



August 2024



Joseph Slomian

Recycling Coordinator, Monroe Township
Department of Public Works (Middlesex County)

For over 25 years, Joseph Slomian has served the [Township of Monroe](#) as the Recycling and Clean Communities Coordinator, and as a member of the [Environmental Commission](#) and [Green Team Advisory Committee](#). Through his incredible drive and innovative spirit, Joe secured funding that helped him optimize Monroe Township’s recycling and environmental stewardship initiatives. Monroe Township has consistently ranked as one of the top municipalities in the state in litter prevention and achieves an impressive 65% recycling rate due to Joe’s efforts.

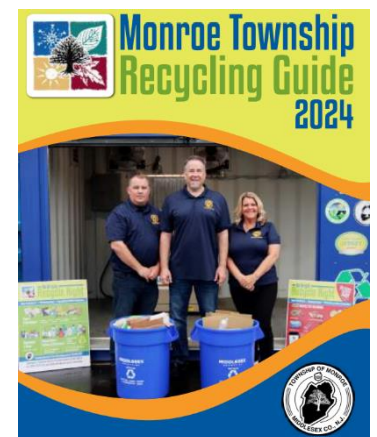


Joe is a [New Jersey Certified Recycling Professional](#), a [New Jersey Certified Clean Communities Coordinator](#), a [Sustainable Resource Management Professional](#) and a [Rutgers Environmental Steward](#). He serves on the board of the [Association of New Jersey Recyclers](#).

Under his supervision, various upgrades and improvements have been made at the Monroe Township Recycling Center. Joe conducts periodic enforcement audits of curbside recycling and regularly speaks with residents about the need to recycle correctly. He uses the township’s Enviro-Mobile (a traveling learning center), the Recycle Coach application, newsletters and special events to educate residents about recycling. Monroe Township has been silver-certified with Sustainable Jersey since 2017. This achievement is thanks in part to the 100 certification points that Joe secures through his various recycling and outreach programs. The Monroe Township Recycling Division’s efforts have yielded substantial financial support, including nearly \$90,000 from the New Jersey Recycling Tonnage Grant and over \$100,000 from the [New Jersey Clean Communities Grant](#). These funds have been pivotal in enhancing the recycling center infrastructure, implementing community clean-up programs and supporting educational initiatives.

Joe is an outdoorsman through and through. He enjoys fishing, hunting and kayaking. As a kid, Joe remembers spending hours exploring the streams and woods near his Monroe home where he has lived his whole life. Family visits with his three brothers to Colliers Mills Wildlife Management Area further fueled his love of the outdoors. Joe said he is lucky to have a job that allows him to work outside of a traditional office. He said, “Basically, I like to keep busy, do what I can to contribute and be outside on the creek.”

Monroe Township and the Environmental Commission are constantly promoting waste reduction and recycling. Efforts include hosting in-person programs, sharing social media posts, submitting newsletter articles and developing guides. The [2024 Monroe Township Recycling Guide](#) is an impressive document that serves as a model for other municipalities. Monroe also has a [Public Works and Recycling Webpage](#) full of information.



Monroe Township X-Stream Clean Up: Increased development and population growth has resulted in more litter and overall stress on the natural areas around Monroe Township’s waterways. When it came time for Joe to select his final project to receive his Rutgers Environmental Steward certification, he did not have to think long about a topic. Joe evaluated and reported on the health of the Matchaponix Brook and the Manalapan Brook in Monroe Township. The project included an assessment of the habitat, storm water operations, recreation possibilities and litter abatement. He then used his project findings as the foundation for a comprehensive program that he proposed to the Monroe Township leadership.



Joe spearheaded Monroe Township’s program to clear the waterways of debris and litter, remove log jams and place litter catching devices at storm water outflows. To support the project, Monroe Township used part of a \$94,000 Clean Communities grant from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection’s Solid Waste Division. “Litter comes from many sources and this grant helped us organize community programs that educate the public about proper trash disposal, reducing waste and the environmental impacts of litter,” Joe said. The New Jersey Clean Communities Council asked communities to complete a Visual Litter Survey. Monroe Township accomplished this with an assessment of the Manalapan Brook by a group of volunteers overseen by staff. The findings formed the basis of a plan that outlined how to clear an approximately 15-mile stretch of brook of log jams and litter. Cleaning up the brook enhanced its recreational use, such as canoeing and kayaking, and helped the public works staff maintain and monitor storm water operations. To support the effort, Monroe Township purchased an amphibious vehicle and other specialty equipment. Joe loves to be on the water as you can see him pictured here.



The Clean Communities grant helped to fund a summer employment program through the Monroe Department of Public Works called the Monroe Clean Communities Clean Team. The Clean Team consists of two residents who spend 12-hours a week picking up litter along Monroe Township’s roadsides, parks and open spaces. In addition, the township offers Monroe-based non-profit and community- service groups mini-grants that offer \$500 per group for running localized clean-up efforts. Monroe Township received 10 Sustainable Jersey certification points for this work by completing the action: [Innovative Community Project](#).



Monroe Township Environ-Mobile: One of Monroe Township’s biggest recycling and waste reduction tools is the Enviro-Mobile, a mobile learning center which reaches thousands of people a year. Joe said, “The idea for the Enviro-Mobile first came about from me being a bit lazy about packing up all the educational materials every time I went out to do community outreach. I suggested that we convert an old ambulance into a mobile unit and the idea caught on and resulted in something much better than I could have imagined.” The Enviro-Mobile is an enclosed trailer that was converted into a classroom with nine interchangeable learning centers that highlight different environmental subjects such as recycling, conservation, hazardous waste, storm water regulations, litter abatement and composting. It has a bulletin board that lists current events and regulations. Joe takes the mobile environmental classroom to visit schools, the senior center, the library and the recreation building to educate the community. Joe even built and designed Enviro-Jopardy. “I made a lot of the questions open-ended with multiple answers to help me encourage discussion and get kids and residents to think about the



environment,” Joe explained. Monroe Township received 20 Sustainable Jersey certification points for these efforts by completing the action: [Recycling & Waste Reduction Education & Compliance](#).

Monroe Township Recycling Drop-off Center: The Monroe Township Recycling Drop-off Center is one of the most frequently used points of service in the municipality. The township collects traditional curbside materials, but also accepts numerous, less-common materials at the recycling center, such as newspaper, expanded polystyrene (Styrofoam), cardboard, old tv’s, computers/printers, batteries and bulky residential items. Joe and the staff at the Department of Public Works have been instrumental in exploring new and improved ways to dispose of waste, focusing on how to do so by the most efficient and environmentally friendly means available. Monroe Township recently invested in resurfacing the entire drivable area of the facility to make it even more user-friendly and introduced a municipal bi-monthly paper shredding program that runs from May through October. Bulk waste pickup is held from spring to fall, offering residents a once-a-year bulky waste pickup free of charge. In addition, nearly all year round, Monroe Township has crews that pick up grass bags, leaf bags, yard debris and do roadside clean-ups.



FoamCycle: Through a \$73,000 grant from the Middlesex County Division of Environmental Health and Solid Waste, Monroe Township acquired a foam densifying machine that has greatly improved foam recycling efforts. This technology removes air from foam materials, such as expanded polystyrene (Styrofoam), resulting in a remarkable 90:1 waste reduction. The densified foam material finds new life in various products, such as picture frames and crown molding, contributing to a more sustainable future.

May through October. Bulk waste



Recycle Coach: In collaboration with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Monroe Township introduced [Recycle Coach](#) to the community. The innovative online tool provides a personalized collection schedule, custom collection reminders (bulk pick-up, paper shredding and hazardous waste), a “What Goes and Where” search tool and educational quizzes. Community members download the free app and have easy access to information that results in increased recycling.



Sustainable Jersey Silver Certified: The Monroe Township [Green Team Advisory Committee \(GTAC\)](#) was officially established in July 2013. The committee operates as a subcommittee of the Environmental Commission with non-commission representatives from municipal departments and volunteers. Joe has been a member of the green team since its inception. Monroe Township has received three [Sustainable Jersey Grants](#) that the municipality used to support green team capacity building, develop an Environmental Resource Inventory and conduct energy outreach. Monroe Township achieved bronze-level certification in 2014 and silver-level certification in 2017 and 2022. The township has submitted for silver-certification for 2024. To see all the actions completed, review the [2022 Monroe Township Certification Report](#).



More about Joe: Joe has lived his entire life in Monroe Township. He recently married his ‘sweetie’ JoAnne, making them Joe². Never one to miss an adventure, Joe challenged himself to a 50 by 50 goal. Riding on his Harley-Davidson motorcycle, he successfully visited all 50 United States by the time he turned 50. Joe is looking forward to retirement. He is building a home on a mountain which sits in the middle of over 30-acres of land. He plans to enjoy the outdoors and continue to do his part as an environmental steward.