



Amy Menzel

Hammonton Green Committee and Environmental Commission;
Co-Chair, Sustainable Jersey Atlantic-Cape May Regional Hub
Atlantic County, New Jersey

For more than 30 years, Amy Menzel has turned her passion for the environment into action, helping South Jersey communities become more sustainable. A member of the [Hammonton Green Committee](#) and [Environmental Commission](#), she also serves as co-chair of the [Sustainable Jersey Atlantic-Cape May Regional Hub](#).

Although she is not one to seek the spotlight, Amy is widely known for her friendly, approachable style and her ability to bring people together. A talented communicator, she focuses on community outreach, helping residents better understand their environment and discover practical ways to protect the natural resources they value. "We have a beautiful planet that we need to protect," Amy said. "It's not too late to take steps to preserve it. We just need to be more mindful about the way we live and help others find ways to take action." For more than 18 years, Amy has served as a [Rutgers Environmental Steward Program](#) Coordinator for Region 5, which includes Atlantic, Ocean, Cape May, and Cumberland counties. She collaborates with other coordinators to organize guest speakers and guide local stewards, connecting them with resources to make positive environmental change in their communities.



Under Amy's leadership and through the work of the Hammonton Green Committee, the [Town of Hammonton](#) has earned both bronze- and silver-level Sustainable Jersey certification and secured six grants totaling \$43,000 through the [Sustainable Jersey Grants Program](#). Read the [Hammonton Town Certification Report](#) to review the sustainability actions that Hammonton has completed. Amy credits Sustainable Jersey with providing valuable support and assistance. "Sustainable Jersey is very helpful to green teams and municipal staff," Amy said. "I'm impressed by the actions and how the program brings together the expertise of the right professionals. The framework is meaningful, the guidance is easy to follow, and the examples make it practical for communities to take action."

Sustainable Jersey Atlantic-Cape May Regional Hub: The [Sustainable Jersey Atlantic-Cape May Hub](#) supports green teams and sustainability leaders throughout Atlantic and Cape May counties by providing opportunities to learn and collaborate on sustainability initiatives. The group hosts regular programs on topics ranging from water and energy resources to climate science, resiliency, school sustainability, public engagement, effective communication, and plastic pollution reduction. As co-chair of the Hub, Amy helps organize educational events. One recent example was the Civic Engagement Workshop, which brought together local and state elected officials, sustainability leaders, and community members to demystify the policymaking process and provide practical strategies for advancing local sustainability initiatives.

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She pointed to the workshop's case study on addressing microplastics generated during construction activities as a powerful example of grassroots advocacy in action. "It shows how residents can work with elected officials to create

policy change at the local level and how those efforts can inspire other municipalities and even influence state-level action," she said. Amy added, "The lessons from our Civic Engagement Workshop apply beyond environmental issues. It was especially helpful to hear directly from elected officials about the realities of establishing and enforcing municipal ordinances and policies and how to best collaborate with them to move important initiatives forward."

For Amy, the Hub's strength is the network it creates among people who share a common goal. "So many green teams are working to address similar challenges," she said. "The Hub offers a way to share resources and support each other's work and amplify our impact."

Seed Library: From the Bodacious Hybrid Tomato and Melting Sugar Snow Pea to the Hopi Black Dye Sunflower, the [Hammonton Seed Library](#) offers a wide selection of free seeds for community members to grow at home. Amy led the initiative as the Hammonton Green Committee began planning the Seed Library in 2022. To launch the program, committee members reached out to seed companies nationwide to request donations. Nine companies responded, providing hundreds of seed packets representing approximately 300 varieties of vegetables, herbs, flowers, and native plants. Community support followed, with residents contributing additional seeds to help the collection grow.

To make the program as accessible as possible, the Green Committee created an online request form where residents can select up to 12 seed packets at no cost. Since its launch, the Seed Library has continued to grow through its integration into other initiatives, including the Hammonton Community Garden and the annual Green Day Festival. The Seed Library also received regional recognition when it was featured at an event hosted by the Noyes Museum and Stockton University, where Jeff Quatrone, founder of the Seed Bank Library, presented a workshop titled *Intro to Seeds: Stories, Cultures, and Saving*. The initiative attracted interest from the Atlantic County Rutgers Cooperative Extension as a potential model for expansion into a countywide Seed Library program. Hammonton received 10 Sustainable Jersey certification points for this effort under the [Innovative Community Project action](#).

Hammonton Community Energy Plan: Amy is proud of the energy planning work that the Hammonton Green Committee has accomplished. Under the leadership of committee member Thomas Hatch, Hammonton prioritized and documented initiatives that reduce greenhouse gas emissions while advancing the goals of New Jersey's Energy Master Plan. Planning began in 2024, when the Hammonton Green Committee reviewed the [Sustainable Jersey Guide for Sustainable Energy Communities](#) and the [Workplan Template](#). In 2025, Hammonton was awarded a \$10,000 Community Energy Planning Grant from the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities to develop the plan.

Working closely with municipal staff, the committee evaluated local priorities and identified high-impact initiatives designed to provide meaningful economic and community benefits. Community data from the [Sustainable Jersey Data Center](#) helped inform the plan. Residents and stakeholders were invited to provide input through a publicly advertised stakeholder meeting, multiple public comment opportunities, and in-person and virtual engagement sessions. Following the extensive planning and public engagement process, the Hammonton Town Council approved the [Hammonton Community Energy Plan](#) on July 27, 2026. Completion of this plan will earn Hammonton additional certification points under the [Community Energy Plan or Climate Action Plan action](#).

Hammonton Community Events: Amy is helping organize the [17th Annual Hammonton Green Day Festival](#), which will be held on November 7, 2026, at Veterans Memorial Park. The festival will feature about 50 vendors offering eco-friendly products and services, along with live music and educational presentations. This year's event will include collection stations for items such as jeans, sneakers, toys, and plastic bags, giving attendees a convenient way to



recycle items not typically accepted in curbside recycling. Hammonton achieved 10 certification points for this event by completing the [Green Fair action](#). Another favorite community tradition is the Hammonton Lake and Community Cleanup. "This is a great day that started as a park cleanup at Hammonton Lake and has expanded to include other areas across the community," Amy said. "Last year, more than 80 volunteers collected 53 bags of trash and 33 bags of recycling."

Hammonton Community Garden and Composting: Amy is proud of the growth and impact of the [Hammonton Community Garden](#), which was founded in 2015. The garden gives residents a place to grow fresh produce while learning sustainable gardening practices. Supported by the Town of Hammonton, AtlantiCare, the Atlantic County Utilities Authority, and other community partners, it brings gardeners of all experience levels together through Garden Talks, workshops, and community workdays.



"Support from our mayor, Town Council, and Public Works Department helps our efforts," Amy said. "The Public Works Department assists us with maintenance and provides water and repairs when needed. We couldn't do it without their help." The garden also supports the community by donating fresh produce to local food banks, including St. Vincent's Food Pantry and the Community FoodBank of New Jersey. It is also expanding partnerships to improve food access.

Composting is another cornerstone of the garden's sustainability efforts. Volunteers promote backyard composting and food waste reduction through workshops, a nascent onsite composting area, and community outreach. Amy often recruits graduates of the Atlantic County Master Composter Training Program to join the Green Committee and share their expertise through workshops and compost bin giveaways, helping residents turn yard waste into a valuable resource rather than landfill waste. For these achievements, Hammonton earned 25 Sustainable Jersey certification points by completing the [Community Gardens](#) and [Backyard Composting Program actions](#).



Atlantic County Utilities Authority: Amy is the communications manager at the Atlantic County Utilities Authority (ACUA). Throughout her career, she has seen firsthand the tremendous amount of waste generated by our communities and the critical importance of reducing, reusing, and recycling whenever possible. Amy leads events and fosters community partnerships to educate residents about responsible waste management and the services ACUA provides. In 2025, Amy's team led onsite tours for more than 3,400 visitors, gave 26 environmental presentations, and participated in 82 community events.

More about Amy: Amy's commitment to sustainability began during her childhood in a rural community outside Philadelphia, where she developed a lifelong appreciation for the outdoors. After high school, she moved to Ocean City, New Jersey, to live and work near the ocean. She attended Stockton University, where she met her husband, John Menzel. Married for more than 30 years, the couple has called Hammonton home for more than 26 years and has a grown son, Eric, an urban planner.

Amy enjoys hiking in the Pine Barrens and in Sullivan County, Pennsylvania, where her family has a home. She also enjoys kayaking, cross-country skiing, traveling, and a variety of creative pursuits, including drawing, painting, and crafting. The couple's commitment to sustainability extends to their travels—including a recent family road trip to Mississippi in their Hyundai Kona EV—and their home. After completing an energy audit, they installed a tankless water heater and a more energy-efficient boiler. An animal lover, Amy shares her home with Astrid, their 14-year-old German shepherd, and three foster cats—Monkey, Peanut, and Carol (Amy adds that these wonderful cats are all looking for their forever homes – reach out to adopt!).