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ACROSS THE WATERSHED

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Winter 2004

The Great Swamp Watershed Association

Vol. 24 No.1

Frelinghuysen Accepts Environmental Award on Cunningham's Behalf

On November 14, 2003, instead of presenting the Marcellus Hartley Dodge Memorial Award to John Cunningham, Congressman Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-11) accepted the award on Cunningham's behalf. Noted New Jersey historian John Cunningham was unexpectedly sidelined and unable to attend the presentation.

Given each year by the Great Swamp Watershed Association, the Marcellus Hartley Dodge Memorial Award is presented to an individual who has made a significant impact on natural, cultural and historic preservation. In speaking to the crowd of 200, Frelinghuysen said: "Truly, John Cunningham is New Jersey's 'Renaissance Man' of historical and environmental preservation."

Through his writings, service to our state, and award-winning films, John has demonstrated his love and commitment to New Jersey's history and pristine natural treasure, including our very own Great Swamp.

Like John, all of us in this room tonight continue to recognize the importance of protecting this refuge. The preservation of Great Swamp is a testament to the good that can be accomplished when interested citizens come together in an important cause. And it is good stewards like John Cunningham who have helped make this refuge an ecological gem that each year continues to shine a little bit brighter."



US Congressman Rodney Frelinghuysen delivers a tribute to Guest of Honor John Cunningham at the Watershed Association Annual Event. Looking on is Executive Director Julia Somers.

Watershed Association Initiates Heritage Programs

by Patsy Clew

When most people hear of the Great Swamp Watershed Association, they think of an environmental organization concerned with land use, water quality and outreach and education. What people don't typically associate with the Watershed Association is protecting the history, culture, and quality of life throughout the towns and counties touched by Great Swamp, but that has always been part of the organization's mission.

In 2004, the Association is out to change the way you think! From this point forward we are stepping up our efforts to promote history and culture throughout the watershed.

Why is this so important for us? Our environment does not exist in a vacuum - a region's landscape is interwoven with its people, culture and history and only an appreciation of this connectedness will create a stronger sense of stewardship. The region is home to some of the most distinguished heritage attractions in the northeast and perhaps the entire country.

Continued on page 11

Adopt Loantaka Brook Program – First Year Summary

by Karen Patterson

The Loantaka Brook is one of the five main tributary streams in the Great Swamp watershed. Though the majority of Loantaka flows through a Morris County park and is thus somewhat protected, the stream is nevertheless the most seriously degraded of any of Great Swamp's waterways due in part to the intense development of the headwaters area and the location of a large wastewater treatment plant on the brook. How exactly the brook is contaminated and what can be done to restore it is the subject of the Watershed Association's Adopt Loantaka Brook program, now entering its second year.

The focus of the program in the first year was on identifying and investigating the cause(s) behind the high levels of phosphorous, nitrogen and total dissolved solids found in Loantaka Brook. Specific sampling sites were chosen and water samples were sent either to a certified lab for analysis or were tested using monitoring equipment purchased for this project. In addition, visual inspections of the headwaters of the Loantaka Brook were conducted in an effort to identify specific problem (source) areas. Through lab analysis, we sought to identify concentrations and sources of the following pollutants: total dissolved solids (TDS), nutrients (phosphorus and nitrates) and total suspended solids (TSS).

With regard to the total dissolved solids question, the good news is that there was no evidence of particularly dangerous pollutants such as mercury, lead or other heavy metals. However, there are rather high concentrations of salts and other "naturally" occurring substances, which, in excess can cause damage, particularly to aquatic life trying to survive under such conditions. In addition, the analysis of nutrients and sediments showed that the Treatment Plant does indeed contribute the bulk of the nutrients to the stream, but there may be opportunities to reduce phosphorus, nitrogen and suspended solids concentrations upstream of the Treatment Plant. Further testing will help determine this and help identify opportunities for reducing the input of nutrients and suspended solids. Additional laboratory analysis of both base flow and storm flow samples are needed in order to get a better picture of the ongoing conditions along Loantaka Brook. Detailed results of this testing can be found in the full Summary Report, found on our web-site www.greatswamp.org under Stream Monitoring and Loantaka Brook or you may contact the Watershed Association at 973.966.1900 to receive a hard copy of the report.

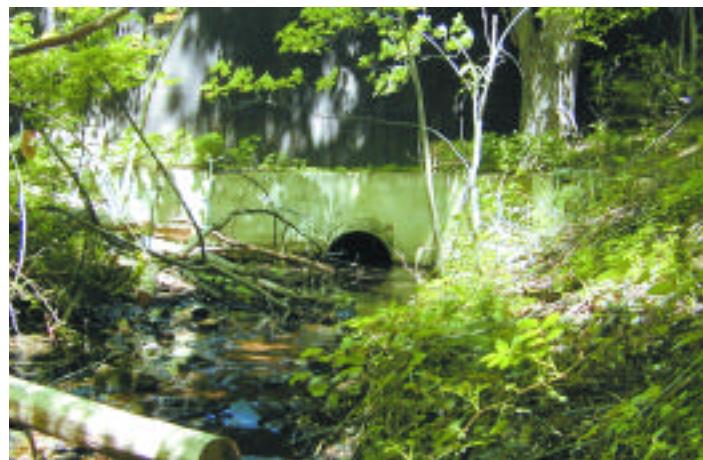
In the coming year, the Watershed Association will use the data gathered to date to help develop a plan for water quality improvements. Site-specific physical improvements and education and outreach are likely to be the main areas of focus. Funds for the project have come from the following members of the Watershed Association's Corporate Council: Atlantic Mutual, Maersk, Schering Plough, and Wyeth, all of which have corporate offices at Giralta Farms in Madison (within the Loantaka Brook sub-watershed).



A culvert in the upper part of the Loantaka Brook sub-watershed, just below the intersection of Madison Avenue and Normandy Parkway during dry weather.



The same culvert under wet conditions receiving stormwater runoff from Madison Avenue and the parking lots associated with businesses on Madison Avenue.



Another stream in the upper Loantaka Brook sub-watershed originates from underneath a parking garage in the Parsons Village apartment complex.

From the Desk of Julia Somers, Executive Director:

Across the Watershed is a quarterly publication of the Great Swamp Watershed Association. The Watershed Association 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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Patsy Clew

John Malay

Karen Patterson

On December 17, 2003, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) denied a stream encroachment permit application filed by the Order of Saint Benedict of New Jersey for Abbey Woods at Delbarton. Earlier, the Abbey's wetlands permit application also needed for its proposed Continuing Care Retirement Center, was denied by NJDEP. Without these permits, the CCRC project will be subject to the new stormwater rules that are to become final in January and it will likely be impossible for them to build as designed.

The Morris Township Planning Board has passed its resolution of preliminary site approval for the CCRC project and the new athletic facility on the Abbey property to be built for the Delbarton School. State approval is still needed to allow a sewer connection for the CCRC.

Unfortunately, the Watershed Association's spot-zoning lawsuit against Morris Township and St. Mary's Abbey was unsuccessful before Judge Bozonelis in Morris County Superior Court. We brought suit because we believe the Township's rezoning was not in the public's interest. The National Park Service, manager of the Jockey Hollow Section of Morristown National Historical Park, joined the Watershed Association in opposing the Township's action and Michael Henderson, its Superintendent, testified in court on our behalf. While the Abbey property lies next to the Park but in the Whippanny watershed, Jockey Hollow is situated almost entirely in the Great Swamp watershed. Appeal of the Judge's decision is being considered.

The rezoning contemplates construction of a Continuing Care Retirement Community on 41 acres of St. Mary's Abbey's property. Under the proposed site plans submitted to the Planning Board, the CCRC is designed to accommodate more than 500 residents and will require 130 fulltime staff. Approximately 230,000 cubic yards of fill will have to be removed from this steeply sloped site to permit its construction. The property has Category One waters, exceptional resource value wetlands, habitat for threatened and endangered species, steep slopes and extensive forest cover, and is in the Highlands and Planning Area 5 (most environmentally sensitive and historically significant) of the State Plan.

As to the sewer connection, a Wastewater Management Plan (WMP) is required of every community in the state. It is a planning document that shows how the town expects to grow, ensuring that it has sufficient wastewater capacity while protecting the community's environment. It must be approved by NJDEP. Morris Township is now one of a handful of towns in the State that does not have an approved Plan and is ten years late in preparing its WMP. NJDEP has mandated that if they are to even consider permitting a sewer line to run into the Washington Valley to St. Mary's Abbey for its proposed CCRC, the Township must submit a "credible" and "substantially complete" WMP.

In July, Morris Township quietly submitted a WMP application but in October, NJDEP sent Morris Township a 13-page "deficiency" letter detailing the actions the Township must still take to have its proposed WMP considered "credible" and "substantially complete."



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julia".

Swamp Watch — Local Environment

Bernards Township

Demolition-Related Decision

The Bernards Township Board of Adjustment recently rejected an application to demolish a 1,034 sq. foot house on Lindbergh Lane and replace it with a much larger house of 3,800 sq. ft. The applicants revised their plans twice, but the Board remained opposed to giving a lot-width variance for the house which Board members felt was out of scale with the surrounding neighborhood.

Board members also expressed concern that approval of the application could set in motion a chain to redevelop the whole street of similar modestly-sized homes.

Home Setback Proposal Attempt Fails

The Bernards Township Committee tabled a proposed ordinance that would have increased setback requirements for homes along a major road in the township. The plan was for a requirement for new homes to be set back 200 feet from the street, or less if calculated by averaging the setbacks of nearby homes. The proposal had been presented by the Planning Board as one of several initiatives in an effort to preserve neighborhood character in the township.

Though the intent of increasing setbacks was admirable from a land-preservation standpoint, the proposal was unclear to the public. Numerous township residents came to voice protest at the larger setback requirements, but it turned out that their properties were not affected by the proposal.

Millington Quarry, which owns 190 acres in the township that it plans to eventually develop, did stand to be impacted by the proposed ordinance and also protested the proposed setback increases.

Committeeman Tom Moschello, who is also on the Planning Board, criticized his own Planning Board for the lack of clarity in the proposal and lack of thorough analysis of the potential impact of changes in setbacks.

News of the Ex-AT&T Complex

The former AT&T complex, which is now vacant and owned by Pfizer Inc., is currently being marketed by two entities. One is a developer with a potential plan to sell the 1.4 million square feet of office space to more than one tenant. The other entity is a broker who has shown the site to potential buyers ranging from banks to educational institutions to other pharmaceutical companies. There have been very few recent transactions in New Jersey of large-scale office space.

Pfizer won a reduction in the assessed value of the property, which will reduce its tax bill by \$715,000. Most of the Pfizer-owned modest rental homes that border the property are now vacant and no longer for rent. Pfizer also owns the building currently used by the Passaic River Coalition for its headquarters.

Ann Parsekian

Bernardsville

The Borough of Bernardsville has finally succeeded in reducing the erosion from its new athletic fields on Seney Drive improvidently built on steep slopes, but the damage downstream to Chestnut Brook and Bernice Dreesen's historic mill pond along Hardscrabble Road has been incalculable. The Borough has been advised of its legal responsibility for the cost of restoration.

While Chestnut Brook has been completely degraded, Lee Pollock in a recent presentation to the Ten Towns Committee based on extensive water sampling data, reported that upstream of Chestnut Brook, Indian Grave Brook continues to manifest the highest water quality of any stream in the Great Swamp watershed, with minimal sedimentation and pollutants.

Daniel E. Somers, Esq.

Chatham Township

Chatham Township Begins to Revise Master Plan

The Chatham Township Planning Board is reviewing the township's Master Plan, which was last revised in 1999. To emphasize the importance of the township's environmental resources, an updated Environmental Resource Inventory (ERI) will be incorporated for the first time into the Master Plan. In addition, the Environmental Commission is applying for a grant to compile a conservation element which would be part of the master plan for the first time. This Conservation element would establish goals, policies and strategies to enable the township to protect its wetlands, streams, trees, and open spaces, and to protect its remaining agricultural lands, good water and air quality, and recreational opportunities.

Chatham Township's Conservation Easements Inventoried

The Chatham Township Environmental Commission, under the leadership of Dorothea Stillinger, finished its inventory of township conservation and trail easements this fall. The report documents the existence of conservation easements on 37 properties in the township. The Commission won an award for this thorough inventory from the Association of NJ Environmental Commissions (ANJEC).

Stillinger, along with John Malay of the Watershed Association and Louis Caprioglio of the Environmental Commission, generated computerized GIS (Geographic Information Systems) maps that show conservation easement deed restrictions as an overlay on the existing township block and lot maps. The public can see some of the information at www.geocities.com/ctecnj.

The Environmental Commission plans to establish an ongoing program of land stewardship by monitoring each easement through site walks and meetings with property owners. Citizen volunteers are needed to help with conservation easement monitoring and are encouraged to leave a message for Dot Stillinger, Chair of the Environmental Commission, at 973-635-4600.

Rolling Knolls Landfill Gets Superfund Status

On September 29, 2003 the federal Environmental Protection Agency designated the 187-acre Rolling Knolls Landfill as a Superfund clean-up site. The Watershed Association was instrumental in promoting this action by the Federal Government; our efforts spanned nearly a decade. The privately run garbage dump was used by local businesses and Chatham residents from the 1930's through the 1960s. The property lies entirely within Chatham Township borders, and 42 acres of it is within the National Wildlife Refuge. Loantaka Brook runs 2,000 feet from its toxic borders, and Black Brook passes alongside the tainted property with only 500 feet to spare.

The official EPA score for contamination at Rolling Knolls was 35, well above the 28.5 minimum required to be considered for Superfund cleanup status. Contaminants at the site include mercury, PCB's, and pharmaceutical compounds. Scientific studies have shown that these toxic chemicals are leaching from the dump into local streams which eventually flow into the Passaic River, a public drinking water source. The EPA says, however, that there is no immediate threat to public health.

The EPA estimates it will take five years before a remediation plan is complete.

Groundwater Contamination from Former Hickory Tree Garage

Progress continues on schedule to clean up the petrochemical contamination of ground water under the Kessler assisted living facility on Southern Boulevard near Shunpike Road. The site, formerly owned by Hickory Tree Garage, is under remediation as directed by the NJ Dept of Environmental Protection (NJDEP). "Ground water samples collected from MW-9 continue to show MTBE above the applicable NJDEP Ground Water Quality Standard," stated the NJDEP in its most recent report.

Kathy Abbott

Long Hill Township

The Long Hill Township Committee formally adopted a Master Plan Reexamination Report on 25 November. Although some residents urged the committee to undertake a more extensive revision, the report did reaffirm the strong goals of the 1996 Master Plan and recommended nearly 20 ordinance changes. Several of these changes would cover topics that are of particular relevance to the watershed: (a) tree removal and replacement, (b) the use of grass pavers as a means of circumventing coverage limits, (c) tear-down and replacement of existing homes with larger homes, and (d) parking lot designs to encourage greater leaf coverage. Each of these has the potential to contribute positively to stormwater management goals, so it will be important to get these on the agenda as soon as possible.

As covered in the last newsletter, the Long Hill Zoning Board denied the Great Swamp Greenhouse's application for expansion on 16 September. The resolution to memorialize that decision was passed on 02 December. It is unclear why there was such a long interval between these decisions. The 45-day window for the applicant to appeal the original decision does not start until the resolution to memorialize has been published. Based on past experience, an appeal seems likely.

Len Hamilton

Madison

Madison Establishes Open Space Fund

This November, Madison voters passed a referendum to create a trust fund for purchase of open space for environmental, recreational and historic preservation purposes. The money will come from a tax of two cents per \$100 of assessed property value. An open space plan with recommendations for the next five years will be presented to the Planning Board for approval and adoption into the Master Plan in January. The Open Space Plan and trust fund will enable Madison to leverage Green Acres dollars and other matching funding more effectively.

Judy Kroll

Mendham Township

Morris Area Girl Scouts Council

At the time of writing, neither NJDEP nor Mendham Township have received any applications for the state permits needed to construct the new camp at Jockey Hollow.

Julia Somers

Harding Township

Harding Township has adopted a Redevelopment Plan designed to revitalize the Center of New Vernon.

The Redevelopment area consists of 11 lots in the B-1 zone and the Township Property which includes the Tunis Ellicks House and the Department of Public Works. This zone basically includes both sides of Village Road, from the Millbrook Road intersection to within about 100 feet of the traffic light at the beginning of Lee's Hill road by the Presbyterian Church.

The overall goal is to restore this area as a place for residents to run small errands and see each other in the process. It is hoped that the U.S. Post Office will re-locate back to this area. The Post Office used to occupy the space now taken by Weichert Realtors in the second building down from Millbrook on the north side of Village Road. Discussions are continuing as to whether the Harding Township Library will be moved to new quarters within the Redevelopment Zone.

In accordance with the Redevelopment Zone ordinances, the Township Committee will be able to work with lot owners to achieve the goals of establishing small businesses, encouraging rentals and other residential uses, and building pedestrian walkways and a central parking lot. The construction of a central parking lot will allow more room for lot owners to build new septic facilities designed to meet current standards. The new septic requirements have been an impediment to development in this area.

Overall it is hoped that the Redevelopment Plan will transform the village of New Vernon into a place to which residents of Harding and people from outside the town will come on a regular basis. This would restore the level of activity in the village to where it was several years ago before the Post Office moved out to the trailer behind Kirby Hall. The Township Committee and several subcommittees have been hard at work on this project for at least two years.

Marshall Bartlett

Volunteers Make Good Things Happen

The Watershed Association's Annual Meeting, Cocktail Party, and Silent Auction involves enormous effort on the part of many, but special thanks go to volunteers:

- Stephanie Barnett
- Barbara Bilancioni
- Michael Drury
- Thomas Drury
- Pat Ryan

Morristown

Morristown applied to the Morris County Open Space Trust Fund for funding to purchase a 2+ acre property along Great Brook. Located at the end of Gillespie Lane and Vanderpool in the town, the property includes wetlands, forest and a meadow and is adjacent to a section of Great Brook. Joined to a property owned by the New Jersey Conservation Foundation and to conservation easements granted by some local property owners, it will form part of an emerging greenway. The application to the County was successful with the full amount requested being granted. Working together on the project with Morristown, NJCF and the Watershed Association, it was led by neighbors including Jim Gilbert and Tom Hollo, who is a new Watershed Association trustee and President of Morristown Friends of Great Brook.

Peck School

The School has begun an application to the Board of Adjustment to add approximately 180,000 square feet. They asked the Watershed Association for advice on stormwater management for the project and opportunities to improve the current situation were discussed.

Temple B'Nai Or

Neighbors opposing the expansion of the Temple continue to present their case to the Board of Adjustment. At the conclusion of the application, the Watershed Association will conclude its testimony asking that major stormwater management adjustments be made to the project. It is the Association's position that the project as presently designed will degrade Great Brook and Foote's Pond, which is to be dredged next summer and undergo an extensive restoration project.

Julia Somers

Silent Auction Raises Funds

Many thanks to the following donors for their generosity in making our Silent Auction successful:

Atelier Country Salon and Spa
Bartlett, Marshall
Bevan, Dr. Eileen Klok
Blanchard, Michele and William
Blanchard, Robert and Ginger
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Briarpatch, Inc.
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Studio Yoga
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Whole Foods Market
Womer, David
Wyeth Corporation

Endowment Fund Keeps Watershed Association Viable

by Bonnie Gannon

The nature of Watershed Association funding has changed dramatically over the last few years. While we used to receive a large portion of our funding from grants, that percentage has been shifting and now we find ourselves relying much more heavily on individual contributions to fund our programs.

In recent years, the Development Committee and Board of Trustees created an Endowment Fund to help “smooth out the bumps” of an erratic and sometime unpredictable cash flow, minimizing the impact of volatile funding resources. We currently have about \$450,000 in the fund, but our goal is to reach the million dollar level so that we can use the interest to secure the future of our programs.

Please consider making a gift of \$1,000 or more to our Endowment Fund, either in cash, stocks, or securities. We, at the Watershed Association appreciate gifts in any amount, but smaller contributions will be applied to operating expenses. All contributions are tax deductible. Please let me know if you have any questions or would like more information about the Endowment Fund.

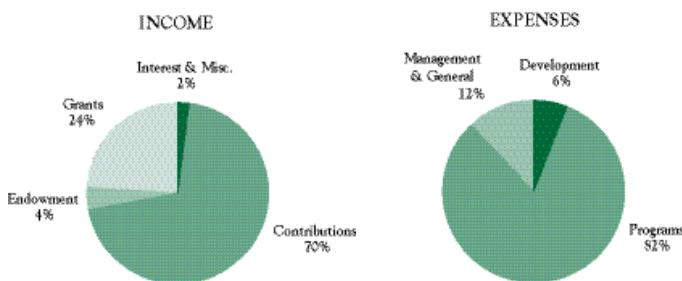
Donations

Many thanks for their generous contributions: Mr. Donald Abbott in memory of his wife; Annette, Claire, and Phil Englander in honor of Karsten Englander; Ms. Agnes Frogde in memory of Marguerite P. May; Cecily and Michael Herves in memory of Emily Roberts; and June Tullman in memory of Robert Hull.

Correction

Our apologies go to Mr. Elliott Ruga and Ms. Cathi Hession, valued Watershed Association members, who were inadvertently omitted from the \$500 giving category in our Annual Report.

These charts, which appeared in last issue's Annual Report, were inadvertently missing some information.



Members Enjoy Historic Graveyard Tours

by Patsy Clew

According to Leslie Bensley, Executive Director of the Morris County Visitors Center, there was an outstanding response to the Historic Graveyard Tour by Lantern Light in October. The tours, which were offered on Friday, October 24 and Saturday, October 25 had a combined waiting list of 100 names! The Morris County Visitors Center said that there was a strong response from Great Swamp Watershed Association members. We want to thank all of you for your support; we will continue to let you know about more special events like the graveyard tour. Based on the overwhelming response to this event, the Morris County Visitors Center plans to offer this event again next year.

What Will You Leave Behind?

As you focus on financial planning and review your estate plan, think about leaving a legacy for the land. Planned Giving to the Great Swamp Watershed Association is not only financially sound, but will provide a legacy to future generations and continued protection for our most precious resource...land.

Please call **Bonnie Gannon 973-966-1900 x 18** for details about some of the many ways you can give. What will you leave behind?

Virtual Newsletter

Across the Watershed is posted on our website www.greatswamp.org and over 700 members have signed up to receive email notification that the newsletter is available online. If you're not on that list and would like to be, please contact Membership Director Patsy Clew at 973-966-1900 x 21 or by email at pclew@greatswamp.org. The benefits to receiving the newsletter electronically include saving paper and printing and mailing costs. Un-subscribing is easy and you have our word that we will not share your email address with anyone!

Association Loses Long-Time Friend

It is with great sadness that the Watershed Association notes the passing of one of its most enthusiastic members, Bill Janes. We appreciate everything he has done for us and will miss him him enormously.

Loantaka Brook to Benefit from Restoration Institute

This fall, Great Swamp Watershed Association Project Director Karen Patterson attended the Watershed Restoration Institute sponsored by the Center for Watershed Protection in Maryland. The Watershed Institute, the first of its kind, provided participants from around the country with tools and techniques for designing and implementing urban stream restoration practices.

The Watershed Association will be applying much of what Karen learned at the Institute to the Loantaka Brook, one of the five tributaries of the Great Swamp watershed. A watershed is the land area that drains to a particular body of water such as a pond, lake or ocean. The 35,000 acre (55 square mile) Great Swamp watershed is the land area that drains to the 7,500 acre Great Swamp Wildlife Refuge.

The Loantaka Brook sub-watershed is only about 5 square miles and makes up less than 10% of the overall watershed. However, with its headwaters in the heavily developed Madison Avenue corridor running through Madison, Morris Twp and Morristown, it is the most polluted of the five streams. As a result, the Watershed Association has sought and received funds from several area

continued on back page

Staff Notes

John Malay was elected to the Bernards Township Committee in the November election. He takes office for a 3-year term in January, 2004. In addition to being Bernard's representative to the Ten Towns Committee John will be the township committee liaison to the Shade Tree Commission, Open Space Trust Fund Task Force, the Board of Education and he will become a member of the Sewerage Authority.

The bad news is that **Karen Patterson** left the Watershed Association in December after working here for more than five years. During her tenure, Karen has done a variety of jobs including editing the newsletter, creating maps using GIS data, facilitating Project WET workshops, but perhaps most importantly, has been instrumental in working with Stream Team volunteers and the Ten Towns Committee to collect water samples from the five streams in the watershed and creating a database which provides significant information about each stream. Karen has also led the project to restore Loantaka Brook.

The good news is that Karen is expecting her second child in March. Her three year old son, Ben, is excited about having his mother around more and becoming a big brother. Here in Madison, we are very, very happy for Karen but miss her a lot.

On The Move

If you've ever visited our offices at 36 Madison Ave in Madison, you know that we've seriously outgrown them. Fortunately we've been offered the opportunity to rent a house in Jockey Hollow, from the National Park Service and we expect to move there this June. Since the house is vacant, we will need furniture and a wide variety of odds and ends. We can already begin storing things at the new place so, if you're cleaning out, redecorating, or upgrading, please keep the Watershed Association in mind.

As always, contributions and donations are tax deductible. The kinds of things we'll need include: sofas, easy chairs, folding chairs, rugs, desks, file cabinets, shelving, refrigerator, dishwasher, and lamps.

Become a Member of the Great Swamp Watershed Association Now!

You can join by completing and mailing in this form, or call us at (973) 966-1900 ext. 15, or visit us online at : www.greatswamp.org.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

<input type="checkbox"/> Steward	\$1000 or more
<input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor	\$500
<input type="checkbox"/> Patron	\$250
<input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor	\$100
<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$50
<input type="checkbox"/> Member	\$35
<input type="checkbox"/> Student, Senior	\$25

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Card # _____

Expires _____

Signature _____

My employer will match my gift. The completed forms are enclosed.

Please send me information on volunteer activities.

Your membership gift is tax deductible as allowed by law. We are a 501 (C)(3) non-profit organization.

Mail this form to:

Great Swamp Watershed Association
PO Box 300
New Vernon, NJ 07976

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

Birding and Natural History Walks: Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge: First and third Sunday of the month 8:00 –10:00 a.m. Meet at the Wildlife Observation Center on Long Hill Road. 973-425-1222

Free Nature Walks: Scherman-Hoffman Wildlife Sanctuary; Every Friday and Saturday, 8-9 a.m. No pre-registration – just show up! Walks focus on birds, butterflies, wildflowers, and all other aspects of natural history. Led by Scherman-Hoffman naturalists, these walks are fun and informative. Meet at the Hoffman Parking Lot. 908-766-5787.

Ford Mansion Tours: Daily, 10, 11 a.m., 1, 2, 3, 4 p.m. 973-539-2016

The Wick House at Jockey Hollow: Daily, 9:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. (Except when school programs conducted; call for availability) 973-539-2016.

February

6, Wintertime Reflections. 7 p.m.: Spend a quiet evening indoors at the Great Swamp listening to nature poetry with a hot cup of tea or coffee! Bring a poem to share. Free. Great Swamp Outdoor Education Center. 973-635-6629.

7, 21, Bound to Serve. 1, 2, 3, 4 p.m.: Walk through the Ford Mansion on a special tour that focuses on African-American history. Learn about the role enslaved Africans played in the American Revolution. Ford Mansion. 973-539-2016.

7, 14, 21, Maple Sugaring. 2 p.m.: One hour program about maple sugaring, including tree identification, tree tapping, sap evaporation, and taste testing. Great for the whole family! Great Swamp Outdoor Education Center. 973-635-6629.

14, 15, 21, 22, 28, 29, Maple Sugaring. 10 a.m., noon, 2 p.m.: People of all ages are invited to see the tradition brought to life and see how trees are tapped, view sap collecting methods and see the boiling process. Somerset County Environmental Ed Center. 908-766-2489.

20, Farmer's Wife. 1:30-3:30 p.m.: The main focus of the women in the 18th century was the survival of their families. Learn how wives survived during the time of war when their husbands or sons went off to fight. Wick House. 973-539-2016.

22, Winter Trees Hike. 10 a.m. Learn how to identify trees in the winter without leaves. Great Swamp Outdoor Education Center. 973-635-6629.

28, Maple Sugar Festival. 1-4 p.m.: Celebrate the end of the Great Swamp sugaring season with tree tapping demos, maple tree games, maple cream making, crafts, and taste testing. Great Swamp Outdoor Education Center. 973-635-6629.

28, Super Swamp Science Show. 10 a.m., 2 p.m. Experience amazing scientific phenomena that occur routinely in nature but are rarely discernable by casual observers. Recommended for ages 4 and older. Pre-registration is required. Great Swamp Watershed Association. 973-966-1900 x21.

March

6, Frog Slog. 6-8 p.m.: Although you will see a few birds before sunset, frogs will be the main focus. Wood, Chorus and one of the tiniest North American frogs, the Spring Peeper will be calling. Wear rubber boots. Somerset County Environmental Ed Center. 908-766-5787.

6, 7, 13, 14, 20, 21, Maple Sugaring. 10 a.m., noon, 2 p.m.: People of all ages are invited to see the tradition brought to life and see how trees are tapped, view sap collecting methods and see the boiling process. Somerset County Environmental Ed Center. 908-766-2489.

13, Reptiles. 2 p.m.: Learn about the four types of reptiles with a lecture and live reptile presentation. Great Swamp Outdoor Education Center. 973-635-6629.

20, Family Wonder Walk. 10 a.m.-noon: Ramble and meander the trails looking for? Scherman-Hoffman Wildlife Sanctuary. 908-766-5787.

20, Birdhouse Building Workshop. 2-5 p.m.: Pre-cut lumber is available and children will assemble boxes using nailing forms. Scherman-Hoffman Wildlife Sanctuary. 908-766-5787.

21, Birding at Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. 9 a.m.-1 p.m.: Late March at the refuge is a good time to see waterfowl, Northern Harriers, winter finches, and sparrows. Meet at the Wildlife Observation Center, Long Hill Road, Harding. 908-766-5787.

27, Beginning Birding. 9 a.m.-1 p.m.: Trip starts at the Sanctuary and migrates to the Great Swamp and environs. Good loaner binoculars are available and excellent, patient leaders. Scherman-Hoffman Wildlife Sanctuary. 908-766-5787.

27-April 25, Preview of the Wildlife Art & Carving Show. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.: The preview features realistic birds of hand-carved and hand-painted wood, finely rendered wildlife paintings, drawings, and hand-colored etchings of a wide range of flora and fauna. Somerset County Environmental Ed Center. 908-766-2489.

28, Tempe Wick – Truth and Legend: 1, 2, 3 p.m.: In celebration of Women's History Month, the park historian explains the story, both fact & fiction, behind one of New Jersey's most famous women of the Revolutionary War. Find out if Tempe really hid a horse in the Wick House or if it's just a legend. Wick House. 973-539-2016.

Watershed Association Initiates Heritage Programs

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The Heritage Alliance Steering Committee: (from left) Patsy Clew and Julia Somers (GSWA), Michael Henderson (National Park Service), Leslie Bensley (Morris Visitor's Center), Cathy Schrein (Somerset Environmental Education Center), Pam Fisher (AAA), David Helmer (Morris County Park Commission).

The goals of Heritage programs are to 1) promote the area as a destination for local residents and heritage tourists, 2) increase the number of visitors to local attractions, parks, and Great Swamp, 3) create partnerships with other organizations and businesses and 4) create a self-funding revenue stream through promotional activities that will be reinvested in Heritage Programs.

To accomplish the goals of Heritage Programs, a Heritage Alliance Steering Committee has been created. This group has representatives from the Morris County Park Commission, Morris County Visitors Center, Morristown Partnership, Morris Tomorrow, Somerset County Park Commission, Morristown National Historical Park, and New Jersey Theatre Alliance. We are still in the process of recruiting members who represent the interests of Somerset County. The Heritage Alliance Steering Committee is responsible for setting the direction, identifying and prioritizing issues, and evaluating the progress and effectiveness of the organization.

The broader membership will consist of businesses, museums, performing arts organizations, historical agencies, universities, heritage education organizations, and trail organizations. Representatives of these organizations will attend meetings to hear progress reports, discuss the issues and participate in Heritage Programs events.

Partnering with these organizations will allow us to marshal our resources more effectively to promote, educate and raise awareness of heritage tourism and the tremendous potential that it holds for preservation of our historical resources and economic development for the region.

Conservation Property Finishes A Busy Year

by John Malay

2003 was a busy year for the Watershed's Conservation & Restoration property in Harding Township. New trails were opened, several new stretches of boardwalk were installed and improvements were made to features throughout the property. The large amount of rainfall made constant trail maintenance imperative.

A new trail loop was installed on the adjacent "Zimmer" property, a tract of land currently being acquired by the Watershed Association. The trail circles a prime example of cat tail marsh environment. Forming part of the new "Red Trail", the loop is accessed from the back half of the main property.

The Watershed Association has also concluded negotiations with the US Fish & Wildlife Service for money and plantings to embark on a program of stream bank restoration along Silver Brook, which bisects the property from east to west. This work is scheduled to begin in the Spring of 2004.

Our partnership with the Morristown Garden Club continues to flower (!) with an enlarged and refurbished garden located along the edge of Tiger Lily Lane at the entrance to the trail head.

Volunteer groups in 2003 included those from National Starch & Adhesive, American Express, Drew University, the College of St. Elizabeth, Fairleigh Dickenson University, local high schools, middle schools and boy scouts. We are now on the list of groups in the Somerset County United Way volunteer program and participate in their Annual Day of Caring, an event designed to encourage corporate groups to take part in community service projects.

In addition to the Stream Bank Restoration Project, our plans for 2004 include planting more native plant species, laying still more boardwalk sections over the muddy portions of the Blue and Orange Trails and enlarging our deer exclusion areas.



The Bridge Over The Silver Brook! Volunteers from National Starch & Adhesive Corporation take care of the construction during the United Way National Day of Caring.

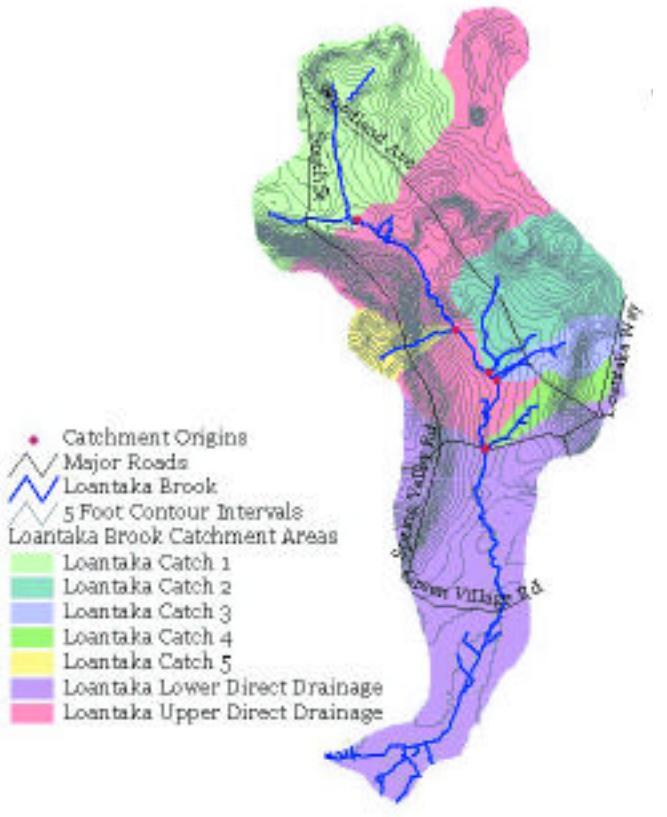
Restoration Institute

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corporations to "Adopt Loantaka Brook." Now in its second year, the Adopt Loantaka Brook program has conducted water quality tests along the length of the stream and begun identifying portions of the stream that have the potential for restoration. Tools and techniques from the Institute will be instrumental in refining and implementing restoration along these areas of the stream.

Over 80 people from 26 states and Canada attended the Institute. The Great Swamp Watershed Association was the beneficiary of a scholarship that paid for two thirds of the cost of Karen's tuition.

Founded in 1992, the Center for Watershed Protection is a non-profit organization which provides the technical tools for protecting some of the nation's most precious natural resources: our streams, lakes and rivers. The Center has developed and distributed a multi-disciplinary strategy to watershed protection that encompasses watershed restoration, watershed research, better site design, education and outreach, and watershed training.

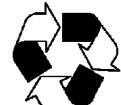


Loantaka Brook Sub-Watershed Catchment Areas

In the map at left the Loantaka Brook subwatershed is further divided into catchments and drainage areas based on its topography, as indicated by land contour markings.

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

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Great Swamp Watershed Association