



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TREASURES IN YOUR BACKYARD

Celebrating Harding Township's Natural and Historical Riches

Harding Township, NJ, March 10, 2014: Kemmerer Library Harding Township (KLHT) is combining efforts with the Great Swamp Watershed Association (GSWA) throughout the month of April to highlight the Township's natural and historical treasures. Several programs for children and adults are planned to educate members of the public about Harding's unique environment and its rich history. Township residents will also have an unprecedented opportunity to participate in a discounted well water testing program.

April's activities get an early start on **March 30** when the **Harding Township Treasure Hunt** begins. Don your fedora, summon your inner gumshoe, and then head to KLHT between 4PM and 5PM to pick up your special Harding Township treasure hunter's kit. All participants will have two weeks to scour the landscape in search of answers to several town-specific brainteasers. Budding sleuths can solve these mysteries at their own pace, but the ultimate goal of the hunt is to learn more about the environment, history, and culture of Harding Township.

"We hope this fun adventure will engage families in discovering our Township's rich history and environmental riches," says Lotte Newlin, Director of KLHT.

The Harding Township Treasure Hunt will conclude on **Friday, April 11**, with a special prize award event at KLHT starting at **4PM**. All scavenger hunt participants are encouraged to attend and share results

One week after the scavenger hunt, on **Saturday, April 19**, KLHT and GSWA will hold two workshops about native plants and native wildlife in Harding Township. One workshop will be geared toward adult participation and the other will be for children and their parents. From **10AM to noon** at KLHT, GSWA's Director of Education and Outreach Hazel England will present **Wildlife "Berried" Treasures**, a program that teaches adults how to use native plants to attract beneficial wildlife into their back yards. Participants will leave the workshop armed with a trove of information about what they need to plant in order to support local bird, bee, and butterfly populations. From **noon to approximately 2PM**, KLHT and GSWA will offer a special hands-on bird and bee box building workshop for children and their parents. Each child/parent team will create their very own bird or bee box that they can take home and use at the end of the event.

On **April 26**, from **9AM to noon**, local volunteers are needed to assist with a special clean-up of all the natural treasures at Harding Township's Bayne Park. Under the direction of GSWA's Director of Water Quality Programs Laura Kelm, participants will tend shrubs and native grasses that were planted around the perimeter Bayne Pond in 2011 in an effort to reduce pollution from stormwater runoff. Following the clean-up activities all volunteers are invited to attend a free luncheon across the street at KLHT.

As all of these special events progress, KLHT and GSWA plan to spotlight another one of Harding Township's most important natural treasures—its precious water supply. Unlike many other New Jersey municipalities, Harding Township relies on private wells for its water. For many years, residents have taken advantage of a free well water test for *E. coli* bacteria offered by the local health department. This year, and only during the month of April, residents will be able purchase an expanded water test offered through GSWA at a discounted rate. The GSWA test not only detects the presence or absence of *E. coli*, it also measures the level of several other important indicators of water purity, including nitrates, pH (acidity), iron, arsenic, and lead.

Harding Township homeowners who are interested in taking advantage of the new well testing program may register with KLHT or GSWA **between March 30 and April 22**. All participants will be required to make a \$10 deposit and pick up a self-guided water sampling kit when they register. Participants must use the supplied kit to sample well water at their home on the morning of **Wednesday, April 23**. All samples must be returned to KLHT between **8AM and noon** the same day. (Note: Water samples that do not follow specific timetable instructions may not return reliable test results.) Homeowners may customize their well test by choosing specific testing parameters from a prepared list at time of registration. The cost for a basic, multi-parameter test will not exceed \$110. Test add-ons may be purchased for an additional charge.

GSWA will collect all water samples from KLHT on April 23 and send them to Garden State Laboratories, Inc. in Hillside, NJ, for testing. Following the testing period, GSWA will mail final results to individual homeowners.

"We hope this initiative will enable Harding homeowners to learn valuable insights about the quality of their drinking water," says Hazel England, Director of Education and Outreach at GSWA.

To register for any of these programs, or to receive additional details, please contact KLHT or GSWA.

Find KLHT online at HardingLibrary.org or call (973) 267-2665. KLHT is located at 19 Blue Mill Road in New Vernon, NJ.

Find GSWA online at GreatSwamp.org or call (973) 538-3500 x22. GSWA is located at 568 Tempe Wick Road in Morristown, NJ.

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About Kemmerer Library Harding Township. The mission of Kemmerer Library Harding Township is to improve and enrich the lives of our users through informational, educational and recreational programs and services. The Library welcomes all members of the community and offers an inviting space, well-organized and up-to-date collections, friendly professional service and well-trained staff and volunteers who are committed to the Library vision. Come visit us!

About the Great Swamp Watershed Association. Founded in 1981, the Great Swamp Watershed Association (GSWA) is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving and protecting the water and land of New Jersey's 36,000-acre Great Swamp Watershed region. GSWA works with stakeholders in Morris County and Somerset County municipalities to maintain the health and beauty of open spaces; to educate the public about regional environmental issues; and to monitor and safeguard the five headwater streams—Loantaka Brook, Great Brook, Primrose Brook, Black Brook, and the Upper Passaic—that feed the Great Swamp and the Passaic River.