

# Environmental Commission Report of Activities for 2014

## Citizens Stormwater Advisory Committee

Art, Joan and Cathy were reappointed.

Stormwater information was included in the "water" newsletter sent to all residents.

## \$10,000 Sustainable Jersey Small Grant – Conservation Easements

Final report sent to Sustainable Jersey on 4-09-14. Approved 5-16-14.

**Municipality:** West Amwell Township

**County:** Hunterdon

**Grant Award Amount:** \$10,000

**Submitted on:** April 9, 2014

**Report Prepared By:** Catherine Urbanski

**Title:** Chair, Green Team

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### Project Description

Conservation Easement Stewardship Program: The Township wished to complete an inventory/inspection of conservation easements and to prepare a map of all easements using ARCGIS software. Education and outreach to all residents was important. The project went as planned, except that the easement inspections were not totally completed, due to the ice and snow cover this winter. The Township plans to complete the remaining inspections this spring and summer. 65 of 99 easements were inspected and documented, with descriptions and pictures (Attachment A).

### Project Completion Summary

To date, over 400 volunteer hours have helped to bring the project to its current status. Since the filing of the interim report, work has continued on the easement inspections. The mapping has been completed.

Education and Outreach – All easement holders were sent information on the care of their easements (attachment B) and were notified that the easements would be inspected (attachment C).

Conservation Easement Map– The completed easement map was mailed to all residents of the Township (Attachment D). The map was constructed using the inventory of easements, the tax maps, Hunterdon County GIS and deeds. It also included all other deed restricted properties in the Township. Some of the easements on the tax map were not in the Township's files. Several of the easements on the tax map were not recorded in the deeds. Many of the easements had to be digitized by hand. A 2'X3' map was produced and is on display in the Township's main meeting room. The map was well received by the residents.

Easement Inventory and Inspections – Volunteers prepared and continually updated the easement inventory. Easement inspection and documentation were done by volunteers and to date 65 out of 99 inspections have been completed. Inspections are to be completed this summer as we were delayed by the snow and ice this winter.

☐ The grant money was spent as follows:

Education/Outreach/Easement Inspections - \$1587.00

Map of Conservation Easement and Deed Restricted Properties - \$8413.00

☐ The project basically followed the original proposal and the interim report. We did underestimate the cost of the GIS mapping and the amount of volunteer hours that easement inspections would take. The project ran over the grant funding by \$161.81. Inspections are still ongoing and will be completed this summer. The easement stewardship program is in the process of being written by volunteers.

#### **Evaluation**

☐ West Amwell never had an inventory of conservation easements. The completed inventory provides a baseline of easements which will aid the Township with future monitoring. Residents did not either know they had an easement or were uncertain as to what an easement meant. Through education and outreach they now are aware of the benefits of and the restrictions on their easements. Most residents were very grateful for this information and had many questions during the inspections. We were very pleased that no easement violations were noted. Also, the Green Team plans to monitor the sale of homes in the Township and provide information to those new residents with easements recorded in their deed.

☐ Preparing the Easement Inventory was the greatest challenge. The Township had records of some of the deeds, but others had to be obtained at the Hunterdon County Hall of Records. Tax maps provided very useful easement information, but were not complete. Production of the easement map was very time consuming, but ultimately was very successful.

☐ We feel that the project went very well. Our recommendation is that future monitoring be undertaken by a professional or a larger number of volunteers. It was a difficult task to have the inspections being done by two volunteers.

#### **Expenditures through November 2013**

2-14-13 – Printing of Trifolds \$235.20

2-19-13 – Stamps for Trifolds \$55.20

4-02-13 – Print and Fold letter \$26.72

4-01-13 – Stamps for letter \$55.20

4-01-13 – Envelopes and labels \$44.49

4-11-13 – Camera and cards \$157.92

4-09-13 – Banisch, meeting, consultation \$450.00

Sustainable Jersey Small Grants Program

Final Report Template

Page 3

4-19-13 – Field report copies of bl/lot \$14.93

5-01-13 – Engineering survey of Calton \$23.95

5-02-13 – Banisch, GIS mapping \$1110.00

6-06-13 – Banisch, continue mapping \$1350.00

7-03-13 - Banisch, map \$2100.00

8-09-13 – Banisch, map \$1350.00

9-05-13 – Banisch, map \$870.00

10-08-13 –Hunterdon County, print maps \$142.75

print letter \$52.00

West Amwell envelopes \$45.00

Postage, West Amwell \$444.82

11-07-13 – Banisch, final invoice \$1633.00

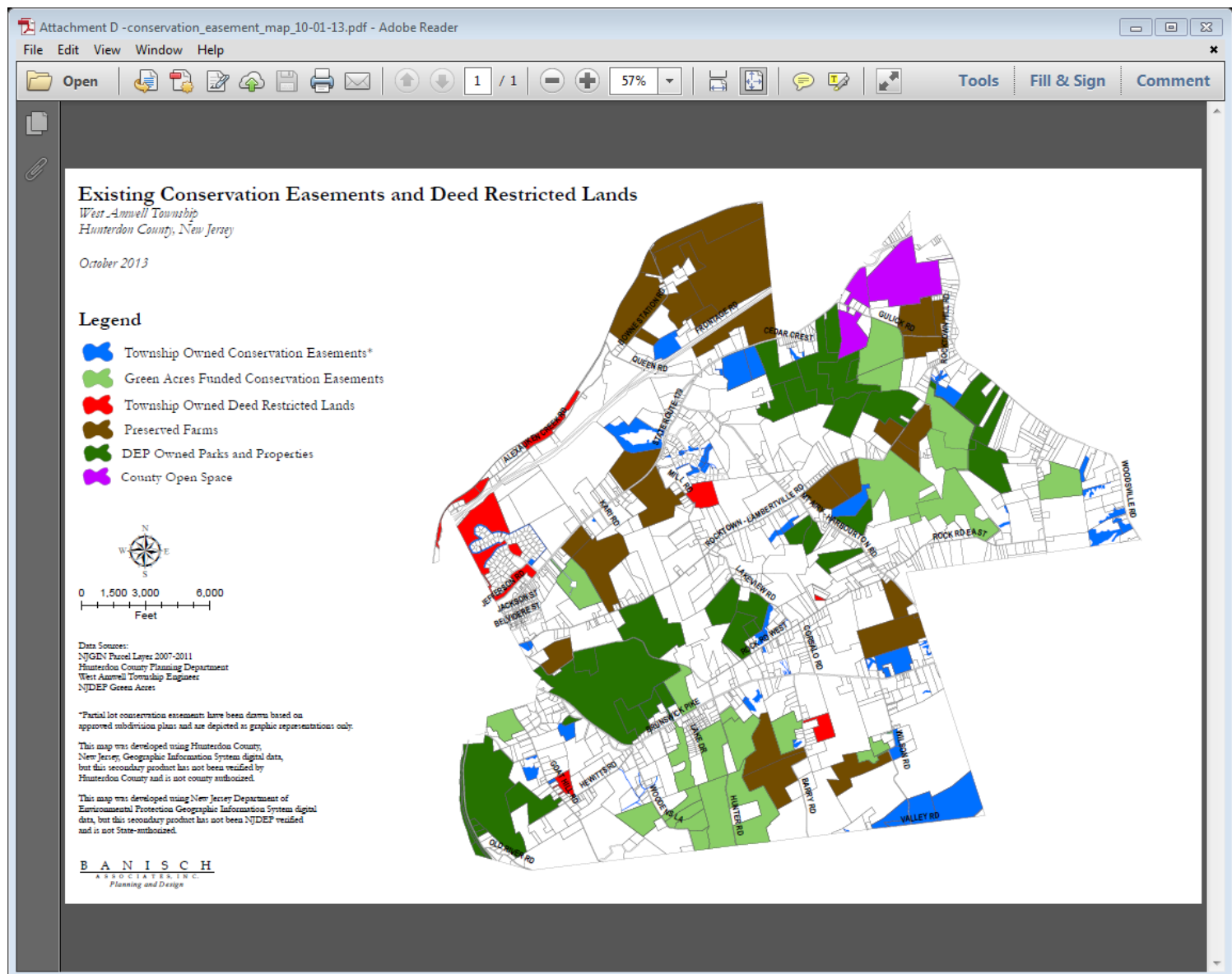
Total expenditures \$10161.18

Attached also is the list of expenditures from the CFO (Attachment E).

Invoices, purchase orders, and/or receipts are attached that relate to the list of expenditures included in the final report (All listed as Attachments F).

The Grantees Certification and Declaration is attached (Attachment G).

Map prepared by West Amwell and Banisch&Associates:



### **319h grant**

Commission members worked with Steve Souza, Princeton Hydro on proposed projects. The NJDEP has been difficult to work with. On-going projects for the dam decommissioning at the Alexauken Creek Wildlife Management Area are still pending DEP approval/permitting. Detention basin projects for the Orleans development have been rejected by the residents as they do not want to view a natural landscape, preferring a mowed area. The Rain Garden at South Hunterdon Regional HS has been planted and replanted. The students were involved with the project and love it and have provided benches and bird feeders. Signage has been provided by Princeton Hydro.

Members also reviewed Princeton Hydro's new plan for a raingarden and bioretention system on the municipal property and provided comments and concerns to Princeton Hydro. Awaiting final documentation.

**Woodlands Ordinance** – As requested by the Planning Board, the Commission reviewed the draft ordinance. The members made comments and changes. The ordinance was subsequently amended with input from the members of the EC.

The EC's recommendations included:

1. 109-269 - recommend that lot acreage in the table on page 2 be clarified.
2. 109-269 page 3, D.

If woodlands are to be disturbed or removed, the applicant shall design the development in such a way as to or minimize removal of woodlands which provide enhanced environmental or scenic value, which shall consist of woodlands in any of the following categories: **need to address the timing of the removal to minimize disturbance of nesting T&E species.**

3. 109-269 page 4, F. Exceptions:

Add: (5) Any invasive species of tree as listed in the West Amwell Township NRI subject to verification by the Township's Woodland Advisor.

**NRI Update** – EC members Van der Veen and Urbanski will update the NRI in 2015 to reflect the changes in the Woodlands Ordinance.

**PennEast Pipeline** – Two members of the EC (Urbanski and Zuzov) were appointed to West Amwell's Pipeline Committee to educate and inform the residents of their rights and provide ongoing information.

**Sustainable Jersey** – West Amwell Township was re-certified as a Sustainable Community in 2014 through the efforts of the Environmental Commission/Green Team.

