

ANNUAL ACCOMPLISHMENT REPORT

Municipality Township of Dennis
County Cape May
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Mayor's Signature _____ **(John Murphy)**

The year 2015 saw a number of initiatives by the reinstated environmental commission in the Township of Dennis under Robert Penrose (Chairman) and Ray Rebmann (Vice-Chairman).

Commission members for 2015 are (alphabetically): Chris Castor, Alma George, Frank Hoff, Cindy Leatherwood, Jerry McManus, Robert Penrose, Ray Rebmann, Brad Rosenthal, Sue Slotterback.

Community Forestry activities for the calendar year include the following:

- 1) Submitted a new Community Forestry Plan. A three member subcommittee reviewed, updated, modified, and expanded the former plan for the upcoming five year period.
- 2) Maintained Volunteer Hours recordkeeping schedules. Each member has maintained records of hours/tasks dedicated specifically to business related

to community forestry. These will be reported to the Township of Dennis (as part of the commission's annual report to that body).

- 3) Maintained member training. Three members of the commission attended day long training in Atlantic City. Offered by the NJ Shade Tree Federation, the required training allowed the township to maintain its certification. **We now have 5 CORE trained individuals, four on the Commission: Bob Penrose, Alma George, Brad Rosenthal, and Chris Castor, as well as Vernon Champion in Public Works.**
- 4) Planned local projects for tree planting. With the local school and on township property, the commission organized several tree planting initiatives including seedling giveaways at the local museum and the Dennis Township Public Schools. **By participating in the NJ Tree Recovery Program in 2015, the Commission was able to distribute 1500 seedlings.**
- 5) Research on historical trees. Using available assets at the local museum, members have begun reviewing past records for the purpose of developing a list of historically "significant" trees. This record will include digital photographs, locations, and measurements of specific tree species. This will be an ongoing project into the coming years and may include geocaching as a means of "marking" significant trees in Dennis Township.
- 6) Community Outreach. Informational displays/brochures made available at specific township events including National Night Out and Dennisville Historic Homeowners Association House Tour.
- 7) Established media communications for community, including a Facebook page and a separate presence for the environmental commission on the township web site.

- 8) Supported environmental activities by groups not directly affiliated with Dennis Township Environmental Commission. For example, a tree planting/natural habitat project undertaken at the Dennis Township Elementary School on Hagen Road (see attached description).

- 9) In reviewing applications before the local Land Use Board, the commission consistently made recommendations directed at minimizing tree cutting. In the instance of one application, the commission advocated to save a number of trees that previously have been determined to be "historically significant".

10) Commission member Cindy Leatherwood, also a teacher at Dennis Township Public School, gave a presentation to 7th-8th graders at the school's Health Fair. The presentation covered the do's and don'ts of tree planting and the importance of trees in our everyday lives. She also distributed handouts/brochures showing proper month by month care for first year trees.

In addition to forestry activities mentioned above and submitted in an earlier report specifically for the NJ Department of Environmental Protection, the environmental commission performed a number of other services for the Dennis Township community. Among these are:

- 1) Spring clean-up along Hagen Road for which the commission was ably assisted by students and parents from the local public school along with members of the Ocean View Fire Company.
- 2) National Night Out, for which the commission set up an informational display and met members of the public attending the event. We were joined by Meredith Brown from the American Littoral Society.
- 3) Member Cindy Leatherwood created and has maintained an active FACEBOOK presence which is being "followed" by more than 150 regular viewers and growing.
- 4) Led by member Jerry McManus, the commission continued its work renovating the natural garden at the municipal complex including the addition of a frog pond.
- 5) Following up on a leak at the Ludlam Dam, the commission initiated a study of the condition of all dams located within the township. Data was collected from sources including the US Army Corps of Engineers and the NJDEP. A subcommittee was formed which has begun on-site inspections of the dams in question (The results of these inspections will be included in the commission's 2016 report).
- 6) Contacted NJDEP to express interest in becoming part of Delaware Bay Watershed Committee, coordinated by Senator Van Drew. The commission was notified that this body will meet again in 2016 and commission participation is welcome.
- 7) Commission members, particularly Jerry McManus, assisted a local Girl Scout troop that has been working at the garden at the museum in Dennisville.

- 8) Commission member Chris Castor attended an educational forum on septic system maintenance and reported on this at a full commission meeting.
- 9) Reviewing applications to the Land Use Board, the commission consistently recommended “least harmful” activities from applicants regarding parking, paving, and landscaping, including using “native plantings” whenever feasible.
- 10) Maintained an active relationship with Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions, an organization of municipal environmental commissions throughout the state.