

SUSTAINABILITY HERO

May 2018



Ann Marchioni

Co-Chair, Caldwell Environmental Commission

Ann Marchioni has been a member of the [Caldwell Environmental Commission](#) since 1978, serving as co-chair or chair since 2005. For forty years, she has been tireless in her efforts to make Caldwell a sustainable borough and has guided it through countless initiatives that have resulted in Caldwell achieving Sustainable Jersey certification.

Ann's passion for protecting the environment comes through in word and deed. She has worked in collaboration with Caldwell's mayor and council on resolutions and ordinances that make the town greener, such as an anti-idling ordinance that she developed and saw passed. She also presses the town to improve the means and organization of recycling and to follow through with the Open Space Trust Fund. Ann is a longtime member of the Essex County Environmental Commission, and has been an active volunteer for the [Association of NJ Environmental Commissions \(ANJEC\)](#) and [Earthshare NJ](#).

Ann is a dedicated and thoughtful leader; however, it is her persistence that makes change happen. Ann said, "I have learned to knock on doors for help. It doesn't hurt to ask. When we have a need, I figure out who we can approach and ask them to help." Thanks to Ann's ability to find needed resources, the Caldwell Green Team has many valuable partnerships including ones with the Grover Cleveland Middle School Ecology Club, the Environmentally Friendly Club at Caldwell University, the West Essex Ministerial Association, the Caldwell Public Library and more.

Caldwell Pollinator Garden Project

As an advocate for pollinators, and the native plants they depend on, Ann is the singular force behind turning a plot of open space land into a large pollinator garden. In the process, she has inspired a growing team of local volunteers to lend their time to plant and maintain the garden. Ann said, "Seeing how the garden affects people makes the work worthwhile. I love when community members come and are inspired to volunteer their time or just enjoy the garden. I am so humbled by the outpouring of support for this project."



In 2015, the Caldwell Environmental Commission received an ANJEC Open Space grant to develop a pollinator garden on a newly acquired open space property. The area is about 70-by-100 feet with garden plots surrounding a pollinator meadow. The plants were carefully chosen to support bees, birds, butterflies and other wildlife.

Many groups in the community have helped including: Troop 6 Boy Scouts, Caldwell University and Montclair State University students, [the Rotary Club of the Caldwells](#), the [Rutgers Master Gardeners of Essex County](#),

Shop Rite of West Caldwell and local landscapers. The Home Depot Foundation provided a grant and the labor of its employees to install permeable pavers to make the garden wheel chair accessible.

A number of workshops were held to educate the community on the project, such as pollinator workshops for kids and adults at the Caldwell Library. Each participant received a milkweed plant to put in their yard to help the monarch butterfly. Even the mayor got involved; Mayor Ann Dassing signed the National Wildlife Federation's Mayor's Monarch Pledge Program.

Ann explained, "The volunteers are creating monarch waystations throughout the community, at the library and the local schools. The waystations provide a source of nectar and pollen for all insect pollinators and a unique educational opportunity for students to learn about the relationship between the monarchs, milkweed plants and butterfly migration." She added, "Currently, we are increasing the library's resources on pollinators and climate change with funds from a 2017 Sustainable Jersey grant funded by the PSEG Foundation."

Wastewater Treatment Plant Solar Storage Project

Frustrated that she couldn't add solar to her own roof at home due to big trees, Ann set out to get solar for the borough. She attended a solar workshop at the ANJEC Congress to learn about [PSE&G's Solar 4 All Program](#). Then, working with the municipality, she led the Environmental Commission in initiating a project with the Solar 4 All Program, which is a community solar program that uses rooftops, parking lots and landfills/ brownfields for large-scale, grid connected solar projects.

Ann said, "I'm proud to report that PSE&G and the Borough of Caldwell cut the ribbon to open the Wastewater Treatment Plant Solar Storage Project on October 25, 2017." The project is an array of solar panels that store and help keep the borough's wastewater treatment plant running during any extended power outage as a result of severe weather. The solar storage system combines a 2,682 panel, 896 kilowatt-dc solar system with one megawatt-hour batteries. During the day, the solar panels recharge the batteries and help power the wastewater treatment plant, and at night, the batteries help keep the facility running. The combination of the new solar storage system and the existing back-up generators allow the Caldwell plant to operate for as long as ten days without outside power, which will help if they lose power for a storm like Hurricane Sandy. During normal operation, the solar system provides electricity directly to the grid and can power about 165 homes annually.

Reusable Bag Education Campaign

Ann and the Caldwell Environmental Commission have been early promoters of plastic pollution initiatives. The group has worked with local shop owners to support a plastic bag ban. She said, "To promote our reusable bag campaign, we reached out to the local college students at Caldwell University, our community residents and made presentations at the Caldwell Library and the local West Essex Ministerial Association." The Caldwell Environmental Commission received an ANJEC Environmental Achievement Award for



promoting a general decrease in the borough's use of plastics and in particular, the plastic bag. Caldwell also partnered with the Roseland and West Caldwell Environmental Commissions to show the movie "Bag It" with the Environmentally Friendly Club at Caldwell University.

Sustainable Jersey Certified

Caldwell Borough was re-certified with the Sustainable Jersey program in 2017. You can read the [Caldwell Borough Certification Report](#) to review all of the activities the town completed to achieve certification.



Education and Career

Ann received a B.A. in History from Pennsylvania State University, a M.A. in Elementary Education from Lehigh University and a M.A. in Environmental Studies from Montclair University. Ann was a teacher for many years; most recently she was a science teacher at Bloomfield Middle School and a teacher of science and reading at Aquinas Academy in Livingston. Ann integrated sustainability into her teaching lessons in any way that she could. She served as the coordinator of recycling and Earth Day programs in both schools. While at Bloomfield Middle School she implemented a district-wide recycling program. She was the liaison to Friends of Clark's Pond and coordinated the Science and Environmental Career Day and the Global Warming Days. Before retiring in 2011, Ann served as the development director for ANJEC for three years.

Bringing Nature Home Event - May 12

Ann was inspired to create the Caldwell Pollinator Garden after reading the book [*Bringing Home Nature*](#) by Dr. Doug Tallamy. Dr. Tallamy is the chair of the department of entomology and wildlife ecology at the University of Delaware. A focus of Dr. Tallamy's research goals is to better understand the ways insects interact with plants and how the interactions determine the diversity of animal communities. Ann is very excited that the Caldwell Environmental Commission has organized an event for Dr. Tallamy to provide a free lecture on May 12, 2018 at 1:00 pm. The event is being planned in partnership with the West Caldwell Environmental Commission, the Roseland Environmental Commission and [Sustainable Verona](#). Program funders include the [New Jersey Beekeepers Association](#), [Grover Cleveland Park Conservancy](#), [Conserve Wildlife Foundation](#) and Rutgers Environmental Stewards program. It is open to the public and will take place in the Alumni Theater at Caldwell University. Dr. Tallamy will discuss native plants and how to incorporate them into your yard and garden.

What You May Not Know About Ann

Ann grew up in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Her family has deep roots in America, dating back to the mid-1700s. As a child, Ann loved to visit the [Academy of Natural Sciences](#) to see the dioramas, especially the ones of Africa. This museum sparked her lifelong interest in the environment and conservation.

As part of a teacher training program, Ann went to Africa for a three-week safari. It was on this trip that she met her husband, Warren. Ann said, "Warren is a great supporter of this work. He is also a Master Gardener with an incredible green thumb. He has really helped with the pollinator project." In her free time, Ann enjoys doing needle work and traveling. She recently took a cruise to Cuba. One of her favorite spots to visit is Assateague Island located off the Virginia Coast. Ann and Warren have a daughter named Meredith who has similar interest in the environment. Meredith has a Ph.D. in Anthropology and is working on sustainable fishery projects. Ann said in closing, "We need to respect the planet and understand that natural resources are finite. There are limits. Personal choices make a difference, so I try to share information and do projects that raise awareness about sustainability issues in the hope that we can all do better to protect the Earth and our future."