



# Your Land & Water

A Joint Newsletter of  
the Federation of Gloucester County Watersheds and  
the South Jersey Land Trust



Winter 2004

*"Never believe that a few caring people can't change the world. For, indeed, that's all who ever have." - Margaret Mead*

## NEW MUNICIPAL STORMWATER RULES - Suzanne McCarthy

On January 5, 2004, the NJ Department of Environmental Protection passed new rules that will affect the management of stormwater in all towns in New Jersey. These new regulations are targeted at reducing non-point source pollution of water, the pollution that is carried into our streams, rivers, lakes, and wetlands by rainstorm/snow melt runoff coming from streets, lawns, parking lots, construction sites, and maintenance yards.

All municipalities must develop plans that spell out how they will meet the specific requirements of the Municipal Separate Stormwater Sewer (or MS4) program, also referred to as the Phase II Municipal Stormwater Rules.

There are 6 Statewide Basic Requirements (SBRs). The first two SBRs apply to every town in NJ and the remaining 4 apply to the majority of towns in Gloucester County and all those in Camden County.

### The 6 SBR's are:

- 1. Control post-construction stormwater management** in new development through adoption and implementation of a stormwater control ordinance that requires the retention on site of 100% of preconstruction groundwater recharge, the use of low-impact design in stormwater facilities, and the long-term operation and maintenance of Best Management Practices on municipal property, among other features
- 2. Conduct local public education annually for residents;** including an annual "event," distribution of information about low impact landscape practices and waste disposal; and labeling of all municipal storm drain inlets with some type of "don't dump" message.
- 3. Control improper disposal of waste** through improvement of yard waste collection and adoption of ordinances (pet waste, litter, improper dumping, and wildlife feeding).
- 4. Control solids and floatables** through increased street sweeping, retrofitting storm drain inlets during road repairs, and instituting programs for stormwater facility manage-

ment, for roadside erosion control, and for outfall pipe scouring/erosion.

- 5. Improve maintenance yard operations,** including better de-icing material storage, fueling operations, vehicle maintenance, and housekeeping operations.
- 6. Increase employee training.**

### Volunteer Assistance

The Federation of Gloucester County Watersheds and its member watershed associations are working to develop a program to assist municipalities in fulfilling the 2<sup>nd</sup> SBR – educating the public through an annual event, creation of printed mailing materials, and organizing storm drain labeling. The Federation established a labeling program for all of Gloucester County in 1999 that is administered through the Gloucester Co. Dept. of Parks & Recreation and is carried out by groups of volunteers such as scout troops.

The Federation's municipal assistance program and the ability of municipalities to meet their education SBR will depend on expanding volunteer aid. Look for more news on this Federation program and stormwater regulations in the near future.



**D**ON'T  
DUMP! PM  
DOWNSTREAM

## Save The Date

February 28

### All Gloucester County Environmental Commission Conference

9 am-1 pm

Washington Twp. Municipal Bldg.

Open to all interested persons.

Free. Pre-register: Email to

deborahann@backpacker.com or call 856-863-0330.

February 28 & March 13

### Vernal Pool Survey Volunteer Training

See article on Vernal Pools.

March 27

### Annual Land Trust Rally

Sponsored by NJ Conservation Foundation & partners. Call SJLT for information at 856-589-2049 or go to NJCF website: [www.njconservation.org](http://www.njconservation.org).

March & April

### Backyard Habitat Workshops

Check out the website for details to come. [www.sjwatersheds.org](http://www.sjwatersheds.org)

April 24

### Earth Day Festival

Washington Twp. Park, Greentree Road  
10 am - 3 pm.

Visit the Federation's Plant Auction.

## Regular Meetings Call to Confirm

### Federation of Gloucester County Watersheds

4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month, 7 pm  
Scotland Run Nature Center  
Call: 856-694-3681

South Jersey Land Trust  
3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month, 7 pm  
Scotland Run Nature Center  
Call 856-589-2049

### Bird Walks

1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of the month  
Scotland Run Nature Center

For info on this and other programs, call  
856-881-0845

Gloucester County Nature Club  
2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month, 7pm  
EIRC, Washington Twp.

Programs on many nature topics  
& great field trips.

Call 856-468-9272 or email Brian or  
Paula Hayes at [pnbhayes@aol.com](mailto:pnbhayes@aol.com)

## FEDERATION STAFF MEMBER, *at last*

The Federation welcomes Christine Coulson as its new Outreach and Education Coordinator for the "Building Watershed Awareness" project, funded by the Watershed Institute of New Jersey grant. While earning her degree in Geography/Environmental Studies at UCLA, she worked as Outreach Coordinator for the Green Team Project sponsored by the City of Santa Monica, CA. She also co-created Sustainable Works, a three-month sustainable living education program for Los Angeles residents, as well as volunteering with other environmental education non-profits. Since returning to South Jersey, she has been working in outreach with the New Jersey Environmental Lobby and as an Adjunct Professor of Geography at Atlantic Cape Community College.

Anyone wishing to volunteer to help with membership projects, staffing the Federation table at public events, or assisting with education programs can reach Christine at 609-501-1741 or [ccladybug5@hotmail.com](mailto:ccladybug5@hotmail.com).

## NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIC FOOD CO-OPS FORMING NOW!

Today's families are more health-conscious than ever. Finding quality Certified Organic produce at a reasonable price can be quite a challenge. Fortunately, Suburban Organics, a local food cooperative in Voorhees, New Jersey has a distribution network covering South Jersey. Suburban Organics has been delivering top-quality organic produce directly to customer homes for over five years including organic dairy, dry goods, and other natural foods, with plans to offer organic chicken, beef and fresh fish.

Suburban Organics is committed to fostering a healthy community. Members FGCW and SJLT who elect to start a Suburban Organics co-op earn cash on every order placed, which in turn is donated to FGCW and SJLT.

### How it Works

Each co-op consists of a minimum of at least 10-12 families. The menu for the co-op each week can be found on their website. Suburban Organics will drop off the produce at a desired location and time chosen by the co-op members. There is no minimum commitment, no contract to sign, no strings attached! Eat well, live well, and support your own cause! In addition to raising funds, co-ops can create a broader sense of community.

For more information about starting a co-op, visit [www.suburbanorganics.com](http://www.suburbanorganics.com) or call Suburban Organics at 856-427-0767.



# SOUTH JERSEY LAND TRUST:

## PRESERVING THE NATURAL HERITAGE OF SOUTHERN NEW JERSEY

In 1990 a group of concerned South Jersey residents saw a critical need for increased land preservation in rapidly developing southern New Jersey, and decided to form the South Jersey Land Trust (SJLT). Since then, this volunteer group has preserved over 1,125 acres, with many more acres currently in progress. For the past four years, SJLT has had major support and assistance from the New Jersey Conservation Foundation, a statewide land conservation organization.

SJLT's preservation efforts have focused on purchasing land through partnerships with Green Acres and other conservation groups, and providing assistance to communities and other organizations in their efforts. SJLT also restores critical wildlife habitat on preserved land, and works, again in partnership with other organizations, to promote smart growth land use planning and to offer educational activities about land preservation in our region.

SJLT projects have preserved over 500 acres of municipal open space that provide critical wildlife habitat and stream corridor protection, as well as opportunities for hiking, wildlife observation and other passive recreational activities. Over 155 acres of farmland have been protected by SJLT.



*Andaloro Farm, Big Timber Creek*

### SJLT Preservation Accomplishments

#### Municipal Open Space

- 400 acres of woodlands along the Nacote Creek in Port Republic, Cumberland County
- 102 acres of woodlands in Upper Deerfield Township, Salem County.

#### Protected Farmland

- 55 acres on the Andaloro Farm, including 25 acres of wooded stream buffer and 30 acres of fields on Big Timber Creek (that had been slated for a 90 unit housing development) in Deptford Township, establishing the *Andaloro State Wildlife Management Area*.
- 42 acres on the Lodge Farm, 1,500 feet of stream corridor frontage on the Mantua Creek in West Deptford Township. Preservation of this property establishes the first State owned *Wildlife Management Area* on Mantua Creek and the only public boating access.
- 60 acres of farmland and wooded stream corridor on Raccoon Creek in Logan and Woolwich Twps., establishing a *Wildlife Management Area* and stream corridor access in the Raccoon Creek Watershed.

#### Unique Habitats

- 114 acres on Cedar Lake in Monroe Township, Gloucester County and Buena Vista Township, Atlantic County, creating a *Wildlife Management Area*. SJLT also carried out a 75-acre wetlands restoration project on this property that will provide valuable habitat to numerous rare plant and animal species.
- 29 acres of open fields and pond habitat in Scullville, Cape May County, for wildlife habitat.

#### and More...

- 325 acres in Hamilton Township, Atlantic County through conservation easement, and 0.5 acres in Egg Harbor City, Atlantic County, land currently owned by SJLT.

#### More to Come

- 100 acres in S. Harrison Twp, Gloucester Co
- 50 + acres in East Greenwich, Gloucester Co
- 40 acres in Auburn, Salem Co
- The Raccoon and Oldman's Creek Watersheds through a Green Acres Area Grant.

#### Support South Jersey Land Trust

SJLT is making every effort to protect our region's unique and critical habitats, but we really need more help. If you support these efforts, please become a member. If you have an interest in getting involved or know of a special place in need of preservation, please contact us at 856-589-2049.

# STOP THE SPRAWL - STEP #2 - Suzanne McCarthy

## *How can you help control sprawl in your community?*

This is the second in a series of short articles on the steps you can take to influence local development. The first article, issued in the Fall 2003 *Your Land & Water* newsletter, advised learning about the basic planning documents pertaining to growth and environmental protection in your municipality (Step #1). This article focuses on the development and land use applications that may come before your town's land use boards.

### **Step #2**

Residential developments often begin as **Major Subdivisions** creating multiple lots from a single lot. The review process for local approval of major subdivisions is set out in the Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL), the legislation that grants land use regulation powers to the towns. Local land use ordinances must reflect the standards of the statute.

### **Types of Applications**

Applications for development are usually of the following types:

**1) Conforming Applications** are proposals that meet all of the requirements of the town's zoning ordinance. They are reviewed and subject to approval by the Planning Board as to their design. The application may be for subdivision approval or for **Site Plan** approval. A site plan includes the design of a building and other features on a par-

ticular lot including building location, parking, stormwater management facilities, access and grading, and utility and landscape plans.

**2)** Sometimes a project will require a **variance** (permission to deviate from the terms of the zoning ordinance) as a first step. Such an application may go before the Zoning Board of Adjustment. This Board's principal powers are to hear and decide questions on interpretation of the zoning map and land use ordinances of the town and to grant variances, or "relief," as necessary and appropriate.

### **Types of Variances**

A proposal requires a variance when what is proposed is:

- A **use not permitted** in the zone, or an expansion of an existing **nonconforming use**. An example would be siting an industrial facility in a residential zone. (A "Use Variance")
- An **intensity of use** above the permitted density of the zone, for example, applying to build more houses, on smaller lots, that the minimum lot size allows. (A "Use Variance")
- Nonconforming size, shape or certain aspects of the **configuration of a lot or structure**.



An undersized setback from the street or sidewalk might be an example. (A "Bulk Variance")

### **Questions to Ask:**

- What development is coming to your community? Not all development is bad for a town, but sometimes a project is going into the wrong place, is an undesirable use for a particular area, or may have a negative impact on sensitive environmental features of the site.
- What applications have been submitted and where are they in the approval process?
- Are any variances required?
- What do your zoning and land use ordinances allow and where? Reading the ordinances will tell you what types of development are permitted in various sections of your community, at what densities, and under what restrictions and requirements. You can review the ordinances at the town hall, on the municipal website, or request a copy (for a set fee) from the clerk's office.

The **Environmental Commission** of your municipality often reviews subdivision and site plans that are scheduled to come before the Zoning and Planning Boards. Contact the E.C. to find out if an application in which you are interested is under review. This is one way for you to see the specific plans and to learn what variances are being sought, if any. The plans of any application become public documents once the application is submitted and are thus open to examination at the land use office. *cont.*

## Vernal Pool – Sue Bagienski

A Vernal Pool is a wetland that occurs in a confined area and has no obvious outflow. The size can range from about 10 square feet to several acres. An important feature is that the pool has no permanent fish populations. Vernal Pools last a few months between March and September and then dry up. The varieties of vernal pools found in New Jersey include woodland, wet meadow, scrub, swamp, and man-made. The most common types in South Jersey are the swamp and woodland types.

There are many species of frogs and salamanders that breed in vernal pools because their eggs and young can survive more readily in the absence of fish predators. The Eastern tiger salamander, spotted salamander and the blue spotted salamander

are all obligate species (which means they only breed in vernal pools). Some obligate frog species are the wooded frog and the Eastern spadefoot toad. Vernal pools also provide a foraging habitat for turtles, birds, snakes and mammals and can provide permanent habitat for rare plants, dragonflies, and fairy shrimp. About 500 total species inhabit vernal pools annually.

Until recently, vernal pools in NJ were not under the same level of government protection as wetlands and could be filled in and built upon. This reduced the number of these important habitats and worsened the decline of species that

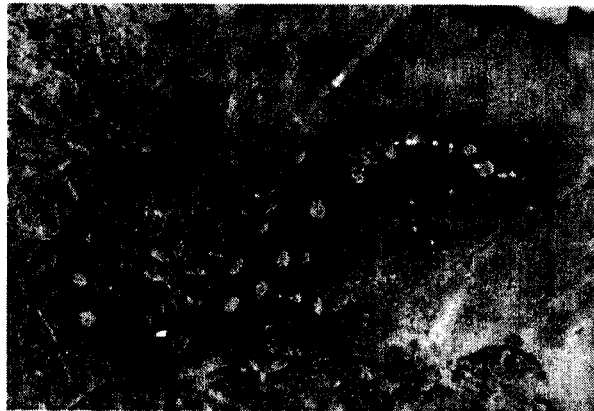


Photo by: Tony McBride, 2002

depend on them. A Vernal Pool Survey by the NJDEP under the Endangered and Nongame Species Program (ENSP) is now underway to map vernal pools and report on the species present in them. It relies on volunteers to carry out this work, and many more volunteers are needed.

Surveying starts in late winter when amphibians begin to mate, so comprehensive training sessions will soon begin.

## STOP THE SPRAWL - STEP #2 *cont...*

If a **public hearing** has been “noticed” it means that the property owners within 200 feet of the applicant’s property were notified of a public hearing to review the application. At this point, the applicant has already submitted complete plans and an application. There will be a **public portion** of the hearing on the application, following the full presentation by the applicant. At the hearing you have the opportunity to ask questions, cross-examine witnesses’ testimony, voice objections, and present relevant new information.

If **Zoning and Land Use Ordinances** in your community should be strengthened or improved, the proper group to address is the municipal **Governing Body** (the Council or Committee). This elected body adopts, amends, revises, and enforces the Zoning and Land Use Ordinances, subject to advice by the Planning and Zoning Boards.

The key is to become knowledgeable about the specific growth occurring in your community and to participate in the review of proposals whenever necessary. **That’s step #2!**

### Vernal Pool Training Sessions

February 28<sup>th</sup> 9am-3pm  
Stockton College

March 6<sup>th</sup> 9am-3pm  
Hackettstown Fish  
Hatchery

March 13<sup>th</sup> 9am-3pm  
Lord’s Sterling  
Environmental Center  
Basking Ridge, NJ

For more info:  
Call 908-735-8975  
or visit the ENSP website at  
<http://www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw/ensp/vernalpool.htm>

## Join the Federation of Gloucester County Watershed



- Basic Membership - \$15
- Contributor Membership - \$35
- Sponsor Membership - \$100
- I would like to volunteer

**FREE BONUS:** You will automatically become a member of your local watershed association.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Town \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Send this form along with your check to  
FGCW, PO Box 233, Glassboro, NJ 08028

## Join the South Jersey Land Trust



- Basic Membership - \$25
- Contributor Membership - \$35
- Sponsor Membership - \$100
- I would like to volunteer

Help us preserve the lands  
that you care about!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Town \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Send this form along with your check to  
SJLT, 229 Lake Ave., Pitman NJ 08071

All Memberships are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.