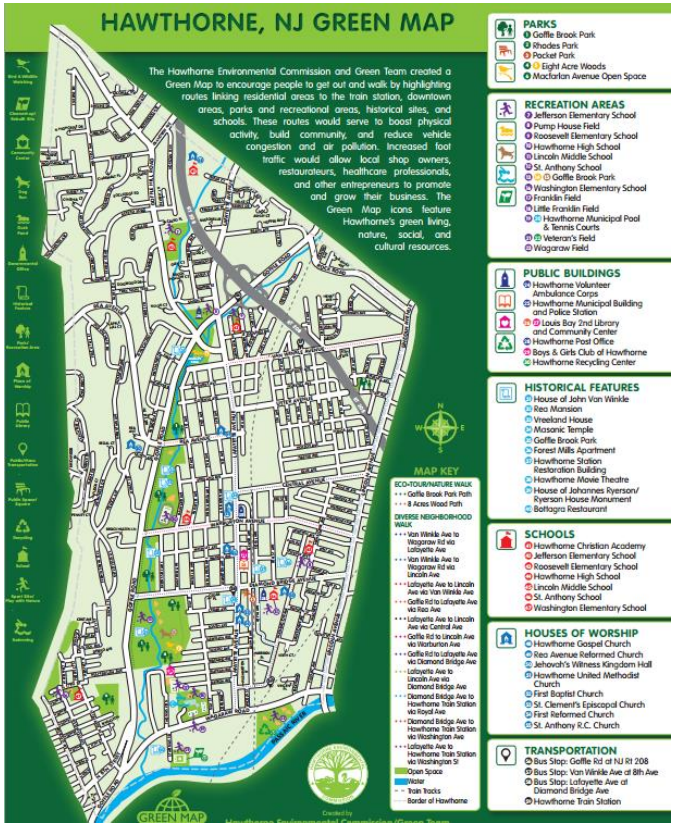
Critical Habitat Survey

- Expanded on ERI info
- Started with list of 12 T&E species
- After field surveys, expanded list to 37 species and 18 species verifying presence of vernal pool habitat
- Series of trainings and information sessions
- 5 field guides
- http://www.w-pjec.org/HabitatProject.asp

Other examples

Hawthorne - Silver

- Green Map
  - Interactive online tool to promote exercise, wellness through biking & walking
  - Lists local walking paths, trails and community destinations
  - Community partnership

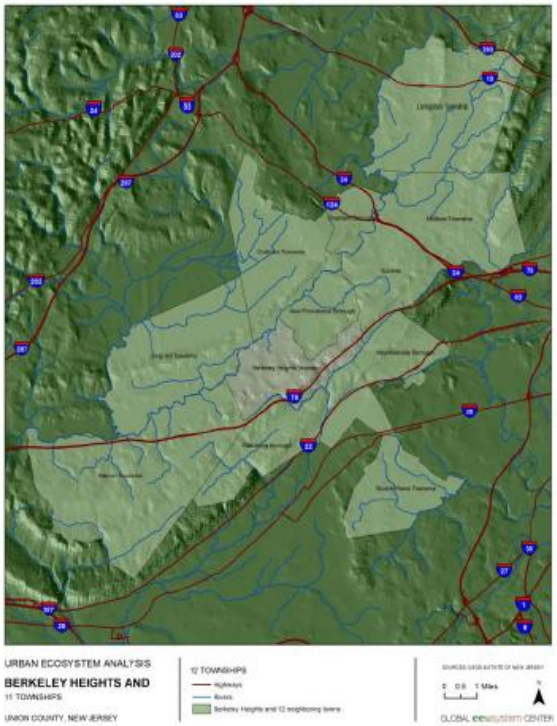


Warren Twp. - Silver

- Low impact checklists to encourage environmentally friendly building practices prior to planning and construction
  - Checklist handed out when residents and builders apply for construction permits
  - Given to architectural firms and developers when putting together developments
  - Also shared with school district as guideline in developing a $12 million infrastructure referendum

Urban Ecosystem Analysis
Township of Berkeley Heights, New Jersey
and 11 Contiguous Towns

Calculating the Value of Nature



GLOBAL ecosystem CENTER

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Berkeley Heights - Silver

- Pioneering tree canopy study
- Conservation easement inventory
- Energy audits of municipal buildings

Haddonfield - Silver

EC since 1973

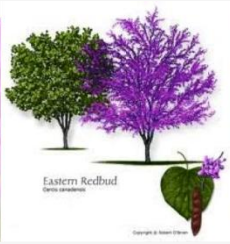
- Open space plan
- Sustainable land use plan
- Green fairs
- Community outreach & education

Haddonfield EC/Green Team rebuilt a bridge washed out by a beaver dam.

3 rain gardens – 1st town-owned green infrastructure

Chatham Twp. - Bronze

Sapling sale and education



Questions?

More information

ANJEC Resource Center
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www.anjec.org

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