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ACROSS THE WATERSHED

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Spring 2003

The Great Swamp Watershed Association

Vol. 23 No.2

"DO THE SWAMP THING 2003" KICKS OFF

By Missy Small

Return of the "Swamp Thing"

Now in its third year, 'Do the Swamp Thing' is a month-long celebration of the recreational and educational resources abundant in the Great Swamp watershed. From April 26th through May 24th the Watershed Association will be publicizing events at venues throughout the watershed.

'Do the Swamp Thing' is organized by Great Swamp Watershed Association and sponsored by Kings Super Markets Inc., PSEG, and Recorder Community Newspapers. This year's celebration includes a four-page advertising supplement in many of Recorder's local papers, weekly ads highlighting a wide variety of family activities, publicizing the event on Kings grocery bags, and a place on our website to enter to win some great prizes.

As part of the "Do the Swamp Thing" promotion, the Watershed Association is offering two special events for members. On May 10, Blue Ridge Mountain Sports, along with the Watershed Association will provide a hands-on canoe and kayak demonstration at the Somerset County Park on Lord Stirling Road, in Basking Ridge from 11-3. On May 31, we're hosting a nature hunt at Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge from 9-11. Appropriate for everyone age 5 and up, naturalist Dave Womer will lead the group in finding tracks for birds, insects, animals, and more.

On April 26th, "Do the Swamp Thing 2003" will kick off at the Somerset County Environmental Education Center in Basking Ridge. The afternoon's activities will begin at 1 p.m. with a reception featuring many state and local dignitaries. The reception will be followed by a sneak preview of the renowned Annual Wildlife Art Show.

For updated "Do the Swamp Thing" events, membership specials and calendar information, check our website at www.greatswamp.org.



Swamp Stuff™

Support GSWA and look cool doing it!

The Great Swamp Watershed Association and CafePress.com are partnering to bring you an easy way to buy GSWA merchandise. Help support the Great Swamp Watershed Association in its conservation and educational activities and look cool doing it! We now have an online store where you can purchase apparel and other GSWA items!

All profits go to fund our on-going programs and projects!

This past winter we featured warm winter fleeces for cold swampy breezes. Each have a chest patch with one of our GSWA mascots: turtle, heron or salamander. As of press time these are still available, but don't wait!

Still feeling chilly this Spring? Keep your coffee hot in a GSWA stainless steel travel mug, with a full color photo of one of the prettiest spots in the refuge.

In limited edition right now: the *Official GSWA Lunchbox!* Available in retro-tronic silver with colorful turtle design on the front and back, this item can be used for snacks, school lunches, or the samples from your latest macroinvertebrate survey! Don't miss out!

For details and current offerings, log on to our website at www.greatswamp.org and click on the info button on the home page where it says "Swamp Stuff".

From the Desk of Julia Somers, Executive Director:

More About the Big Map

On February 26, Commissioner Bradley Campbell unveiled the latest version of the Department of Environmental Protection's "BIG Map." Now being called the Blueprint for Intelligent Growth (BIG), the map represents the McGreevey administration's gameplan for implementing Smart Growth in New Jersey. The goals of the BIG map are to incorporate environmental concerns into the existing State Plan, and to make the regulatory approach to environmental protection more rational. According to the DEP, the objective is to make the regulatory process more "transparent" so that developers, municipalities and environmental groups will have a better understanding of the regulatory impacts on proposed development projects.

Towards this end, the DEP has identified and designated every part of the state either red light, yellow light or green light areas. Red indicates areas with critical natural resources. The state plans to implement tighter regulatory restrictions on development to limit growth in red light areas. Critical natural resources are considered threatened and endangered species habitat, wetlands, dedicated open space, farmland preservation areas, the Pinelands Preservation Area and the Natural Heritage Program priority sites. Yellow light areas indicate a cautious approach to growth. The yellow light areas are places where natural resource and infrastructure considerations do not clearly suggest that development should be discouraged or channeled. Green light areas are the places where the state will work to encourage development and to channel growth. The state intends to streamline and expedite the regulatory permitting process in the green light areas. However, it also plans to dedicate funds for infrastructure and parks in those areas and use other non-regulatory programs to "sustain and to enhance the quality of life for residents and businesses in those areas."

According to the DEP, strengthening the protection of water quality and water quantity is a key objective of the BIG Map. The Watershed Association is cautiously optimistic about the BIG Map approach to protecting New Jersey's remaining natural resources. As you might imagine, however, NJ builders have come out against the BIG Map. Already they have succeeded in adding a substantial amount of green to the map since it was first released in January 2003. The DEP is currently accepting comments from the public through an informal process. The Watershed Association will be taking a close look at the map, and the

impact the various color designations might have on the environment and quality of life in the Great Swamp, before we submit our comments. In addition, we will closely monitor any efforts by the builders to reduce the red and increase the green even further. We will keep you posted! Meanwhile, to view the map in full color visit <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/antisprawl/>.



Across the Watershed is a quarterly publication of the Great Swamp Watershed Association. GSWA works to protect the ecological, historic, and cultural integrity of the Great Swamp and its watershed. The Association promotes the conservation and restoration of the watershed's natural resources and encourages land use that is compatible with these goals.

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Across the Watershed

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GSWA Ecological Restoration Project Update

By Blaine Rothauser

If you have yet to visit our ecological restoration site located at the end of Tiger Lily Lane in Harding Township - the time is now. We have come a long way since pulling the first invasive species out of the ground in 1996.

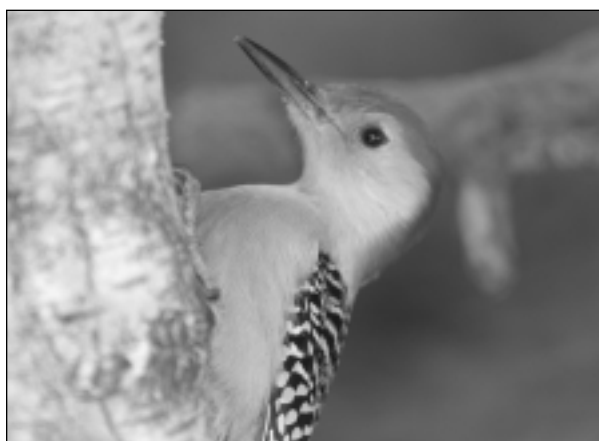
Today our site includes over a mile and a half of trails that meander quietly through forested wetlands, along streams, cattail marshes and vernal habitats. Three wooden bridges have been built to cross over ditches and streams. With the help of volunteers we have constructed simple boardwalks that traverse some of the wettest areas on our site and removed non-native species of plants that persistently try to out-compete native species on the site.

All creatures great and small have benefited from the wildlife management techniques implemented throughout the complex. These include the creation and maintenance of meadow habitat at the trail head to our property. Blue bird, wood duck, bat and screech owl boxes have all been built and placed in strategic spots and brush pile habitat has been provided, free of charge to all songbirds, reptiles and small mammals that wish to seek solitude in them. To show their appreciation blue birds have nested in our boxes for the first time in the spring of 2002. Spotted turtles, songbirds and chipmunks have been seen in the brush piles and bat guano has been found underneath some of the bat boxes we have placed on trees. I have witnessed Great Blue Heron hunting frogs in the cattail marsh. I've watched as different species of butterfly feast on wild flowers that were planted in our meadow. I have spied on more than one pair of red-bellied woodpeckers rearing their young in the dead trees that lace the bottomland swamps on site.



In late winter some of the animals that live here actually thank us with duck-like quacking and bird-like trills. These calls can be heard echoing through the wetlands for up to a mile. The calls burst from the vocal sacs of wood frogs and spring peepers -- early breeding amphibians that appreciate the maintenance we provide to their temporary breeding pools that dot the GSWA property.

You can catch an intimate glimpse into their nuptial displays by following their love laden bellows to the vernal ponds which house them. What's a vernal pond – I'm glad you asked. Grab a "tour guide" at the entrance to the site inside the mailbox across the first bridge. If you just can't wait for the answer or if you want to meet some of the tenants that inhabit GSWA's restoration site, take a virtual tour on line at <http://www.greatswamp.org>



2002 was a productive year for the Watershed Association ecological restoration area. The progress we made was due to the many volunteers and we thank them all:

- A trail guide was created with a map of the property.
- Volunteers helped stabilize the stream bank of the Silver Brook by planting fifty native shrubs and grasses along its sides.
- The Garden Club of Morristown donated money and time for our new sign and the native plants and shrubs that surround it.
- Volunteers blazed a new trail and built 400 feet of boardwalk on an adjacent property that GSWA is in the process of acquiring.
- In 2002 Frank Stillinger and his son Andy designed and built the bridge that crosses over the mosquito ditch onto the new extension of the red trail.

Over 3,000 volunteer and staff hours have been dedicated to the enhancement of GSWA restoration site. These hours were forged in sweat but resulted in maintaining trails, pulling invasive plants, fence mending, hole digging, native planting, brush clearing, installation of nest boxes, painting bridges, completing biological inventories and office work. I hope that everyone who played a part in 2002 enjoys the thanks that nature gives each time I add another plant, butterfly or bird to my inventory of life forms found on our restoration property. Thanks to you that list continues to grow.

Blaine Rothauser is a dedicated naturalist, photographer and long-time volunteer of the Watershed Association. These are two photographs from his extensive collection.

Environmental Commissions: Keeping the Focus on Nature

By Karen Patterson

In the winter issue we ran part 1 of this article, which included an overview on Environmental Commissions for the ten towns within the watershed. See box at left for when and where they meet.

Environmental Commissions (ECs) in the Great Swamp watershed have not limited themselves to Environmental or Natural Resource Inventories. The ten watershed area ECs have taken on a wide range of projects, from well head protection efforts, to open space preservation, to mapping of stormwater outfalls, and more. The following brief listing of recent accomplishments and projects provides an overview of how actively our ECs have been working to protect the environment in each of the ten towns.

The **Bernards Township** EC reports the following recent accomplishments: 1) the mailing of an environmental newsletter to all home owners, 2) the creation of a new conservation easement marker ordinance, 3) the creation of a new steep slopes ordinance, and 4) the organization of a Town clean-up day. The EC is currently working on a "how to care for your septic system" manual and folder to track maintenance for all septic owners, as well as a Natural Resources Inventory.

The **Bernardsville Borough** EC recently completed an exhaustive and comprehensive Environmental Resources Inventory. The ERI was done using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and contains many useful maps showing aquifer recharge areas, open space, soils and more. The EC also supported the Borough's adoption of 10 acre zoning in some parts of the Borough.

The **Chatham Township** EC received a \$6,600 grant to purchase computer and printer hardware for GIS use. This equipment is now being used extensively by the EC and the Open Space Committee to show potential open space acquisitions, visualize the town's planned greenway, map stormwater outfalls and more. The EC is working to create an inventory of all conservation and trail easements in the township. The EC also regularly reviews and comments on development plans before the Planning Board and Board of Adjustment.

The **Harding Township** EC is busy with several projects that support the Harding Master Plan's focus on protection of water resources. The EC has conducted an extensive survey of private wells in the township, in conjunction with the Health Department and is also working to revise its Natural Resources Inventory. The EC also regularly reviews and comments on development plans before the Planning Board and Board of Adjustment.

The **Long Hill Township** EC developed and disseminated a well head protection pamphlet to all residents who own wells and septic systems. Copies are available at the library or the Passaic River Coalition.

The **Madison Borough** EC recently published the 2001 revision of the Environmental Resources Inventory (first created in 1982). The EC also provided expert analysis to Madison and the Chathams on the environmental impacts of the proposed development of the Exxon/Mobil property, especially as it would affect the region's water supply. See the EC's web page for a full listing of its activities.

The **Mendham Borough** EC has recently completed the town's first comprehensive Environmental Resources Inventory. Copies of the ERI will be distributed to all members of the Planning Board and Board of Adjustment, and will continue to be updated as needed. For additional activities, please see the EC's web-site.

The **Mendham Township** EC used an Office of Environmental Services Grant to inventory and GIS map all its stormwater detention and infiltration facilities, outfalls and drainage easements. As part of the project the EC also developed a maintenance and monitoring program for the stormwater facilities. In addition, the EC receive a federal Recreational Trails grant for \$21,500 to construct new trails in municipal parks and to rehabilitate a section of the Patriot's Path.

Bernards Township

Chair: Bert Fonde bfonde@chubb.com

Meeting Time and Place: Second Monday of the month at 7:30 PM in the Town Hall

Web-site: <http://www.bernards.org> (select "contacts" and then under "send to" select Environmental Commission)

Bernardsville Borough

Chair: Sherry Frawley 908.953.9486
908.766.3000 x 151

Meeting Time and Place: 2nd Wednesday of the month at 7:30 PM in the Borough Hall.

Chatham Township

Chair: Dot Stillinger 973.635.4600 (municipal offices) Chatham Township Municipal Building, 58 Meyersville Road, Chatham, NJ 07928.

Meeting Time and Place: First Tuesday of the month at 7:45 in the Chatham Township Municipal Building.

Web-site: www.chathamtownship.org

Harding Township

Chair: Chris Allyn callyn@verizon.net

Meeting Time and Place: First Tuesday of the month at 7:30 PM in the Town Hall.

Long Hill Township

Chair: Vince Blenx 908.647.2516
35 Sherwood Lane, Stirling, NJ 07980

Meeting Time and Place: Fourth Monday of the month at 7 PM in the Town Hall

Web-site: www.longhillnj.org

Madison Borough

Chair: Ernest Cicconi Ernie.cicconi@cit.com,
973.593.3042

Meeting Time and Place: Last Thursday of the month at 7:30 PM in the Committee Room of the Hartley Dodge Memorial Building.

Web-site: www.rosenet.org/gov/environmental/

Mendham Borough

Chair: Will Geiger will.geiger@verizon.net
973.543.4955

Meeting Time: Third Thursday of the month at 8:00 PM in the Phoenix House

Web-site: www.mendhamnj.org/envcomm.htm

Mendham Township

Co-Chairs: Ralph Rhodes rrhodes22@aol.com,
Sarah Dean Link SarahDeanL@aol.com

Meeting Time and Place: Third Monday of the month at 7:30 PM in the Town Hall

Morris Township

Chair: Ted Largman. Contact Sandi Young at the Town Hall for information 973.326.7215

Meeting Time and Place: Second Tuesday of every other month at 7:30 PM in the Town Hall.

Morristown

Chair: Karen Patterson Greene
kpatters@greatswamp.org, 973.727.5652

Meeting Time and Place: Second Tuesday of the month at 8:00 AM in the Town Hall 2nd floor meeting room.

continued on back page

New Stormwater Management Rules to Take Effect: How GSWA Can Assist Developers and Municipalities with Compliance

By Karen Parrish

Mention the words "stormwater management rules" and your listeners' eyes glaze over. Ask if their towns will have a plentiful, clean water supply in the next ten years and you're likely to have everyone's attention. The fact that the headline-getting topic here in New Jersey and elsewhere is intimately tied to rules governing stormwater isn't widely known, but is well on its way to becoming common knowledge with the upcoming passage into law of two new stormwater regulations. These regulations, the first major update to the state's Stormwater Management Rules since 1983, will affect both private developers and municipalities alike.

The first set of rules is oriented toward new development. The 2002 drought showed that New Jersey is vulnerable to ground water depletion. Currently no requirements for on-site recharge exist. The new rules will require that 100% of a site's average annual runoff be recharged to groundwater POST DEVELOPMENT, or that the increase over pre-development levels for the 2-year storm be infiltrated. As a stimulus to restrict sprawl, urban redevelopment projects can be waived from this requirement. Whereas no stormwater management requirements currently exist for site design, the new regulations will require that developers minimize clearing and grading, minimize the disturbance of drainage features and native vegetation, and minimize and disconnect impervious surfaces. They will also be required to retain water on the site as long as possible. Developers will have new requirements in how they treat stormwater runoff in terms of quality and quantity. The rules will also supply additional protections for Category 1 waters (such as the upper reaches of the Passaic and Primrose Brooks in the GS watershed).

Recognizing that nonpoint source pollution accounts for 40-70% of existing New Jersey water quality problems, the second set of rules addresses existing stormwater runoff. These rules will be oriented toward municipalities and other public entities such as hospitals, colleges, prisons, and highway agencies that have jurisdiction over existing and new development. Municipalities will be required to develop stormwater management plans (SMP), which ideally would be created among communities on a regional basis. Within the context of each SMP, the rules will require the passage of local ordinances to reduce nonpoint sources of pollution such as excess lawn fertilizer and pesticides and to ensure the proper disposal of pet and yard waste and litter. Other ordinances will be written to retrofit storm sewers, label storm drains, and better manage municipal maintenance yards.

Nonprofit organizations such as the GSWA can assist developers and municipalities meet the new requirements. The GSWA's video *Doing Water Right* and handbook *Blue-Green Technologies: Integrated Practices to Manage Stormwater as an Asset* present a compendium of strategies for site design. These strategies infiltrate groundwater and reduce pollutant and stormwater runoff loads. In addition, strategies for retrofitting existing development, such as pervious pavement and vegetated rooftops, are amply illustrated. To assist municipalities and agencies undertake the creation of Stormwater Management Plans, the GSWA's Municipal Liaison stands ready to assist with Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping to identify ecosystem and physical characteristics of a given area, and to map existing and proposed infrastructure, discharge systems and outfalls, and existing water supplies. Towns will also be required to conduct buildout analyses for existing and proposed land uses. The GSWA has been engaged in a watershed-wide buildout analysis and can assist with this endeavor as well.

The 2002 drought and New Jersey's ongoing water pollution problems serve as a reminder to all New Jerseyans that fresh, abundant water supplies can never be taken for granted. Hopefully the passage of the new stormwater regulations will help ensure that local water supplies remain plentiful and clean well into the future.

Can Bugs Talk?

Not really... but they can tell you a lot about the quality of your water!

Would you like to become involved in a volunteer monitoring program in and around the Great Swamp watershed? If so, as part of *Do the Swamp Thing 2003*, the NJ Watershed Ambassador Program is hosting a training session for the BATs program. We will teach you how to use the abundance and diversity of stream-dwelling insects to determine water quality, and put this information to use in preserving the health of our waterways.

Come out and learn how to find the critters in your stream and hear what they are saying to you!!! Breakfast and lunch are included.

BATs Training (Rain or shine)
Saturday, May 3, 2003
10am - 3pm
Great Swamp Outdoor
Education Center
Chatham, NJ

For more information or to register, contact Elyssa Serrilli, NJ Watershed Ambassador for WMA 6, at 973-966-1900 or elyssas@greatswamp.org

Correction

In the winter issue in thanking the retiring Watershed Association Trustees, we omitted that Paul Becker was a past president of the board. Paul, please accept our apologies for the error and our thanks for your dedication.

Swamp Watch — Local Environmental

Madison

Madison, Chatham Twp and Chatham Borough continue their appeal in County Superior Court challenging the Planned Office Development (POD) ordinance of the Borough of Florham Park. The POD ordinance will guide development of the 475 acre former Exxon property at Park Avenue. The legal action was initiated last year by the three towns in order to protect against over-development of the site, which would increase traffic on residential roads, allow excessive impervious coverage, even over re-charge soils, and provide a major incentive for the developers to seek and obtain a new Rt 24 connector. A re-hearing of the Ordinance, ordered by Judge Reginald Stanton in October, resulted in passage of a slightly modified version of the original, but consensus is that the Ordinance will still allow construction that will be detrimental to the three towns.

Possibly due to continued litigation between the towns involved, or possibly because of economic conditions, the developer, Gale/Rockefeller (purchaser under contract) has postponed it's presentation of the General Development Plan for the property to the Florham Park Planning Board.

A worrisome application before the Madison Planning Board for Block 4903, Lot 10 (Dellwood Pkwy South) has been postponed indefinitely. The applicants seek to sub-divide 1 lot into 3. With steep slopes, a wooded terrain and prime aquifer recharge soils, conflicting testimony from engineers regarding the efficacy of proposed storm water management techniques and systems is the focal point.

Madison's Borough Council has taken the first step to develop an Open Space Plan and Open Space Trust Fund. At the February 24th Council meeting, Council member Astri Baillie presented her findings to the Council and identified two potential local resources (one is the GSWA) for consulting on the project. The project will involve identification of open space within the Borough for possible acquisition and if all goes well, the trust fund question is expected to appear on the November ballot.

Judy Kroll

Bernards Township

1. New Master Plan

After more than a year of work, involving two planning board permutations, a new master plan was approved. The planning board, working with planning consultant, Frank Banisch, incorporated a number of changes in the land use element of the master plan designed to reduce development density in sections of the township where there are currently no sewers or public water, and where the underlying geology is not conducive to dense development relying on wells and septic systems.

The most contested aspects of the new plan are the new 7- and 10-acre Conservation Residential zones in the southwestern section of the township, which would replace current 2- and 3-acre zoning. These zoning "upgrades" offer incentives to developers who leave 40 to 50 percent of a tract in one piece. The remainder of the tract could then be developed into 3-acre lots.

Other new design approaches introduced in the new master plan support the plan's objective to protect the integrity of existing neighborhoods. New techniques introduced which could help maintain the character of established neighborhoods include Floor Area Ratio, Enhanced Setback, Lot Coverage, and Maximum Building Size strategies. The need for new guidelines on building/lot proportions was made clear from the recent surge in demolitions, including some historic houses and commercial buildings.

After a particularly contentious reorganization of the planning board in January, coupled with the November township committee election results, a new political group, avowed "soft-liners", has coalesced. This new group on the planning board intends to facilitate new development in the township. It may be difficult this year to implement any of the ecosystem and aesthetics preservation strategies of the newly approved master plan.

2. Development Application Approvals

A proposal was approved in January to build three homes adjacent to the planned Ridge Oak senior citizen apartments. Builder Michael Menza worked with the Great Swamp Watershed Association on runoff plans for the project.

Two proposals by Millington Quarry (MQI) for a total of 12 homes was approved in February after MQI compromised on the number of trees it will plant. The two tracts involved were rezoned in 2001 from three-quarter acre zoning to 2-acre use. MQI has sued to overturn the rezoning which reduced the number of homes from the originally zoned 29. MQI, however, did revise their plans to comply with the new zoning rules. MQI plans to remove 280 trees, which under the township's tree replacement ordinance, would require replacement with 753 trees. Agreement was reached on 600 trees plus a conservation easement.

Ann Parsekian

Long Hill Township

In a surprising turn of events, the Great Swamp Greenhouse's application before the Long Hill Township Zoning Board is still very much in progress. The applicant's attorney had notified the Board that he would not agree to any further extensions and that the matter must be settled at the 04MAR meeting. At the same time, in an apparently contradictory move, a new and very different set of plans was submitted to the Board. In response, Township Engineer D. Gregg Williamson filed a report that cited 22 specific problems alluding to unauthorized fill, inadequate storm water management, pollution, potential fire hazards, and others; the report concluded with a list of 11 actions that would be needed to address these problems. The applicant's attorney came back to the Board on the day of the scheduled hearing with a request (sic) for an extension and a request for adjournment of the 04MAR meeting to a later date. The hearing will be continued on 20MAY, most likely with another set of revised plans. The Watershed Association plans to present expert testimony to the Zoning Board on this application.

Len Hamilton

Chatham Township

Two recent private meetings between the NJ Department of Environmental Protection and Chatham Township on a development applicant's plan to build on properties in the township's open space plan have led the Chatham Township Environmental Commission and the Great Swamp Watershed Association to try to find a way to require the DEP to notify and/or invite Township officials to such meetings.

One instance was made apparent on January 29, when the DEP announced a proposed extension of an amended "Stipulation of Settlement" with Parisi Builders, conditioned on Parisi Builders contributing to the NJ Wetlands Mitigation Bank. In the Stipulation of Settlement with Parisi builders, the DEP granted approval to fill in wetlands on the Parisi lot on Shunpike Road, in exchange for Mr. Parisi donating money to the NJ Wetlands Mitigation Bank to protect wetlands in another part of the state.

The second occurrence involved a meeting in 2001 between Oak Knoll school and the DEP regarding a notice of violation for illegally damaging a culvert on its then proposed, but now approved playing fields on Green Village Road, near Shunpike Road .

With regard to the January 2003 settlement between the DEP and Parisi Builders, the Township Environmental Commission wrote a letter in February to the Morris County Section Chief of the NJDEP stating that swapping the filling in of the wetlands on this lot, which is in the Great Swamp Watershed and only a quarter mile from the Refuge, for a wetlands mitigation in another watershed is inappropriate and largely ineffective, as documented in *Compensating for Wetland Losses Under the Clean Water Act*, National Academies Press, 2001.

Rolling Hill Development at Candace Lane

A four-lot proposed development on hilly Candace Lane is under scrutiny by the Planning Board and the Environmental Commission for its storm water management. In addition, the Environmental Commission has requested a conservation easement on the wooded western section of the property.

The applicant, builder Harvey Caplan, showed plans to use "Recharge 180" units for storm water infiltration for the four lots, but there are no plans currently for maintaining these units in perpetuity. In a January 24th letter, the Environmental Commission stressed the importance of setting up a maintenance plan, since the storm water management system responsibilities will have to be shared by the new owners of the four lots. In addition, the Commission recommended a non-structural storm water management technique such as open infiltration swales rather than the proposed mechanical filters. Mechanical filters require more maintenance to be effective in removing pollutants and slowing runoff than do open swales.

Such recommendations are found in *The Revised Manual for New Jersey: Best Management Practices for Control of Nonpoint Source Pollution from Stormwater*, which was prepared jointly by the New Jersey Department of Agriculture, New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and the New Jersey Department of Transportation.

continued on next page

Chatham Township continued

Fairmount Country Club Needs to Show Natural Resources

The 96-acre Fairmount Country Club, through which run two tributaries of Black Brook, is the subject of an application before the Planning Board. The Club management intends to make additions to the club house and changes to the parking lot. Several years ago, when the club received approval for building plans without submitting a legally-required full property site plan, club management had promised that at its next request for development it would perform the required site plan for its entire golf course property. But instead the club is again asking for a waiver from this land and natural resource mapping responsibility.

On February 24th, the Country Club was told their application was considered incomplete. Planning Board Chair Fred Pocci directed Planning Board Engineer Marshall Frost to draft a letter to the Country Club suggesting that for its application to be considered complete, the property should be mapped, including water courses with the respective required 25-foot stream buffers. Mr. Frost also noted that there is a flood hazard area on the property, which means the application requires a standard development application. A complete development application would include an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and a mapping of streams, wetlands, trees and aquifer recharge areas, though the Planning Board has not determined whether it will waive the EIS responsibility.

Kathy Abbott

Mendham Township

In December, the Board of Adjustment asked its attorney to prepare a draft resolution approving the Morris Area Girl Scouts application to expand its campsite and allow up to 300 girls to use it at any one time. The Board denied MAGSC's request to construct a caretaker's house and a maintenance facility and requested that they return with new plans for septic management, ideally using composting toilets or a comparable technology. Site plan approvals were deferred to the future.

MAGSC had a place on the agenda's of both the February and March Board meetings, but requested deferral; they are anticipated to appear at the April Board meeting.

Julia Somers

Morristown

Temple B'Nai Or, located on Overlook Road in Morristown next to Foote's Pond, is seeking to expand the Temple. According to earlier testimony, the Temple's congregation has grown and they wish to accommodate today's congregants by adding classrooms and office space, a kitchen and slightly increasing their parking. The application has generated considerable opposition from neighbors.

The Temple is located immediately next to Great Brook, upstream from and very close to Foote's Pond. The present stormwater outfall, which accepts stormwater from nearly the entire property, is in poor condition. It empties into the Brook and has contributed to streambank degradation, causing severe siltation of the pond. GSWA will present testimony at a future Board of Adjustment meeting making specific recommendations and seeking stormwater management improvement over what is proposed by the Temple.

Julia Somers

Morris Township

On January 28, Commissioner Bradley Campbell wrote the Order of St. Benedict of New Jersey (St. Mary's Abbey) and Morris Township and lifted his July 2002 stay of an order denying the Abbey's request for sewer capacity. He said that St. Mary's Abbey's CCRC requires the adoption of a Wastewater Management Plan for the entirety of Morris Township's sewer service areas. The SSA's are served by the Butterworth and Woodland Sewage Treatment Plants and include parts of Harding, Randolph, Morristown and Morris Plains. "Only in this way can it be assured that future development in Morris Township will not degrade the water resources of the State and that the Township's treatment plants have sufficient capacity to handle both current commitments and planned growth for the next 20 years." On February 18, the Order of St. Benedict (St. Mary's Abbey) requested an adjudicatory hearing appealing Commissioner Campbell's decision.

In the meantime, legal preparation continues for the Watershed Association's lawsuit against Morris Township and St. Mary's Abbey seeking nullification of the September 2002 rezoning of the Abbey property to permit a CCRC. We are very grateful for the support of a broad coalition of local and statewide groups for this suit and for our other activities on this issue.

Recently, at the Abbey's request, the Morris Township Planning Board began review of a site plan for a CCRC. Were site plan approval to be granted by the Township, the project still cannot be built without wastewater management plan approval from NJDEP.

Julia Somers

Adopt Loantaka Brook

By Karen Patterson

Water quality standards are now in place for each of the five feeder streams of the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. These standards are based on the results of four years of water quality monitoring the Watershed Association and the Ten Towns Great Swamp Watershed Management Committee have conducted together. The establishment of the standards and the comparison of the average water quality values revealed that Loantaka Brook currently does not meet ANY of the water quality standards that have been set for phosphorus, nitrogen and total suspended solids (sediment). As a result, the Watershed Association has launched the Adopt Loantaka Brook project. This project has been funded with generous support from three corporations headquartered in the Loantaka Brook sub-watershed: American Home Products, Atlantic Mutual and Schering-Plough.

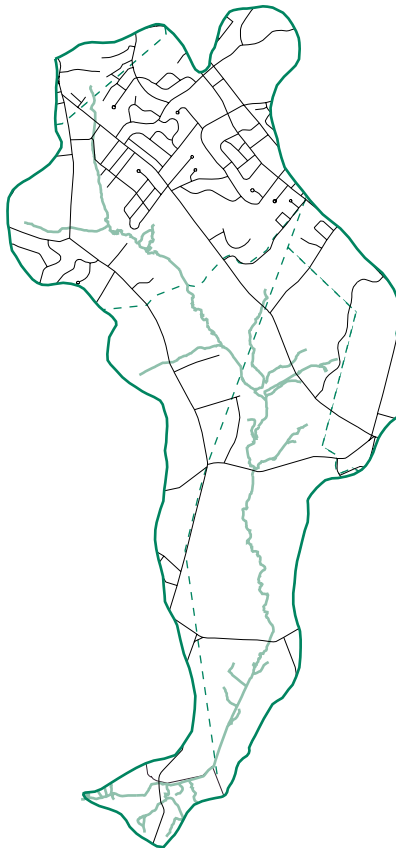
The Loantaka Brook sub-watershed falls partly within Morristown, Morris Township, Harding, Madison and Chatham (see accompanying map). Although the great bulk of the stream flows through Loantaka Brook Reservation, a mostly forested county park, much of the damage has already been done before the stream reaches the park. The headwaters of Loantaka Brook are heavily developed, with anywhere from 30-100% impervious surface cover (roads, parking lots, rooftops, etc) in the upper reaches of the watershed. This impervious cover means that pollutants such as oil and other automotive fluids, fertilizers and pesticides, road salts and other de-icing chemicals, bacteria from domestic and wild animal waste, etc. that accumulate on the land between precipitation events are more readily washed into the Brook during the next rainstorm. The Woodland Sewage Treatment Plant discharges into the Brook, and although the sewage effluent undergoes rigorous treatment before being discharged into the Brook, it is not possible to remove all pollutants. In addition, numerous ball fields and other open grassy areas in the sub-watershed have attracted large populations of resident geese, which defecate and contribute to the pollution problems (the average goose produces about 2.6 ounces of droppings per day. Multiplying this by say 50

geese would result in over *8 pounds per day* of fecal matter being deposited in a given area. Over the course of a year, that would add up to *2,965 pounds*).

These examples are just some of the potential pollution problems facing Loantaka Brook. The Adopt Loantaka Brook project will narrow down and more specifically pinpoint the types and sources of pollution entering Loantaka Brook. This spring the Watershed Association will be conducting additional water quality sampling

in at least 4 locations along the length of the Brook (in addition to the current sampling station, just outside the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge). We will be expanding beyond the three current parameters: nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment, to include Dissolved Oxygen, pH, fecal coliform, Total Dissolved Solids, and Biological Oxygen Demand and temperature. Adding these parameters to our water quality testing will give us a better idea of the overall water quality of the Brook, from both a human health perspective (in other words, should you panic if your two year old decides to go wading in the Brook or not?) and an ecological perspective (in terms of providing healthy habitat for a variety of plants and animals).

We have established an advisory board of scientists and other experts to provide feedback and guidance on the technical aspects of the project and begun a characterization of the sub-watershed. The characterization is being conducted using existing information contained within the Watershed Association's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) databases, including soils, wetlands, land use, topographic and vegetation information. This characterization will help us identify areas of potential concern and will be analyzed for correlations with the water quality data once that is collected this spring. After the initial investigation period, the next steps will be to develop remediation plans to address some of the most serious causes of pollution, and then to implement the remediation plan. This will be a multi-year project, so please stay tuned for more information.



Event Calendar

What's Happening In the Great Swamp Watershed

Following is a highly selective listing of events and activities offered to the public by private and county agencies that have facilities within and near the Great Swamp watershed. Many of these organizations offer far more activities than those listed, including day and weekend trips to other areas. Call for complete information.

In addition to programs and activities, many of the agencies are also staffed by naturalists and maintain extensive hiking trails, nature-center displays and exhibits, and book sales. For many listings, advance registration is required; for all, it is advised. To register, to receive additional information, or for directions, call the telephone numbers given below.

Ongoing

Tuesdays. 9:30 AM. Baby and Me walks. Put your infant in a pack and join a naturalist on various Morris County area trails. One hour long, registration required. Please call the Great Swamp Outdoor Education Center for location of walk, and registration. Call (973) 635-6629.

Every Friday and Saturday. Nature Walks.

8 AM- 9 AM. Meet at the Scherman- Hoffman Wildlife Sanctuary parking lot. No registration required- just show up! Join Don Freiday on Fridays or Mike Anderson on Saturdays for relaxed but informative walks. Free. Call (908) 766-5787.

April

23 - Spring Frog Walk

6:45 pm. The spring peepers should be in full chorus on this spring frog walk. Meet at Friends of Great Swamp Bookstore & Gift Shop, 148 Pleasant Plains Road (973)-425-9510.

25 - Great Swamp Heron Rookery Watch.

6:00 pm – dusk. Meet at the Friends of Great Swamp Bookstore & Gift Shop, 148 Pleasant Plains Road and car pool to the Rookery. The Great Blue Herons will be setting up their nests at the Rookery. (973) 425-9510.

25 & May 9 – Watching for Woodcock at the Rookery

6 pm-dark. Great Swamp is famed for its woodcock. Come watch their spectacular display. Meet at the Friends of Great Swamp Bookstore & Gift Shop. NJ Audubon Society and Friends of the Great Swamp. (908) 766-5787.

26 – DO THE SWAMP THING KICK-OFF

1 pm. Join us for the opening of Do the Swamp Thing 2003 at Somerset County Environmental Education Center in Basking Ridge. The afternoon's activities will include a reception featuring many state and local dignitaries. Refreshments will be served. Great Swamp Watershed Association (973) 966-1900.

26 - Mapping America

1:00, 2:00, 3:00 & 4:00 pm. Tour the Ford Mansion to learn about Robert Erskine, the mapmaker for General Washington. Hear about the struggles of surveying the land for accurate maps. Morristown National Historical Park (973) 539-2016.

26 – Birds of the Great Swamp

7:30-9 pm. Slide/lecture program about the birds of the Great Swamp. Somerset County Environmental Education Center (908) 766-5787.

27 - Yesterday's Games

1 – 4 pm. Step back in time to explore the fun side of colonial living. Bring a parent or friend to the Wick Farm and learn to play such games as Fox & Geese, Nine Man Morris, Battledore & Shuttlecock and Quoits. Morristown National Historical Park (973) 539-2016.

27 – Energy Play

1-2:30 pm. (ages 7-9) Play games demonstrating the transfer of energy that happens when someone gets eaten. Somerset County Environmental Education Center (908) 766-2489.

27 – Great Swamp Ecological Expedition

8 am. - noon. Dr. Steve Zipko leads this walking safari, by special permit, into the management area of the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. Rubber boots recommended. NJ Audubon Society (908) 766-5787.

27 – Woodcock Watch and Night Hike

7-10 pm. Meet at the Somerset County Environmental Education Center and you'll see and hear woodcock courtship display and several species of frogs and owls. Rubber boots and whispering required. NJ Audubon Society (908) 766-5787.

May

3, 4 – 23rd Annual Carving & Wildlife Art Show and Sale

10 am- 5 pm. – More than 50 artists exhibit woodcarvings, paintings, sculptures, photographs, and drawings. Somerset County Environmental Education Center (908) 766-2489.

3 - Take Me Fishing

10:00 am. - 1:00 pm. The Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge along with the New Jersey Division of Fish & Wildlife will host a fishing event at Southard Park on North Maple Avenue in Basking Ridge. Pre-registration is required. (973)425-1222 ext. 13.

4 - Kid's Tour the Ford Mansion

11 am. Most kids think historic house tours are boring but this tour is different! This tour is geared for kids in grades four and higher (including adults). It will feature activities such as role playing, a scavenger hunt and learning about "icky stuff" like 18th century bathrooms. Morristown National Historical Park (973) 539-2016.

4 - Servants Tour of the Ford Mansion

1, 2, 3 & 4 pm. Travel back to 1780 when General Washington occupied the Ford Mansion as his winter headquarters. A servant will greet you at the door and take you on a guided tour from the servants perspective. Learn first hand the who's who and gossip of life at the headquarters. Morristown National Historical Park (973) 539-2016.

4 & 18 – Birding and Natural History Walks at Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge

8-10 am. Led by Neil Collins and other NJAS naturalists. Meet at the Wildlife Observation Center (the blinds) on Long Hill Rd. NJ Audubon Society and Friends of Great Swamp (908) 766-5787.

7 – Night Birding the Great Swamp

8-12 pm. Great prep for the World Series of Birding. Led by Don Freiday at the Somerset County Environmental Education Center (908) 766-5787.

8 – Wildflower Wandering

5:30-7 pm. – Enjoy a spring stroll through Lord Stirling Park to see what's in bloom. Call (908) 766-2489.

Gina Snell Moves Onward and Upward

Do we wish Gina well? Do we hope that she and her husband Tom will be happy in Manhattan? Will we miss her beyond words? Will we be able to fill her shoes? Yes, yes, yes, no.

Gina Snell has been a volunteer at the Watershed Association for nearly ten years; she served on the Board of Trustees for five years and has been the Association's only Membership Director. Thanks to her dedication and commitment, membership has grown to nearly 2,500 and our annual appeals have become an increasingly successful source of revenue.

Gina first became involved in the Watershed Association as part of her year-long Junior League placement and after helping the staff plan a dinner celebration for the 30th anniversary of the designation of the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge she was hooked. Because planning the dinner took so much staff time, they fell behind on regular business and enlisted Gina's help with the backlog of membership renewals. Before she knew it, her one year placement turned into a full-time



volunteer position, and Gina's been working regular hours at the Watershed Association ever since.

As Membership Director, Gina maintains the membership database, updates all renewals, provides introductory materials to new members, organizes several member events each year and serves on the Outreach and Education Committee. Maintaining the database alone is a 10-12 hour a week job, which Gina does on Tuesdays and Thursdays throughout the year, and works "overtime" during the Annual Appeal in the winter and spring. Not only will we miss Gina for the work she does, but she is an integral part of the Watershed Association staff and the office really comes to life when she's in.

This is an exciting time for Gina and Tom. Now that their son John is going off to college, they're moving to New York to be closer to Tom's job (he's spent three hours a day commuting for the past ten years) and enjoy the benefits of city life.

In her usual gracious way, Gina says that working at the Watershed Association has been the most wonderful experience. She loves the people she works with and believes strongly in the work we do. She says that she has gotten more out of working at GSWA than she has given, but we respectfully disagree.

Not one to sit idle, once she gets settled in her new home, Gina's planning to take classes at the New School and volunteer at another conservation group. And to that we say: "Aren't they lucky!" Gina, we hope you have an excellent adventure!

10 – Hit the H2O

11 am-3 pm. A canoe and kayak hands-on demonstration on the Passaic River. Meet at the "fisherman's parking lot" in the Somerset County Park, Lord Stirling Rd, Basking Ridge. Great Swamp Watershed Association (973) 966-1900.

10 - Colonial Toys (A Children's Activity)

1-4 pm. Come explore with your children as they play with 18th century toys while learning how such things as wood, cloth and yarn were used to make something fun and entertaining. Wick House. (973) 539-2016.

10 – World Series of Birding

Scherman-Hoffman will field teams for the World Series of Birding. Call NJ Audubon Society for more information (908) 766-5787.

11 - A Farmer's Viewpoint

1-4 pm. Step back in time to 1780 and meet a farmer at the Wick House. Hear the views of a local civilian concerning Washington's army after their long stay in Morristown. Ask him about the latest news and his opinion of the war. (973) 539-2016.

15 – Moonlight Meander

7-9 pm. Discover the night world of New Jersey's wilderness and take a moonlit hike on the trails of Lord Stirling Park. Call (908) 766-2489.

17 – Basically Bats

7-9 pm. Learn bat biology in class and a field walk looking for the elusive nocturnal creatures. Somerset County Environmental Education Center (908) 766-2489.

17 – Beginning Birding Field Trip

8 am -noon. Trips start at Scherman-Hoffman Sanctuary and migrate to the Great Swamp and environs. Good loaner binoculars are available. NJ Audubon Society (908) 766-5787.

17, 31 - Campfollowers

1:30-3:30 pm. Learn about the "unknown" part of Washington's Army during a visit to the soldier huts in Jockey Hollow. Discover the role of women and children during the American Revolution. Learn what benefits and problems they presented to the army. Soldier Huts in Jockey Hollow. (973) 539-2016.

18, 25 - Ten Minute Talks: Winter Encampments and Soldier Life

12:30-3:30 pm. Learn a little bit of history in a short space of time. Topics for the talks will include: The Winter Encampments at Morristown, A Soldier's Life, The Hard Winter of 1779-1780, Sheltering the Soldiers. Jockey Hollow Visitor Center (973) 539-2016.

24 – Flora of the Great Swamp

7:30-9 pm. Enjoy a slide/lecture program about the flora of the Great Swamp at the Somerset County Environmental Education Center. (908) 766-5787.

26 – (Memorial Day) Remembering the Dead

1 & 3 pm. Disease, battle, execution and murder were just some of the causes of death of Washington's soldiers. Commemorate Memorial Day by remembering the soldiers who died during the winter encampments at Morristown. Learn how they died and how they were buried. Jockey Hollow Visitor Center (973) 539-2016.

31 – Nature; Up Close and Personal

9-11 am. Join us in exploring the Great Swamp and seeing nature up close. Led by naturalist Dave Womer at the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. Great Swamp Watershed Association (973) 966-1900.

Staff Notes

Congratulations to **Karen Parrish**, GSWA Consultant and **Larry Chase**, former board member for their triumph as spelling champions in the inaugural spelling bee hosted by the Women's Resource Center of Summit. The team, which also included Mary Lee Crawley, outspelled 41 other teams. For the record, the winning word was "fibranne," which is a synthetic fiber.

Project Director **John Malay** has been attending seminars on the upcoming NJ Stormwater Regulations and is working with Bernards Township to assess the impact of the state "Big Map" on their local master plan.

Bonnie Gannon, Development Director, continues her tenure as president of Earth Share NJ, an organization supporting environmental efforts throughout NJ by partnering with corporations to provide payroll deductions to facilitate employee giving.

GIS Analyst **Karen Patterson** has been attending a variety of conferences and workshops relating to the Adopt Loantaka Brook project.

Contributions

Many thanks for the generous donations made by: Donald Abbott in memory of Jeanette C. Abbott, Mary Rose Cassa in memory of Cary and David Cassa, and Joanne and Larry White in memory of Charles H. Lockwood.

Keeping the Focus on Nature

continued from page 4

The **Morris Township** EC planted a riparian buffer along Bryant's Stream near the Frelinghuysen Middle School.

The **Morristown** EC is currently working to create Morristown's first-ever Environmental Resources Inventory. When complete, this will be incorporated into the Conservation Element of Morristown's new Master Plan.

Most Environmental Commission meetings are open to the public. For further information about your town's environmental commission, see the clip-out section *on page 4*. You do not have to be a Commission member (usually appointed by the Mayor or Town Council) to get involved with the Commission. There is always more work to be done to protect the environment! In addition to your own town's Environmental Commission, the Association of NJ Environmental Commissions, with headquarters in Mendham Twp, is an excellent resource. ANJEC can be reached at 973.539.7547 or <http://www.anjec.org/>. Another important resource is the newly formed Morris Environmental Commissioner Network (MECN). The group of 15-plus Morris County Environmental Commission chairs held its first meeting in October. The group plans to meet twice a year, and has established an email chat list to facilitate networking and problem-solving in the intervening months (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/MECN/>)

Contact us at 973.966.1900 or visit our web site at www.greatswamp.org

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Non-Profit Organization
Permit #2
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