



**Great Swamp Watershed Association**

The Passaic River WATERKEEPER® ALLIANCE Affiliate



# Across the Watershed

**Fall-Winter 2021**

**40th Anniversary**



*Protecting our Waters and our Land for 40 Years*

## Richness and Hope in the Drew Forest

*By Judy Kroll and Joe Basralian, guest authors*

**T**his summer, residents in Madison, Chatham and beyond are noticing the call to “Save the Drew Forest” everywhere they look. Nearly 1,000 Madisonians and hundreds of Chatham residents have already signed the petition on Change.org, posters and fliers are in cafes and stores downtown, Instagram and Facebook pages light up with #savethedrewforest, and volunteers with Friends of the Drew Forest are speaking with streams of residents at events such as the Madison Farmers Market. Many of us have strolled in the beautiful forest as it blooms to life this season.

The enormous grassroots enthusiasm strongly echoes the Madison Borough Council’s passage of a resolution in May calling for the preservation of all 53-acres of contiguous forest in the upper portion of Drew University. The Council’s resolution on Rosenet.org offers clear-eyed inspiration to all of us who cherish what Drew Forest – and forests in general – give us.

The forest has been there much longer than the 150 years since the campus first became a place of study and worship, and many of its trees are the “old growth” pillars of the ecosystem in our area, connecting with the ancient forests that once stimulated life across North America.

Incredibly, over 22 acres of the 53 acres are protected by deer exclusion fencing, allowing native plants and animals to thrive in diverse abundance. Starting in 2008, university professors, students and local volunteers have spent hundreds of hours removing invasive plants



*Drew Forest - Photo credit Jessica Romeo*

*(continued on page 19)*

# From the Desk of the Executive Director

by Sally Rubin, Executive Director

For over 40 years, the Great Swamp Watershed Association has been dedicated to protecting and improving the water of the Passaic River region, from the Great Swamp headwaters to Newark Bay. In anticipation of a vibrant period of growth, the Trustee leadership and staff came together this spring to draft a new five-year strategic plan. This plan focuses on the four pillars of our mission, addressing the key components of water, education, land and organizational growth, which support the overall mission of the organization. The full strategic plan is available to review on our website at [greatswamp.org](http://greatswamp.org).

GSWA, a Riverkeeper affiliate, aims to broaden its reach and include even more communities in our water quality, education, and messaging endeavors. The goal of the plan is to further the mission of the organization, while increasing awareness of the fragile resources in the area.

Additionally, as the geographical reach of the organization has expanded, an ad-hoc committee is being formed to address a potential name change.

The prospect of a capital campaign is also

included in the plan, as that will enable many of the goals to be accomplished in the next three to five years. Beginning this process with a feasibility study will be a prudent first

**MISSION The Great Swamp Watershed Association protects and improves the health of the Passaic River through science, education, land preservation and stewardship, and advocacy.**

step in assessing the capacity of both GSWA and the community to embark upon such a campaign.

The mission statement has also been modified as follows: The Great Swamp Watershed Association protects and improves the health of the Passaic River through science, education, land preservation and stewardship, and advocacy.

Please join us, at a hike or program or activity, and become more engaged with our wonderful organization and mission to protect and preserve our precious environment. I know the phrase “now more than ever” can sound trite, but sometimes it really is true. Protecting our environment is important **now more than ever...** 🌲

Please be sure to let us know if you change your e-mail address. Send a note with your name, address, and old e-mail address to [srubin@GreatSwamp.org](mailto:srubin@GreatSwamp.org) so you don't miss out on our new monthly e-newsletters.

# Across the Watershed

is a publication of the **Great Swamp Watershed Association**.

GSWA is a member-supported non-profit organization that has been protecting the waters and the land of the Great Swamp Watershed for 40 years.

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# Upcoming Programs and Events

For more information on upcoming events and to register, visit [GreatSwamp.org](http://GreatSwamp.org) or call 973-538-3500. Most events are free or a reduced rate for GSWA members. Registration is required for all GSWA events.

## **Paterson's 1st Annual Green Fair Saturday, September 18, 10 AM–2 PM**

*Pennington Park, McBride Ave., Paterson, NJ*  
Enjoy great food, entertainment, hands-on activities for the family, receive resources from community organizations, and learn how you can help make Paterson a greener city. For more information contact the Paterson Green Team at [PatersonGreenTeam1@gmail.com](mailto:PatersonGreenTeam1@gmail.com). (This is a non-GSWA event). Take a great opportunity to explore Paterson and visit the Great Falls!

## **Harvest Moon Night Hike Monday, September 20, 7–8:30 PM**

*Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge - Bluebird Parking Lot*

It's a spectacular time of year to get outside for a hike at night. The full Harvest Moon appears on this very night, two days before the arrival of autumn. A full moon this time of year is typically called the "Harvest Moon" because the angle of the moon's orbit relative to the Earth's horizon is at its minimum, causing the full moon to rise above the horizon much faster than usual. This once helped farmers bring in the harvest late into the night. For us, it means we will have a bright night sky to light the way as we traverse the beautiful trails of the Refuge. Register at [GreatSwamp.org](http://GreatSwamp.org) or call 973-538-3500. Space limited to 25 so register early.

## **Workout with Lynne Saturday, September 25, 9–10 AM**

*GSWA Headquarters, 568 Tempe Wick Rd., Morristown, NJ*

Get your sweat on! What a great time to get moving together in the great outdoors. We are thrilled to offer you this chance to work out with GSWA's own Lynne Applebaum, Director of Institutional Relations. Lynne is also a NASM certified personal trainer. Join us for a body weight total strength workout (with a little cardio thrown in). All you need is the desire to exercise in the fresh, clean air, appropriate exercise wear, water, and a towel or floor mat. All levels are welcome. GSWA Members: FREE, Non-members: \$10. Register at [GreatSwamp.org](http://GreatSwamp.org) or call 973-538-3500.

## **Community Yard Sale - Madison and the Chathams Saturday, September 25, 9 AM–1 PM**

*\$10/household, no additional permit needed*  
Calling all residents of Madison and the Chathams. Looking to declutter your home? Don't send it off to the landfill. Give it a new life in someone else's home by hosting a yard sale at this community event. Simply register with GSWA to have your address and a list of your items for sale appear on a digital, printable map. This map will be linked to the GSWA website and publicized far and wide to potential shoppers. You must be a resident of Madison, Chatham Township, or Chatham Borough to list your sale. Registration

fee: a \$10 tax-deductible donation to benefit Great Swamp Watershed Association. Everyone else, mark your calendar for September 25 to get out and shop sustainably at this amazing three-town-wide yard sale! Register at [GreatSwamp.org](http://GreatSwamp.org) or call 973-538-3500.

### **GSWA 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Gala and Silent Auction**

**Thursday, October 7**

**5 PM VIP Reception, 6 PM Gala Start**

*Brooklake Country Club, 138 Brooklake Rd., Florham Park, NJ*

**Outdoor and indoor dining options are available. Guests will be requested to wear masks while moving.**

Be a part of our 40th Anniversary Gala Celebration! This year's keynote speaker is Dave Robinson, New Jersey's State Climatologist, a distinguished professor at Rutgers University, and a much sought-after speaker on the critical climate issues that affect every one of us today and threaten the health and safety of our future. This annual Gala dinner & silent auction is our biggest and most exciting fundraising event of the year! Your ticket purchase includes a cocktail hour with hors d'oeuvres, a delicious dinner banquet, our expansive and renowned silent auction, and a timely keynote presentation by Dave Robinson. Visit [GreatSwamp.org](http://GreatSwamp.org) or call 973-538-3500 for underwriting and advertising opportunities, more information, and ticket purchasing.

### **Stream Assessment Training** **Saturday, October 16, 12-3 PM**

*Location: TBD*

Interested in learning how to monitor a stream or gaining a better understanding of stream health? This one-day, two-part

training session is for you! An in-person classroom-style session teaches you how to conduct visual and biological stream assessments and recognize environmental factors that may impact stream health. An outdoor session lets you practice your new-found skills at a local stream site. By the afternoon, you will be a fully trained visual stream assessment volunteer and ready to conduct an assessment. Preferred volunteers are 15 or older. Younger volunteers are welcome with parent participation. This training will be conducted in conjunction with the AmeriCorps New Jersey Watershed Ambassador Program. Registration required. Register online at [GreatSwamp.org](http://GreatSwamp.org) or call 973-538-3500.

### **Evening Briefing: Put Your Garden to Bed (in-person and Zoom webinar)** **Tuesday, October 19, 6-7:30 PM**

*GSWA Headquarters, 568 Tempe Wick Rd., Morristown*

*Zoom link to be emailed prior to the program*

As the days shorten and the temperatures begin to drop, what should you do to help your garden get ready for the winter? We have answers. Join Hazel England, GSWA Director of Education and Outreach, and Land Steward (and our resident green-thumb guru) for best practices, tips, and tricks on closing down your garden for the season. Your garden worked hard for you all summer. Let us help you make sure it is in the best shape possible for another bountiful growing season! Join us live, in-person or via Zoom webinar. GSWA Members: FREE, Non-members: \$10. Register at [GreatSwamp.org](http://GreatSwamp.org) or call 973-538-3500.

**Evening Briefing: Creative Charitable Giving & Tax Benefits**  
**Wednesday, October 20, 6-8 PM**  
**(6 PM Wine & Cheese, 7 PM Presentation)**

*GSWA Headquarters, 568 Tempe Wick Rd., Morristown*

“How can I be better off from a tax perspective AND give money to charity?” It is a question that many people ponder, and there are a myriad of options. Join presenter, Stacey Valentine, a partner at Avelino Law, LLP, as she walks us through it. Stacey will focus on the estate planning process and specifically, how she assists individuals and families with their wealth planning goals. She will also explore some creative ways to benefit your favorite charity through retirement plan assets that can result in significant income tax savings. This is your chance to ask a professional so be sure to bring your questions. A 6 PM wine and cheese reception will precede Stacey’s 7 PM presentation. We look forward to seeing you there! Register at [greatswamp.org](http://greatswamp.org) or call 973-538-3500 This is a free event!

**Drew Forest Hike - GSWA Members Only**  
**Saturday, October 23, 10–11:30 AM**

*The Drew University Forest Preserve’s Zuck Arboretum and Hepburn Woods*

Visit Drew Forest for a special, guided tour for GSWA members only. The tour is an easy, mostly flat walk and takes approximately 1.25 hours. You’ll visit ponds, view wildlife, and learn how protection from deer and removal of invasive plants have brought back lost or diminished plant species, pollinators, food webs, and forest structure through restoration plantings as well as natural regeneration of native trees and 20 lost native wildflower species. Register at [GreatSwamp.org](http://GreatSwamp.org) or call 973-538-3500. Space is limited.

**Intro to Rain Gardens**  
**FREE: in-person and via Zoom webinar**  
**Thursday, October 28, 7–8 PM**

*GSWA Headquarters, 568 Tempe Wick Rd., Morristown, NJ*

A rain garden is a beautiful addition to your landscape that allows water to absorb slowly into the ground, preventing flooding, and preventing stormwater run-off from carrying pollution to our drinking water sources. We will discuss how to build a rain garden at your home. Due to a generous grant, Summit residents will have an opportunity to set up a free consultation with design professionals during the week of November 8<sup>th</sup> to plan and layout your garden. Consultations will take place at your home the week of November 8 by appointment. Registration is required for this free program. Register at [GreatSwamp.org](http://GreatSwamp.org) or call 973-538-3500.

**Change of Colors Hike (new date)**  
**Saturday, October 30, 10 AM–12 PM**

*Garret Mountain Reservation, 8 Mountain Ave, Woodland Park, NJ*

October is the perfect time to head outdoors and check out all the vibrant colors of autumn, and Garret Mountain is the place to be. We will take you on a journey through the trails of Garret Mountain and identify the many varieties of trees and plants as they begin to prepare for a long winter’s nap. Situated 500 feet above sea level, Garret Mountain Reservation offers several overlooks with panoramic views of northern New Jersey and New York City that you can’t see from anywhere else in Passaic County. GSWA Members: FREE, Non-members: \$10. Register at [GreatSwamp.org](http://GreatSwamp.org) or call 973-538-3500.

**Post-Thanksgiving Cleanup & Hike  
Sunday, November 28 (new date)  
9 AM-12 PM**

*GSWA Conservation Management Area  
(CMA), 92 Tiger Lily Ln., Morristown, NJ*

We all did it – we went for that extra helping of mashed potatoes... used a little extra whipped cream on our pumpkin pie... There's no shame in that, especially when you head outside and work it off! So, let's make a deal - you help give a little TLC to our Conservation Management Area (CMA) trails and as a reward we will take you on a hike! We will check out the recent wetlands restoration that has taken place at the CMA and the great work our volunteers have been doing throughout the year. Enjoy the new boardwalks and marvel at the sheer volume of native plants that have replaced the invasives. Can't do both? That's okay. Just let us know which works for you. Either way, we're working off our Thanksgiving meals together! GSWA Members: FREE, Non-members: \$10. Register at [GreatSwamp.org](http://GreatSwamp.org) or call 973-538-3500.

**Wine & Cheese - Yes Please!  
Wednesday, December 8, 5:30-7 PM**

*GSWA Headquarters, 568 Tempe Wick Rd.,  
Morristown, NJ*

The holidays are fast-approaching. Perhaps you're hosting, or maybe you're looking for something special to bring along to a dinner party. Why risk guessing when you can taste for yourself? Join us for a delicious evening of wine and cheese pairings and samplings. We

will provide eight locally sourced different types of cheese ranging from mild to sharp and creamy to crumbly. These cheeses will be matched with just the right wines to tantalize your taste buds and warm your spirits. It doesn't get any easier than that! This event is free if you are NOT a GSWA member. For GSWA members, bring a non-member along and you can both sip and sample for free! Register at [GreatSwamp.org](http://GreatSwamp.org) or call 973-538-3500.

**SAVE THE DATE  
GSWA Virtual "Source to Sea" 80-mile Run  
Begins Saturday, March 5 and ends  
Saturday, April 30th**

*Fee: \$30 registration*

Ready for a challenge? Virtually run, walk, bike or roll the length of the Passaic River from the comfort of your favorite place(s). This virtual event allows you to get it done at your own pace and gives you an opportunity to connect with the river in a fun, active way. Track your progress on the RunSignup app (coming soon) and gain some interesting knowledge about GSWA and the Passaic River along the way with factoids about the river and its surrounding environment at designated mile markers. This event is open to walkers, runners, cyclists, and most anything on wheels! Registration fee: \$30 (includes a t-shirt to be mailed to you.) This is not a race, but rather a fun challenge for those who have learned to love the convenience of a long, virtual run. Registration opens soon so be on the lookout for details coming your way! 🌲

**Know Someone Who Would Like to Become a Member?**

GSWA relies on members like you to help protect our watershed's natural resources. Please pass this newsletter along, and encourage your friends and neighbors to join us! Visit [GreatSwamp.org](http://GreatSwamp.org) for more information.

# “Let’s build the change we wish to see” – *Emily Pilloton*

by *Lynne Applebaum, Director of Institutional Relations*

This quote by Emily Pilloton, designer, builder, educator, and founder of the nonprofit Project H Design and Girls Garage, a rigorous STEM program for girls, clearly conveys the motivation behind Great Swamp Watershed Association’s STEM based environmental education programs. By educating the many students who reside in communities all across the Passaic River region about the water resources and the environment that surrounds them, we are hopefully creating agents of positive change for the future.

STEM Education is a major priority in modern learning. It helps to foster critical thinking and increases science literacy. While this is not new information, more recent focus on this kind of learning has definitely become sharper. Thanks to the generosity of the Bayer Fund and the PSEG Foundation, who have both supported us for almost a decade, GSWA’s education team has not skipped a beat, even during these challenging times. Our well-respected interactive STEM environmental education programs have been provided remotely- and in-person when feasible.

“Throughout the years, the grants given through Bayer Fund have helped strengthen our communities across the United States,” said Al Mitchell, President of Bayer Fund. “We’re proud to be able to provide support to develop programs that help combat challenges such as food insecurity, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) education and support services to patients and families managing an illness or disease.

PSEG Foundation prioritizes STEM education as well, in addition to focus areas such as environmental sustainability. PSEG’s mis-

sion states: “For more than 115 years, PSEG and its employees has been giving back to the communities where we live and work. The PSEG Foundation supports this mission with impact grants in the areas of sustainable neighborhoods, safety and STEM education.”

Education has been at the core of GSWA’s mission for 40 years. It is imperative to educate the next generation on the importance of protecting their environment. STEM education has become more and more important in preparing young people for their lives and careers, no matter which path they choose. It encourages critical thinking skills and strategies that will help them long term in their careers and in their lives. Our programs teach them about where their water comes from and how the choices they make, will affect the water that they drink. We teach them how to take better care of their environment and give them the tools needed to do that.

As people become more aware of the diminishing health of natural resources, organizations like GSWA will expand our roles as stewards, advocates, and teachers for environmental protection. The recent addition of a new education staff person who speaks Spanish as her first language will help us overcome some of the language barriers we have encountered in some of the downstream urban communities, enabling us to deliver our impactful programming to more schools in our downstream watershed communities.

With support from the Bayer Fund and PSEG Foundation, we will continue to expand our education program into more and more communities, educating and encouraging the next generation of environmental stewards. 🌲

# Creating a Legacy Through Charitable Giving

*By Wade Kirby, Director of Development*

It is a question that many people ponder, *how can I benefit my favorite charity in the most tax effective way for both myself and my family members as well?* There are a myriad of options and on October 20<sup>th</sup> the Great Swamp Watershed Association is privileged to welcome Ms. Stacey Valentine, a partner at Avelino Law, LLP who will explain. Stacey is a graduate of Colgate University and the Washington & Lee School of Law. Her presentation will focus on the estate planning process and specifically how she assists individuals and families with their wealth planning goals. Her practice includes all aspects of trusts and estates law including income, estate, inheritance, gift, and generation-skipping transfer tax issues, to help clients maximize the benefits of charitable giving.

The majority of planned giving occurs through bequests, however charitable gifting during one's lifetime can be achieved through the use of a Donor Advised Fund. In this case, funds are stewarded by an institution, but specifically directed to the charity of the donor's choice. A pledge agreement enables the donor to see the impact of their gift during their lifetime. Charitable gift annuities and charitable remainder trusts provide a cash flow to the donor during his or her lifetime. In each case, the designated charity receives cash upon the donor's death. A charitable lead trust can be set up with a designated cash flow to the charity during the donor's lifetime and consisting of a specific term by which the payments cease. At

the term's conclusion as established by the donor, the remaining amount passes along to the next generation. There are also family foundations which require a 5% annual distribution of income to charity.

Stacey will explore some creative ways to benefit your favorite charity through retirement plan assets. Identifying an eligible beneficiary of any qualified, retirement assets can result in significant income tax savings because these assets, if left to your other heirs, would incur income tax. Utilizing this method can also leave less tax-burdened assets to your other beneficiaries.

If you have a Life Insurance Policy that you no longer need, consider naming your favorite charity as the beneficiary and perhaps even the owner of the policy. This ensures that your original investment in the policy does not go to waste and instead benefits the charity in a meaningful and significant way.

Many wonder, *how can I be better off from a tax perspective AND give money to charity?* Your gift will realize an income tax deduction and can help escape capital gains tax. The legacy of including your children in your charitable intentions is an important education as part of your overall estate plan.

Please join us on Wednesday, October 20<sup>th</sup> at GSWA headquarters, 568 Tempe Wick Road in Morristown to learn more. Visit [GreatSwamp.org](http://GreatSwamp.org) to register for this program. A 6 p.m. wine and cheese reception will precede Stacey's 7 p.m. presentation. *We look forward to seeing you!* 

## GSWA Staff Changes

Wow, there have been a lot of comings and goings lately! Fond farewells to some staff who have moved on. **Debbie Rice**, our office manager and event coordinator extraordinaire, recently retired to enjoy life beyond the office! Debbie was with us for 10 years and was lovingly referred to as our office mom, always taking care of us and all the little details. **Kristina Necovska**, our part time membership associate, moved on to a full-time position in Ber-

gen County using her GIS skills. Kristina was with us for five years and really helped launch our social media presence. **Adam Palmer**, our education associate, moved on to a full-time position in the cannabis industry (!), focusing on fertilization and irrigation. We will miss Adam's enthusiasm for all things fungi and his fabulous photography skills!

And, while we will certainly miss them all, we are so fortunate to have hired some new equally fabulous staff members. 🌲

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## Welcome Nancy Rago

Nancy Rago is our new full-time membership and social media manager. Nancy brings 25 years of advertising agency experience. She oversees our social media, membership, and website management. Nancy jumped right in designing the gala invitation and working on the gala, our biggest fundraiser. 🌲



Nancy Rago

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## Welcome Sarah Thorpe

Sarah Thorpe is a recent Montclair State University graduate who has joined the GSWA staff on a temporary basis. She is currently managing the silent auction donation process for our October 7, 40th Anniversary Gala Celebration and Silent Auction. An avid camper, hiker, and outdoor enthusiast, Sarah is no stranger to environmental work. During her high school years, she accumulated plenty of dirt under her nails working for the Student Conservation Association (SCA) a non-profit, United States-based group whose

mission is to “build the next generation of conservation leaders and inspire lifelong stewardship of the environment.” Repairing and rerouting trails and getting hands-on experience with some serious equipment at our local state parks in this role deepened her appreciation and love of nature. She fits right in.



Sarah Thorpe

“Knowing the organization for much of my life, I feel so fortunate to have this opportunity at the GSWA to pass on some of my knowledge and passion on to others in hopes to make a better, more watershed-conscience future!” 🌲

# Angela Oviedo joins GSWA as one of our new Land Steward, Water Quality, and Education Associates

I am an environmental biologist who loves spending my time outdoors. I graduated from Kean University in 2017 with a degree in environmental biology. During my time at Kean I developed a passion for learning how animals and plants can influence people. After graduating, I spent time as an intern for the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. I later went on to work in an envi-



Angela Oviedo

ronmental lab and then an environmental consulting firm. As part of the Great Swamp Watershed Association, I will strive to gain the skills needed to help others understand the value in environmental conservation efforts in my home state of New Jersey. My personal hobbies include learning about indigenous plant medicine, creating visual art and new delicious food recipes. 🌿

# Virginia (Ginger) Van Ryzin joins GSWA as one of our new Land Steward, Water Quality, and Education Associates

I am so excited to join the GSWA staff. I was first introduced to the GSWA when I was a young child attending and later working at the Madison summer camp Nature Nuts. Once every year team members from the GSWA would come and teach about the importance of watersheds to the camp and we would take part in macroinvertebrate sampling of the stream.

Soon I went off to college, studying Environmental Sci-



Virginia (Ginger) Van Ryzin

ence and a minor in Earth Science at Ramapo College of NJ. Here I would spend much of my time outside, studying all the plants and animals that surrounded me. My passion for nature led me to volunteer with the New Jersey Conservation Foundation as well as the GSWA during my college experience. After graduation, I went on to work at Restore Native Plants, an environmental non-profit located in Ramapo Mountain State Forest before coming back to the GSWA. 🌿

## GSWA Experts Available to Speak to Area Groups

Do you wonder, “What is in my water?” or “What can I do to keep water clean for my children?” These and other questions about water quality, land preservation, and local efforts to protect the environment can be answered by the Great Swamp Watershed Association (GSWA). GSWA speakers give interesting, hands-on or virtual presentations that will educate and inspire members of your local club or group. Please contact Hazel England, Director of Education & Outreach at (973) 538-3500 or [hazele@greatswamp.org](mailto:hazele@greatswamp.org).

# Nature in the City

by Angela Oviedo, Land Steward, Water Quality, and Education Associate

**A** cres of habitat, abundant and unique wildlife, diverse and rich plant life, peaceful smooth sounds of streams, and earthy pungent smells. These may be

What of those who grow up walking on city sidewalks, spending their days in man-made brick jungles? The ones whose worlds have been dominated by grey and brown color schemes. Whose connection to nature has been skewed by the lack thereof. For these folk there is hope, for in these greyish brown jungles there are pockets of pure life.

I speak of none other than local parks. Yes! Local parks. Parks provide a wealth of services for both their local human population and the ecosystem. Increasing the quantity of local parks may increase their accessibility in



Deer spotted at Phil Rizzuto Park, Elizabeth, NJ

some ideas that come to mind when the word nature is invoked. The imagery of large spaces of land extending miles on end untouched by man, this is the ideal. However, for many this scenario is not always readily available.



Trails in Conant Park, Hillside, NJ



Riverfront Park, Newark, NJ

turn increasing their usage. Parks provide an essential connection for people of all ages to the benefits of nature and the outdoors. They enable people to lead healthier lifestyles, contribute to the economic wellbeing of their communities and enhance awareness of conservation efforts [1, 2, 3].

Parks help maintain their local ecosystems by improving the quality of air and water [3, 4]. Parks mitigate carbon and are sustainable landscapes, plants remove toxins from the air

*(continued on next page)*

## GSWA Advisory Council

In addition to our new staff members, we are so fortunate to have recently added two phenomenal members to our Advisory Council.

**Sally Glick** is a Principal of the Firm and Chief Growth Strategist at SobelCo., a certified public accounting and consulting firm in Livingston. Sally has over 30 years' experience as a marketing and communication consultant. Her credentials, professional associations, community involvement, honors and philanthropy are literally too numerous to mention! We are grateful for her

wisdom and friendship.

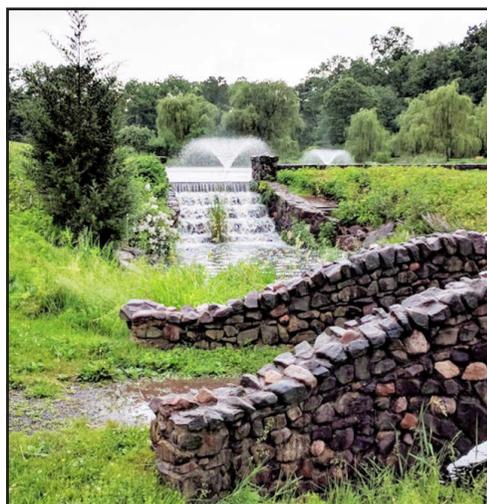
**Jose Barquin** is a Corporate Vice President at CCS Fundraising where he has spent 20 years working in the nonprofit sector. Jose has planned and directed fundraising campaigns and provided strategic advice to local, regional, national, and international organizations. Jose's skills and interest come to us at a perfect time in our organization's life.

We are so privileged to have all of our amazing talented and dedicated board and advisory council members. 🌲

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and filter rain reducing surface water run-off protecting natural sources of drinking water [4]. These green spaces also help cool cities, reducing the negative effects of heat [4]. Not only do parks contribute to the health of the natural environment, but they also contribute to the health of a functioning city by aiding in the management of stormwater and flooding [4]. Lastly, parks provide pockets of habitat for local animals to call home.

Hopefully next time you're in a city and walk past a local park, you'll think twice about the importance of these small spaces.



*Fountain of Bayne Park, Harding Township, NJ*

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2021  
*Gala Celebration*

Outdoor and indoor dining options are available. Guests will be requested to



PLACES IN MIRROR ARE LIKELY TO  
DISAPPEAR IF WE DON'T PROTECT THEM

VIP RECEPTION @ 5 P.M. | COCKTAILS & SILENT AUCTION  
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of protecting  
our local water  
and our land

GSWA is thrilled to invite you to join us on **Thursday, October 7th** for our **40th Anniversary Celebration Gala & Silent Auction** at the Brooklake Country Club in Florham Park, NJ. Our 2021 Keynote Speaker is Dave Robinson, New Jersey State Climatologist.

Dave Robinson is a distinguished professor at Rutgers University, the New Jersey State Climatologist, and conducts research that focuses on the diverse weather and climate of the Garden State.

Dave is a much sought-after speaker on the critical climate issues that affect every one of us today and threaten the health and safety of our future. We are fortunate to have him join us for our 40th Anniversary Gala Celebration. Together we can protect our precious resources before they disappear from our rearview mirror.

# The Many Ways to Show Support for GSWA

By Nancy Rago, Membership and Social Media Manager

As the new Membership Manager, I will work hard to recognize our members and empower them to be as engaged as they desire. I'm reachable at 973.538.3500, extension 11. We share information, news, and ideas with our supporters through mailed and email communications. If something changes, like a new mailing address or email change, send the new info to [nrago@greatswamp.org](mailto:nrago@greatswamp.org). The email subscription sign up is available at the bottom of the [greatswamp.org](http://greatswamp.org) home page.

In my first newsletter article, I wanted to show the different ways to make a meaningful contribution to our mission to protect and improve the health of the Passaic River through science, education, land preservation and stewardship, and advocacy. After 40 years, GSWA continues an ambitious vision for a vibrant period of growth for the organization. Our five-year strategic plan focuses on the four pillars of our mission, addressing the key components of water, education, land, and organizational growth.

**Membership** — Maintaining a solid financial foundation provides GSWA with the necessary resources to succeed with our water quality science programs, education initiatives, as well as our land preservation and stewardship projects. GSWA Sustaining Members make an ongoing commitment to provide a steady, dependable funding source to sustain our mission to protect our local water and land. Sustaining Membership is a recurring amount (\$10/month min.) made through a credit/debit card at [greatswamp.org/join](http://greatswamp.org/join). With an online or offline option, an Annual Membership amount is processed online through

our secure SSL encrypted payment system at [greatswamp.org/join](http://greatswamp.org/join), or offline with payments sent to P.O. Box 300, New Vernon, NJ 07976. GSWA Members enjoy free admission to many of our fantastic events, including exclusive hikes and educational seminars. This biannual printed newsletter is subsidized through membership. But most importantly, GSWA membership ensures that we will continue to be here to monitor and protect the Great Swamp Watershed and Passaic River for many generations to come.

**Donations, Appeals and More** — Donations positively impact our ongoing mission and, just like membership, are processed through [greatswamp.org/donate](http://greatswamp.org/donate) or mailed to our P.O. Box. I am inspired by the ongoing loyalty and commitment I've seen from our supporters answering an appeal for a specific project or purpose.

Bequests, Endowments and Land Donations are planned giving options to the organization, generally through a will or trust. Did you know that GSWA is an accredited Land Trust organization?

Many corporations encourage employee charitable giving through Workplace Giving like a Matching Gift philanthropy program, and in many cases, the employer will match the employee's donation.

Lastly, a Family Foundation is a living heirloom, passed from one generation to another, that can provide charitable vehicles to GSWA.

**Volunteerism** — In a typical year, 2000+ hours of volunteering occur in and around GSWA. The people that give their

*(continued on page 27)*

# Restoring our Floodplains - How Green Infrastructure Could be the New Solution

By Maya Sze – GSWA Intern

In the face of a changing climate, innovative minds are working to solve the problems that are associated with it. Already, flooding is one of the most damaging issues that we must face. But with more frequent and severe weather events due to climate change, we are seeing even more damage due to flooding both cost wise and environmentally. Globally we lose more than \$40 billion dollars each year.

There is one solution in particular that has been gaining a lot of traction, which is green infrastructure. Green infrastructure is, to put it simply, building with nature. Working with the environment instead of against it. Currently, to manage floods, we build dams and levees to control the flow of water. However, green infrastructure takes the approach of using nature's already interconnected systems to manage flooding instead.

Knowing this, we must first understand the importance and function of a floodplain. A floodplain is an area of land next to a stream or a river, meant to store floodwater. By restoring our floodplains, green infrastructure essentially allows them to perform their proper function, which is collecting water. Floodplains even have special soils that are good at absorbing water. If we restored our floodplains across the globe, we wouldn't have to spend as much money to manage and maintain the flooding infrastructure mentioned earlier. Also, this would lessen the pressure on nearby pipe networks and prevent water from pooling in streets or basements. Additionally, using green infrastructure to restore floodplains would allow ecosystems to thrive by allowing new species

to live in these places, and perhaps grant us the ability to take down flood infrastructure that blocks interconnected freshwater habitats.

One amazing example of a project that has fully embraced the potential of green infrastructure is the Greenseams project in the Milwaukee metro area. This area has been suffering from extreme flooding and the overflowing of the sewer systems due to increasingly severe weather events. The Greenseams project seeks to solve this problem by purchasing land and restoring these properties to help absorb rain and snowmelt. These properties are chosen specifically for their proximity to water, water absorbing soils, floodplain or wetland features, and connection to public spaces. Already, the Milwaukee metro area has seen a huge decrease in the costs needed to manage flooding. It also has had the additional benefit of providing endangered plants and animals habitats that previously didn't exist.

Our organization, the Great Swamp Watershed Association, has recently done a huge restoration by digging out previously filled in areas to create locations where vernal pools can be formed. These seasonal pools are places where water from rain and snowmelt can be collected and allow for less flooding in surrounding areas. Similar to the Greenseams project, this feat of green infrastructure will benefit both native and endangered species, and also reduce costs related to flooding both environmentally and economically. Since this project is new, no data has been collected yet about the effect it has had on flooding.

*(continued on page 18)*

# From the Financial Corner:

by Sue Levine, Director of Finance

The Great Swamp Watershed Association Investments now include ESG holdings. ESG or Environmental, Social, and Corporate Governance is an evaluation of a firm's collective conscientiousness for social and environmental factors. In late 2020, the Finance Committee reviewed the possibility of investing into ESG funds and as a result, modified the Endowment Policy to consider ESG funds so long as the returns are comparable to non-ESG funds. Thanks to an incredible and dedicated Finance Committee, the Finance Committee secured board approval and then began the research to find a fund that would meet our investment and mission-based requirements. An appropriate

broad market equity ETF which tracks with the S&P500 was selected. We will continue to seek out funds that align with our mission to protect the Passaic River Watershed and meet our investment policy requirements. We were fortunate to have a guest speaker at this year's Advisory Council which presented on funds that invest in water infrastructure. The Investment portfolio holds \$1.4M in board designed restricted funds, \$0.1M of endowment restricted funds and \$0.3M of operational reserve funds for a total portfolio value of \$1.8M as of June 30, 2021.

Operationally we are in the process of closing the fiscal year end and preparing for the annual audit therefore tentatively our results are an operational revenue of just over \$1 million and expenses just under \$1 million resulting in an anticipated operational breakeven for the year. During the pandemic both the community and the GSWA staff out did themselves with two music festivals, one rain, one shine, an incredible plant sale, corporate and foundation support above prior year and budget, major donors, membership, and trustee giving above prior year and budget, the EQIP project was added and largely completed with successful results in retaining more water at the CMA and the virtual gala was a home run. Thank you to each of you for your support and hard work in fiscal year 2021. 🌲

## Have You Considered Including GSWA in Your Estate Plans?

Designating the Great Swamp Watershed Association as a beneficiary in your will is a sure way to continue your support for our work and sustain it long into the future.

Specific language in your will should of course be reviewed with your attorney. For more information on GSWA's Planned Giving program, please contact Sally Rubin, Executive Director at (973) 538-3500 or [srubin@greatswamp.org](mailto:srubin@greatswamp.org).

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## Restoring our Floodplains *(continued from page 17)*

But based on the Greenseams project case study as well as many others, this is a huge step taken that will reap so many benefits. And we are so eager to see it.

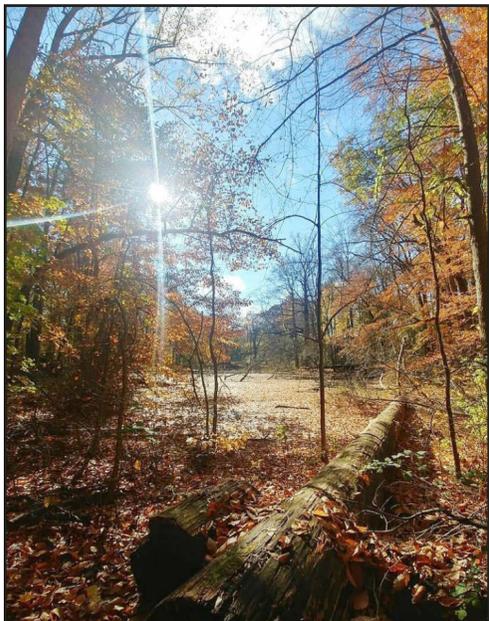
Floodplains are extremely important. Not only do they help absorb water and prevent

flooding, but they also provide much needed habitats for endangered species. This is how nature dealt with problems before mankind, and now with green infrastructure we can use these systems to forge new solutions. 🌲

## Richness and Hope in the Drew Forest *(continued from page 1)*

and restoring native woodland varieties. Such natural richness and diversity is exceptionally hard to find in New Jersey's suburbs, and increasingly rare anywhere.

The Drew Forest's immediate proximity to Chatham's extraordinary Giralda Farms Preserve is another reason to secure it for all-time.



*Drew Forest - Photo credit Silvia RQ*

Across the forest, small ponds and glacial dells also provide havens to native plants, animals and people seeking a restorative walk or contemplation in nature. VisitNJ.org notes features like these “serve as natural laboratories for Drew students and a wonderful woodland retreat for anyone.” In just one single recent walk, a visitor saw a snowy egret, great blue heron and green heron peacefully probing the ponds. One portion of the forest is Zuck Arboretum, for which a high-quality trail guide greets visitors and is available online. Another is Hepburn Woods, whose rustic trail offers immersion in the forest's

abundance. All 53 acres protect and reinforce each other.

We cherish our remaining local forests as unique places to visit, find peace and stimulation, and so much more. The Drew Forest naturally filters and purifies millions of gallons of water for the Buried Valley Aquifer, which our homes and families depend on. Its trees remove toxins from the air before they reach our children's lungs. Its native plants provide homes and nourishment for hundreds of species of butterflies, bees and birds to live in balance and provide wonder in our neighboring human communities.

Scientific findings abundantly demonstrate that undisturbed forests such as the Drew Forest also provide natural holding areas for enormous amounts of carbon, keeping excesses out of our atmosphere at this critical juncture in history. The forest's powers are local too, providing measurable relief from the “heat island effect” of suburban pavement and buildings in the summer.

It is no wonder that the Madison Borough Council resolved and so many residents want to preserve the Drew Forest and create a win-win for Drew University and all people. Through the Drew Forest, we experience a connection with our humanity and hope for our future.

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Judy Kroll is a resident of Madison and Joe Basralian is a resident of Chatham Township. Both are members of Friends of the Drew Forest. Please help save the forest by visiting [www.friendsofthedrewforest.org](http://www.friendsofthedrewforest.org) and on Instagram & Facebook as “Save the Drew Forest.” You are also invited to sign the petition and email [info@friendsofthedrewforest.org](mailto:info@friendsofthedrewforest.org).

Please see our upcoming events section for a guided hike in the Drew Forest. 🌲

# GSWA 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Great Swamp Great Music Festival – a Hot Ticket!

By Val Thorpe, Director of Communications and Membership

**W**e had no rain but all the heat... and our biggest numbers to date! This year's Great Swamp Great Music Festival was held on Sunday, May 23, at Giralda Farms in Chatham Twp. With approximately 700 people in attendance, we exceeded our attendee and financial expectations for this, our second largest fundraiser of the year.



The tree-flanked field provided much-needed shade for many festival goers while others braved the sun in the field. Six-plus hours of continuous live music entertained the audience throughout the afternoon as they danced, frequented the vendors, and safely mingled with one-another. Our volunteers did a tremendous job keeping it all moving through registration, parking, the bar area, the GSWA table, backstage, serving as runners, and promoting our newly introduced 50/50 raffle.

The raffle grossed \$1280, and the winner was awarded half. He then generously donated back \$100 netting us a total of \$740 to

use towards the purchase of our first GSWA kayaks. And that's just what we did. On our wish list for many years, these kayaks will allow us to conduct water quality sampling in areas of our local rivers and streams that, until now, have been unreachable. Also, with kayaks, our river cleanups will be even more effective, allowing us to get in the water and remove trash before it makes its way downstream. Plus, the GSWA staff managed to fit in a lovely morning paddle in the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge recently.

**Big thanks** to all who supported the music festival before, during, and after the event. We are truly grateful to our **musicians** for donating their time and tremendous talent: Jeff Webb, Nick Amling, Big



*Lenox Underground*

Train, Lenox Underground, The Big Fuss, and festival headliner, The Holiday Ramblers. And finally, thank you to our generous **sponsors**: Atlantic Health System, Delta Dental of New Jersey, Adrienne & Dillard Kirby, Peapack-Gladstone Bank, Senlac Ridge Partners, Debra & John Apruzzese,

*(continued on next page)*

## Hot Spot

### Rolling Knolls Landfill Superfund Update

The Rolling Knolls Landfill Superfund in Chatham has had an interesting development this summer. A meeting was held in early June with representatives from Chatham Township, Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, the Miele Trust (owners of the 135 acre private portion of the site), and Great Swamp Watershed Association. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the potential ultimate use and ownership of the site and how we may work together to achieve a mutually beneficial outcome.

The result is a Memorandum of Understanding which was executed by the parties in late July and which is posted on the GSWA website, shared with the Community Advisory Group, and sent to both the EPA and NJ DEP.

The Memorandum specifies that the parties support public use of the private portion of the site for open space, wildlife conservation, habitat restoration, and passive public recreation, consistent with the purposes of

the adjacent Refuge, following implementation of the Superfund cleanup. This would include year-round recreational activities such as hiking, fishing, birding, nature study and other similar activities. The Memorandum specifies that the parties are committed to create a cost effective model that returns damaged land and habitat to useful purposes which enhance the environment and quality of life in surrounding communities.

We are grateful for this progress and hope that it compels the Potentially Responsible Parties (PRPs) and the EPA to re-evaluate the proposed feasibility study based on this new commitment and reasonably anticipated future use of the site.

Another CAG meeting will be held this fall focusing on the results of the recent Fish & Wildlife data gathering and analysis as well as a discussion with the CAG consultants who have analyzed clean ups and proposed clean ups at other New Jersey and Region Two landfills for comparison. 🌲

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*(continued from previous page)*

Community Foundation of New Jersey, EA Boniakowski Insurance, Investors Bank, Agi & Matt Krauser, New Jersey American Water, Kit Stinson & Dick Muldoon, Valley Bank, Pamela Strode, Adrienne & Reed Auerbach, Glenmede Investment and Wealth Management, Lindabury, McCormick, Estabrook & Cooper, P.C., Mariner Wealth Advisors, Pipe Works Home Services, Inc., Regent Atlantic, and Lynn & Ralph Jones.

**See you in May 2022!** 🌲



Big Train

# Cleaning up the Passaic River – One Bank at a Time

By Sandra LaVigne, Director of Water Quality Programs

On July 10th GSWA participated in the City of Water Day as part of the *In Your Neighborhood* program. This is a region-wide day, organized by the Waterfront Alliance and its partners, to raise awareness about the risk we all face from sea level

and a half miles of stream bank. Our clean-up locations were spread through the watershed and included both the main stem of the Passaic and its tributaries.

- Loantaka headwaters, near Ginty Fields in Morris Township
- Millington Gorge in Long Hill
- Passaic River Park, near the soccer fields, in Berkeley Heights
- Canoe Launch off South Orange Ave, in Livingston

With the help of a mix of twelve GSWA staff, board members and our advisory council we were able to man check in points at



rise, climate change, and pollution in our waters and champion clean water and community access. *In Your Neighborhood* programming was organized by the New York–New Jersey Harbor & Estuary Program (HEP) with local partners offering dozens of events on and near the water across all five boroughs, New Jersey, and Westchester. *In Your Neighborhood* programming was supported by HEP, US EPA, and NYC Ferry.

Great Swamp Watershed Association was invited to take part in the initiative by HEP and organize our own activities. With the help of a generous grant from HEP we organized community clean-ups along over one

each of the locations from 10am to 1pm. There they handed out supplies like trash and recycling bags, gloves and information to passersby about what we do at GSWA. With funding from the grant, we were also able to give out reusable mugs and shopping bags to everyone who lent a hand. We had eigh-

teen volunteers come to clean up our stream banks over the course of the day. Our volunteers ranged from town Mayors and council people to boy scout troops with everyone pitching in.

Part of our goal for the clean-up was to track how many single use plastic items we collected. Plastics are a threat to our wildlife and when left in the environment larger items like single use plastic bags and water bottles break down into microplastics. These microplastics are carried into our waterways by stormwater runoff and are then consumed by animals that use and live in the streams.

So how did we do? Overall, we cleaned up:

- over 450 individual items of single-use plastics
- 2 tires
- over 200 tin cans
- 1 old fire extinguisher
- a dining room chair
- a tiny skeleton
- and many bags of general trash

All that and we covered only 1.7 miles out of 80 total miles of the Passaic River. We did amazing work but multiply those numbers times the length of the river...

If everything was equal, and there was no more trash at any one spot along the river than what we found, that would equal 36,000 pieces of single-use plastic just in the Passaic River alone. But all things are not equal further downstream, in more urban areas the increased population, as well as the increase

in impervious surface, means that even more trash finds its way into the water.



We need to keep up the good work, we need to get the word out to our communities about how important it is that we reduce the single-use plastics in our lives. Tell them about the impact these items are having on our streams and as they head out into the ocean, on the whole planet.

GSWA is already making plans to participate in next year's City of Water Day. Next year we hope to incorporate some more recreational activities that will help to show the communities along the Passaic River what an incredible, beautiful resource they have right in their own backyards. 🌲

## Interested in Volunteering?

If you are interested in getting actively involved in efforts to protect and preserve the watershed, GSWA has a number of volunteer opportunities (see [GreatSwamp.org/volunteer/](https://GreatSwamp.org/volunteer/)).

Please send an email to [volunteer@GreatSwamp.org](mailto:volunteer@GreatSwamp.org) if you would like to volunteer.

# Planting for Pollinators and for the Watershed!!

By Hazel England, Director of Education and Outreach, Land Steward

In late February, an intriguing email from a collaboration of environmental commissions, garden clubs and local non-profits landed in my inbox. The Northeast NJ collaboration were working together to share information and resources on many environmental issues, including plastics reduction strategies and ways to encourage homeowners to plant for pollinators. The group were wondering if GSWA would be open to being the hub for a native plant sale, utilizing our website and staff for the endeavor, leveraged by the coalition's volunteer support. After a couple of marathon logistical planning calls, we jumped in wholeheartedly, and the 'Plants for Pollinators' collaboration was born! Our kickoff date for the plant sale was only 5 weeks away, on April 1st, so we got to work selecting and ordering the native plants that would benefit the widest array of pollinators and grow well in the broadest array of typical garden conditions! The plant sale met GSWA's mission of protecting and enhancing the watershed, and encouraging, by demonstration and education, ways homeowners can live watershed friendly. Our Watershed Friendly living program has conducted many backyard gardening programs and we felt this plant sale enhanced all that we have previously done. We know that native plants tend to use less water, fertilizer and other inputs to grow well than ornamental plants do and give back by providing valuable habitat for myriad wildlife species.

Our small planning committee selected 19 native perennials (no small task to pick so few from the long list of fantastic native perennials) that would be sold individually and in 'kits' of complementary plants for in-



Planning committee from left to right:  
Susan Landau, Lydia Chambers, John Landau,  
Hazel England, Kristina Necovska

experienced gardeners to plant in groupings. The goal: pick plants that would perform well when planted by those with little background gardening knowledge, and with a high chance of surviving to maturity, providing resources for an array of insect and bird pollinators. Our criteria were non-fussy, easily grown plants that bloom over long periods, starting with early blooming perennials such as amsonia and lasting late into fall with asters and goldenrods. Also selected were plants whose leaves were munched on by the larval stages of many of the butterflies and moths we were attracting with nectar-laden flowers. Our staff created the 'storefront' portion of the website, with background information and photographs of each plant. Committee members John and Susan Landau worked on creating preview pages with the same information to gauge potential sales. Lydia Chambers headed up communication with the various partner groups. As the kickoff day neared, interest soared from potential customers who learned of the sale through communication from ten environmental commissions and seven other nonprofit or collaboration partners. We hurriedly upped

our orders with local native wholesale nurseries and had to source plants from further afield to fill the expanded number of kits we anticipated selling. We projected 200 customers would be a success for this first pilot year, and as multiple individuals promised to buy up any unsold plants, we were encouraged to expand our order to a massive 7,000 plant plugs.

The sale ran from April 1-22nd, Earth Day being a fitting end point for an environmentally focused endeavor such as this! We kicked off with a webinar I put together highlighting the goals of the program, and the value of planting natives for both pollinators and other backyard wildlife as well as showcasing the plants selected for sale. Many in the group are followers of ecologist Doug Tallamy's work, who advances the concept of the "Homegrown National Park". Tallamy believes it is not enough to rely on state and federal preserved lands for the biodiversity we need, but that every homeowner needs to contribute meaningfully to area biodiversity by changing what they plant in their own backyards. While lawn is ecologically unimportant, even small, densely planted native plant areas can help to sustain large number of valuable insects that form the basis of biodiverse food chains. A single pair of chickadees must find between 6,000-9,000 bugs to feed their young in order to raise just one successful clutch of eggs, and research shows that we need areas comprised of around 70% native plants to be able to sustain this...

More than 150 registered for the webinar, and as it wound down, almost all plants had been sold! With three weeks still left in the sale we frantically spent the next day ordering and planning logistics for the processing of a much larger endeavor! As a condition of partnership, the various non-profit and Environmental commissions offered to pub-



Slide from the kick off pollinator workshop.

licize and solicit volunteers for the sale and we scaled up our expectations. We planned with military precision for how to deliver the hundreds of orders to more than ten pick up locations throughout the watershed. We marshalled 140 plus volunteers into two-hour shifts, cutting apart the huge flats of plants into smaller units and labelling and assembling the kits of multiple plants. Over



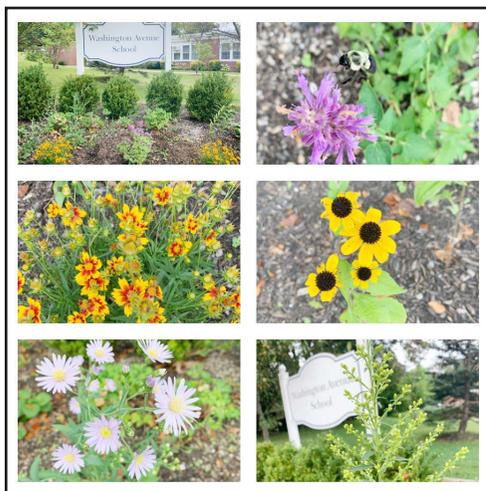
Volunteers label and sort the huge volume of plants ready for delivery

ten days at the end of April we worked to sort and ready the more than 430 orders for their delivery locations. Pick up and distribution occurred at the ten locations on the first weekend of May, and we continue to get great feedback from those who purchased plants this spring.

We have received some fantastic photos of gardens already blooming and providing valuable habitat to pollinators. Plants have been put into gardens at elementary schools

in Chatham, into recently removed grass lawn in Morris Township, and to enhance existing plantings as far away as Massachusetts!

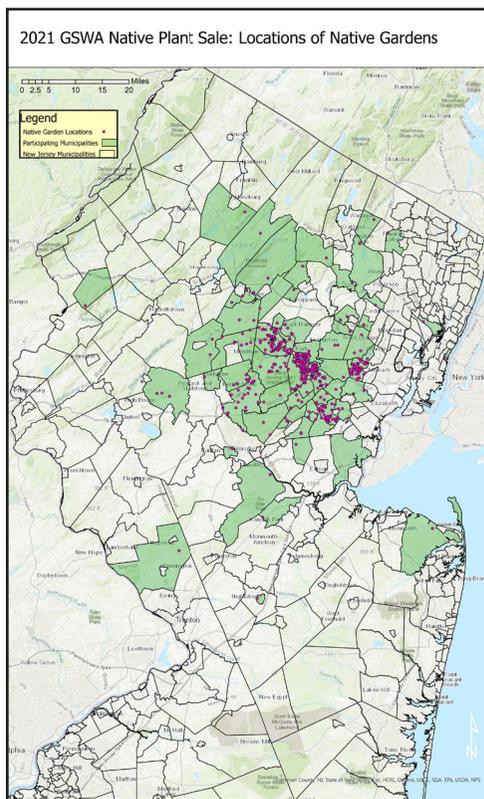
Hightstown in the south. By any metric the sale was a roaring success, and we have already begun planning for next year, learning what to improve moving forward.



Pollinator gardens at Chatham Schools.  
Photo credit Jessica Romeo

One customer from Basking Ridge shared: *“I want to say thank you for making native plants available (and affordable) this past spring. More importantly, I want to share with you the results of your efforts. My swamp milkweed is doin’ its thing! Often, you will find butterflies in our garden. Not only are the plants helping the monarchs directly, but indirectly as well...as my native garden is along the front walk to our house and impossible to miss, creating awareness with anyone that stops by.”*

All told we had gross sales of nearly \$38,000, unexpectedly a great fundraiser, as well as friend raiser for GSWA. We sold 320 large and small kits and altogether nearly 14,000 individual plant plugs. We estimated that if buyers planted their plugs 18” apart, we had created 20,475 sq ft. or more than half an acre of new fantastic pollinator habitat. Of the 430 customers, more than 300 were new to GSWA but can now learn more about the work we do. Residents of more than 70 municipalities purchased plants, including from Sparta Township in the North of the state to



Building on the success of the plant sale, we will also be offering a rain garden education program this fall and encouraging area residents to plant rain gardens in their yards to manage stormwater- known as green infrastructure. These rain gardens, when planted with native pollinator attracting species, can do double duty as great pollinator magnets. Our rain garden education programs will take place in person and virtually on October 28th, with a limited number of Summit area residents able to request a 45-minute site visit and plan for a rain garden for their own property as part of the program. These plans, created this fall, could be planted next spring

with plants from the plant sale! See our website events page for more information

Native pollinator gardens were also installed at Washington Avenue School, Milton Ave, Southern Boulevard School, and Chatham High School. Plants are already providing great habitat and greater learning opportunities for students!

If you have photos of your native plant garden to share, we would love to see them. Send them to [nrago@greatswamp.org](mailto:nrago@greatswamp.org) and let us know how your native plant garden is doing.

Save the date for April 2022 for the second GSWA and partners Plants for Pollinators sale! 🌿



Hazel England celebrating plant sale success.

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## The Many Ways to Show Support for GSWA *(continued from page 16)*

time and talents to our organization are priceless. I cannot say enough about the volunteers for our stewardship efforts at the Conservation Management Area (CMA). As of August 11th, they have officially completed over 1000 ft of new boardwalk this year to make our trail system more accessible, even when it is wet. An individual can volunteer for stewardship activities at the CMA or other projects around the watershed, like our Stream Team. There are Communications and Event Opportunities, too. To find a volunteer opportunity that fits your time and talent, visit [greatswamp.org/volunteer/](http://greatswamp.org/volunteer/).

Companies look to GSWA to provide Corporate Workdays that are fulfilling, team building activities for their employees. Civic and Community Groups volunteer to give back to the community and have fun with their group members at the same time. Past Eagle Scout Projects have included the creation and installation of signage, boardwalks, and interpretive materials.

**Social Media** — Through these media platforms, GSWA connects with supporters, raises awareness for our programs and events, and informs like-minded followers of the timely environmental news. We encourage a ‘Reply’ to further the conversation, a ‘Like’ to show your advocacy and that you’ve read it, and ‘Share’ our Posts with your connections to help us spread our message to a wider audience. On the top navigation bar on our home page, you’ll find the links to all the social media platforms we are on.

In conclusion and to quote the New Jersey biologist, lecturer, author, and explorer, Sylvia Earle, “You have to love it before you are moved to save it.” From environmentally focused programs to our hikes and workshops, to our 73-acre Conservation Management Area (CMA)...I invite you to explore all that GSWA has to offer. I am happy to be part of the Great Swamp Watershed Association team and join in their dedication to the organization and its mission and vision. 🌿



## **Great Swamp Watershed Association**

The Passaic River WATERKEEPER® ALLIANCE Affiliate

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