

EC ANNUAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2013

The Oakland Environmental Commission had a very busy year. Stewart Woods Park and the Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) were on going for most or all of the year. But other projects like the Land Preservation Roadshow and the Environmental Commission table at the town carnival took months of planning. The EC has also been very active in the progress being made with Oakland's newest park, Great Oak Park. We met every month this past year with only one month without a quorum.

Stewart Woods Park

- December 1, 2012, - laid out a trail in the hillside of the property.
- March 29 – Vanderbeck Tree Service of Oakland donated fresh wood chips for the trail
- March 30, 2013 – Several OEC families, along with Matthew Richards (the Boy Scout who eventually made this trail part of his Eagle Scout project) worked on clearing the trail. Over one third of the trail was covered with wood-chips, delineated by narrow, fallen tree trunks. Dangerous rocks along the trail were moved.
- April 3 – Meeting with Matthew Richards, Boy Scout, and Martin Treich, Eagle Scout Project Adviser, on site to discuss project parameters to begin project approval for an Eagle Scout Project: the hillside and valley trail through the Woods, the benches and picnic tables.
- The nature trail signage would make use of the existing kiosk that was completed about 3 years ago at the upper start of the trail. The 6 – 8 interpretive stations is one of our goals for this year. Hikers will be able to get a trail map with the nature stations in full explanation from Borough Hall, or the Library, a student from the school or possibly download it from the Borough website.
- The OEC ordered all products and supplies for this park project, including selecting benches and picnic tables, two sets of garbage pails for the park, 4 red oak trees, and the memorial plaque.
- Additional signs pointing direction to trail (4) and two others, asking people to kindly keep their dogs leashed and pick up after them.
- Vanderbeck Tree Service of Oakland donated their time again in the Fall to remove dead and exotic trees to make room for the Red Oaks.
- A cross walk and drop curb were installed along Ramapo Valley Road across from the First-aid Squad building. This will provide safer crossing for trail users, many who are children attending Dogwood Hills School and Valley Middle School.

Phase I of this park is about 80% complete. Plaque commemorating Mrs Stewart will be mounted on a large rock when the weather permits. The garbage pails will be installed when weather permits. The nature trail brochure should be completed by Spring 2014, in time for a park dedication ceremony.

Natural Resource Inventory

- September 25, 2012 we had our kick off meeting for beginning the NRI. On March 5 we had a public presentation of NRI maps at the library which was attended by OEC members and Kerry Miller from ANJEC.
- Next we worked on verifying map detail.
- In April Debbie Kratzer, our NRI consultant, was given a site tour of Oakland.
- In June a list of 130 birds sighted in Oakland was submitted for inclusion in the NRI. Mr. Daniel Poalillo, a teacher at Indian Hills, volunteered his time to complete the bird list.
- By September 15, we received the complete first draft of the NRI. During next 3 months the OEC reviewed, researched, and wrote any additions needed for the NRI. Local rain data was also submitted from 1995-2012. Alex Myers submitted a Biodiversity section for the NRI.

Resident Michael DaSilva submitted geology pictures and text additions to improve the geology section.

- We are expecting the next draft any time now.

Town Carnival Booth

Informational table was set up at the annual Town Carnival 6/26-6/29/13. An energy savings poster and game were used to offer energy saving tips and renewable energy information. A Boy Scout poster on animal paw prints was displayed as well as a water-tasting challenge. Booth visitors tasted bottled and tap water and tried to guess the tap water. Oakland's tap water tasted so good that the tasters guessed our tap water was bottled water about ½ the time. We also displayed items to be recycled and handed out information on Oakland's recycling program.

ANJEC's Land Preservation Road Show

On October 2nd the Oakland Env Commission partnered with the Franklin Lakes and Wyckoff Env Commissions to host ANJEC's Land Preservation Road Show. The session was very informative and residents of the three towns learned about Open Space Stewardship and Walkable / Bikeable Communities. The speakers talked about the environmental and economic benefits of preserving open space, how to create an open space plan and develop facilities and programs that improve bike/pedestrian opportunities. Students from Ramapo High School also assisted with the program.

Great Oakland Park

EC members participated in several preliminary townhall meetings held last January /February to discuss potential uses of the proposed park. The Park Committee was officially formed in July 2013. Two Environmental Commission members (Lee and Mark) were appointed to the Park Committee and participated in two clean-ups, walkthroughs of the park and planning meetings to discuss trail access and layout. The last several meetings included discussion of potential Eagle Scout projects to formerly map out trails and discuss plans for clearing brush and dangerous tree limbs.

Land Conservation Rally

On March 9, Nancy Krause and Jerri Angermueller attended NJ Land Conservation Foundation Rally in Newark. It was an excellent educational opportunity to bring ideas home for Oakland

Earth Day Cleanup at Great Oak Park

The EC and their families had a park cleanup for earth day. The Oakland Emergency Management Team was also there for a river clean up. We were able to join forces and accomplish so much more.

ANJEC Annual Meeting

In October, Nancy Krause and Jerri Angermueller attended the annual meeting for ANJEC. This is an inspirational meeting that helps us learn what other Environmental Commissions are doing throughout the state as well as a source of resources that are available for our town to better its environment.

Solar Energy

In response to the proposed Solar Panel Ordinance the Oakland Environmental Commission wrote a letter to the Oakland Planning Board in favor of solar energy production within the Borough of Oakland. Solar energy is an important part of New Jersey's plan to produce clean energy.

Difference between the Oakland NRI and the Oakland-Highland ERI

Nancy Krause, after researching the matter, wrote the Oakland Planning Board and attended the Planning Board meeting in order to discuss the importance each of the separate documents – the NRI and the ERI. The Oakland EC recommended that both documents be adopted to the Oakland Master Plan after review to insure there is no conflicting information. It recommends adopting the Oakland NRI first or adopt them simultaneously, with the Highland's ERI as an appendix to the Oakland NRI.

EC Supports Green Team

In December the EC wrote a letter to the Mayor discussing the importance of appointing a green team to maintain our Bronze Sustainable Jersey certification. Two or three of our members would like to be on the green team.