

FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

ANNUAL REPORT for 2022

Submitted by the Environmental Commission of Franklin Township, February 2023

2022 Commissioners:

Jason Brandt
Barbara Doherty
Margaret Duerr
Evan Duerr
Suzanne McCarthy, Vice-Chairman
Jeffery Link
Jon Stippick, Chairman

2022 Liaisons

Timothy Doyle, Township Committee
Heather Flaim, Township Committee

Emergency Management Operation Officer:

Matthew Decesari

Secretary: None (Suzanne McCarthy- Acting Secretary)

2022 Alternates:

#1 Giovanni Cavone
#2 None

Environmental Commission usually meets on the 4th Monday of the month, except when those are holidays. The EC meetings were convened in-person and virtually via Zoom, on the following dates in 2022:

January 13	July 25
February 10	August 22
March 28	September 26
April 25	October 24
May 28	November 28
June 27	December (January 4 th)

Applications Reviewed in 2022:

In the course of its meetings during the year, the Environmental Commission (EC) reviewed a total of **32** Planning and Zoning Board applications:

There were **14 Planning Board applications** and **18**

Zoning Board applications reviewed. Each application was discussed and comments were made when environmental issues were identified. These comments, or “No Comments” sheets (when there were no environmental issues), were subsequently submitted to the Planning or Zoning Board and became part of the packets of information for Board member review.

Emergency Management

The Environmental Commission keeps track of environmental problems within Franklin Township, especially cleanups of hazardous or potentially hazardous sites. The Commission members also sometimes receive reports from its Township Committee liaisons, Timothy Doyle and Heather Flaim, during the year. There were no reports of major environmental problems during 2022.

The Environmental Commission received 6 incident notifications from the NJDEP all relating to the discharge of hazardous material.

- One notice was pertaining to heating oil discharge (15 gallons) at a residence.
- One notice was pertaining to a diesel fuel spill (1 gallon) at 450 Delsea Dr.
- One notice was pertaining to soil contamination of Benzo-a-pyrene (0.52 mg/kg) at 2515 Delsea Dr.
- One notice was pertaining to a property on Piney Hollow Rd that had several violations including fuel/oil discharge and improper animal husbandry practices.
- One incident notice reported a probable fuel/oil spill from a boat on Iona Lake that resulted in a temporary fuel sheen on the lake surface.
- The final incident notice was a fuel spill (30 gallons) because of a motor vehicle accident at Fries Mill Rd and Williamstown Rd.

All incidents were investigated by NJDEP.

Correspondence:

Over the course of 2022 there was some correspondence that was reviewed at meetings (14 letters along with various newsletters). Correspondence consisted of notifications from the Pinelands Commission (8) about applications that were reviewed by them. Other notifications were from NJDEP (6) documenting possible hazardous materials spills.

Special Projects/Reports:

1. Malaga Lake Park:

- a. There was a trash cleanup event sponsored by the Environment Commission that took place on April 23rd, 2022 at Malaga Lake Park. Volunteers collected trash and recyclables from the park, trail and roadside. Several bags of trash were collected, especially along Malaga Park Drive. Participants also cut back invasive plants such as Phragmites and Bradford Pear trees. Time was also spent weeding the Native Wildflower Garden installed by the EC a few years ago.
- b. There was also an event on July 30th, 2022 to celebrate National Moth Week. 20 participants gathered to observe moths and other nocturnal insects that were attracted to multiple viewing areas by shining UV lights onto white sheets that were hung between trees. Over 175 different species were observed, photographed, and submitted to the international database via iNaturalist. This event was so successful that the EC plans to continue this event annually.



Promethea Silkmoth (*Callosamia promethea*) observed at Malaga Lake Park @ Moth Night. Photo: J. Stippick

2. Piney Hollow Preservation Area:

- a. A NJDEP Green Acres Stewardship grant for \$200,000, prepared by members of the Environmental Commission, was awarded to Franklin Township in February 2017. This grant will be used for Piney Hollow, to repair trails, build boardwalks in low-lying areas that are often impassable, establish interpretive and directional signage, and erect gates and barriers at entrances to eliminate vehicle traffic. Township Engineers, CME, worked with the EC throughout 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022 to develop detailed plans and to obtain permits from the Pinelands Commission. The Pinelands Commission approved the project. In December 2019.

Unfortunately, the quotations for the boardwalk construction, received in 2020, were higher than expected. The project was redesigned to eliminate the need for boardwalks over most of the flooded area of the main trail by creating an alternative path around the flooded area. This necessitated approval by the Pinelands Commission for the changes. As of the end of 2022, the township was still awaiting Pinelands approval.

3. The annual **Bird Quest** morning survey of birds in the township, organized by the Gloucester County Nature Club each year, was conducted on May 7th, 2022. The EC continued its tradition of participating in the event. Participants visited Piney Hollow Preserve and Malaga Lake Park, 55 bird species were observed. A comprehensive list of species is included in the Franklin Township Environmental Resource Inventory, available on the township website.



Green Heron (*Butorides virescens*) at Piney Hollow Preserve. Photo: J. Stippick

4. **Community Day:** The Environmental Commission participated in the 2022 Franklin Township Community Day. The theme of the displays highlighted the benefits converting manicured lawn to patches of wildflowers. The EC also provided informational handouts about light pollution and the importance of protecting the night sky. EC members engaged the public with a trivia game based on environmental topics focusing on water usage and providing prizes for correct answers.

Live aquatic creatures collected from Malaga Lake were also on display including several fish species, a frog and freshwater shrimp. All were returned to the lake after the event, unharmed.



FT Environmental Commission Community Day 2022 Display *Photo- J. Stippick*