

# Hopewell Township Environmental Newsletter

A Publication of the Environmental Commission

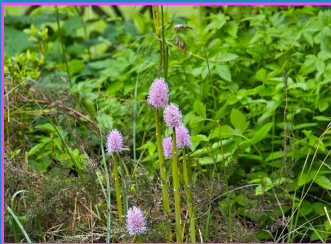
## Environmental Commission Members

Jerry Lewis - Chair  
 Jane Hankins - Vice Chair  
 Beth McClain - Secretary  
 Ken Strait - Liaison to  
 Land Use Board  
 Burt Doremus  
 Marion Carll  
 Cheryl Lalancette

## Meetings

The Hopewell Township Environmental Commission meets the second Wednesday of each month @ 7 PM except for November and December when meetings are held the first Wednesday of the month. The meetings are open to the public and all are welcome to attend.

Newsletters are available on the township website and the township Facebook page. Printed copies available in the municipal building.



Threatened Swamp Pink

## The Cohansey River & its Wetlands



Part of the Delaware Bay Watershed, the Cohansey River runs 30 miles from its headwaters at Cool Run and Bostwick Lake in Salem County, through many areas of Cumberland County, through Hopewell Township and into Cohansey Cove on the Delaware Bay.

The 111-square-mile watershed encompasses one of the largest expanses of quality wetlands in the state. It is home to eight towns and maritime villages, including one of the Bayshore's largest urban centers, Bridgeton, and two National Register historic districts. In 1774, the small port village of Greenwich near the mouth of the river was the scene of an incident similar to the more famous Boston Tea Party, in which imported tea was burned as a protest against taxation.

North and west of Bridgeton, the watershed is rural, dominated by farms growing vegetable crops. Below Bridgeton, moving south and west, the Cohansey River supports sizable non-forested wetland complexes. Marshlands along both sides of the river extend inland for several miles.

Riparian forest can be found along the upper Cohansey, north of Bridgeton. A contiguous forest patch envelops the southeastern corner of the watershed, in Fairfield. It is home to Clarks Pond Wildlife Management Area, the Richard Buhlman Preserve and Rattlesnake Gut. This area also supports an unusual plant community of water plantain and quillwort and the threatened swamp pink.

## *Importance of Wetlands*

Wetlands are commonly referred to as swamps, marshes, or bogs. However, many wetlands in New Jersey are forested and do not fit the classic picture of a swamp or marsh. Previously misunderstood as wastelands, wetlands are now recognized for their vital ecological and socioeconomic contributions. Wetlands contribute to the social, economic, and environmental health of our state in many ways:

- o Wetlands protect drinking water by filtering out chemicals, pollutants, and sediments that would otherwise clog and contaminate our waters.
- o Wetlands soak up runoff from heavy rains and snow melts, providing natural flood control.
- o Wetlands release stored flood waters during droughts.
- o Wetlands provide critical habitats for a major portion of the state's fish and wildlife, including endangered, commercial and recreational species.
- o Wetlands provide high quality open space for recreation and tourism.

Hopewell Township has over 2000 acres of wetlands which are regulated by the Freshwater Wetlands Protection Act rules (NJAC 7:7A).

The New Jersey Conservation Foundation has helped preserve over 2,700 acres around the Cohanse River. In 2010, the Foundation initiated a farmland preservation partnership with Cumberland County, which has already resulted in the preservation of several area farms. For more information about preserving land in the Cohanse River project area, contact [info@njconservation.org](mailto:info@njconservation.org).

## *Why the Cohanse Is Important to Hopewell Township*

The Cohanse River is one of the finest examples of New Jersey's Coastal Zone, yet one of the least protected. Nowhere is this more true than in Hopewell, where much of the river's most important and vulnerable habitat and scenic landscapes are being targeted by developers and mega-home builders.

Measures to safeguard the river's edge and important woodlands in order to protect critical habitat, water-quality, and the river's phenomenal wild and scenic characteristics, which are being lost to inappropriately located development are being studied by the township with other groups including The American Littoral Society. Check out these groups working for the protection of the Cohanse River:

Hopewell Township Master Plan @ [www.hopewelltp-nj.com](http://www.hopewelltp-nj.com)

Littoral Society @ [www.littoralsociety.org](http://www.littoralsociety.org)

Cohansey Area Watershed Association @ [www.cohansey.org](http://www.cohansey.org)



Wetlands along the Cohansey



Scenic View of the Cohansey