

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 Carl
 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.

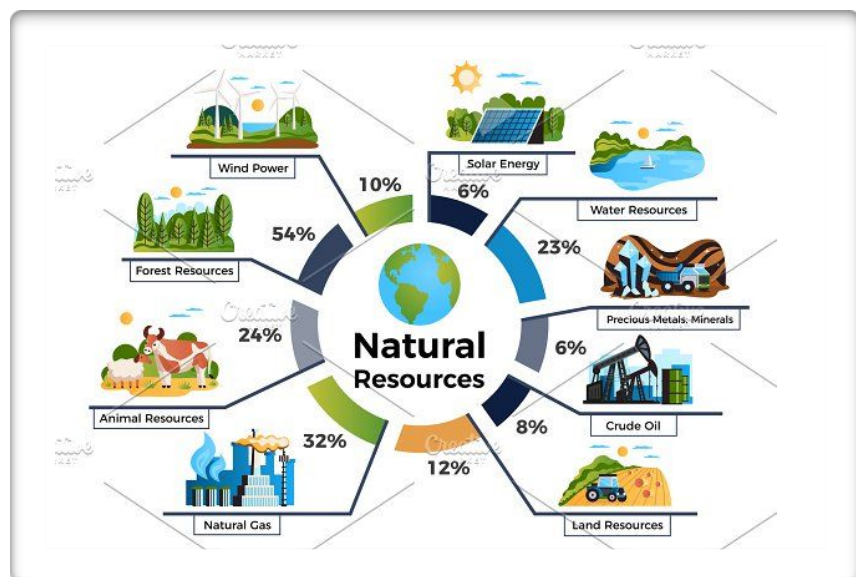
Newsletters are available on the township website and the township Facebook page. Printed copies available in the municipal building.

Environmental Resource Inventory

One of the jobs of the environmental commission is to periodically update the township's ERI. We are currently working on that project. What is it? What does it do? How is it used? All good questions.

The Environmental Resource Inventory (ERI), or Index of Natural Resources, is a compilation of text, tables, maps and other visual information about the natural resource characteristics and environmentally significant features of an area. The Environmental Resource Inventories now commonly use the addition of manmade features to the inventory, such as historic sites, brownfields and contaminated sites. It is a baseline document for measuring and evaluating resource protection issues. Identifying significant environmental resources is the first step in their protection and preservation and in assuring that future development or redevelopment protects public health, safety and welfare.

The ERI is an important tool for governing bodies, environmental commissions, open space committees, planning boards and zoning boards of adjustment. As part of the master plan, the ERI can provide the foundation and documentation for master plan updates, ordinances, legal defense, open space or agricultural protection plans, protection of water resources, and many other municipal functions.



The ERI (or sometimes called the Natural Resource Inventory) is an unbiased report of integrated data. It helps the local municipality understand the capacity and limitations of its natural resources, and becomes the basis for the analyses and recommendations concerning the impact of land use and other decisions on local and regional resources.

An updated ERI will reflect resources that have changed, such as forested or agricultural lands since the original ERI was created. In some cases, new information may be available about a particular resource, or the laws or regulations that govern its use might have changed. It is also important to educate and inform the community about the ERI and changes that may have occurred. Recent concerns about global climate change and energy may require changing the components of the ERI. You can find the current ERI on the township website under the Environmental Commission menu.

What Are the Uses of an ERI?

As a tool to increase the understanding of natural systems and their limitations and opportunities for use

A basis for a land capacity analysis, for determining the intensity and location of development;

As a factual basis for municipal land use planning, including preparation of the land use element of the municipal master plan

A guide in the site plan review process

A reference for developing municipal ordinances and establishing management practices for public lands and infrastructure

As a means to help identify priority areas for open space, historic and farmland preservation;

An educational tool for residents to learn more about their community and its environment;

A way to save dollars by avoiding future problems such as flooding and degradation of water quality

A guide for the environmental commission on where more research is needed to supplement existing data and studies.



Who Uses an ERI?

- Environmental Commissions
- Planning and zoning boards
- Developers
- Planners and engineers
- Environmental consultants
- Open space committees
- Elected officials
- Residents and property owners
- Educators

The ANJEC RESOURCE CENTER (anjec.org) offers the following services to all citizens:

- reference collection of more than 7,000 books, pamphlets, documents and government publications ranging from academic texts to Environmental/Natural Resource Inventories;
- more than 1,200 material files covering topics from acid rain to zoning;
- extensive materials on state and federal laws including current legislation and regulations;
- extensive file of municipal and model ordinances on topics such as light and noise pollution, critical areas protection and stormwater management;
- response and referral for information requests and questions on local, state and national environmental issues, problems and projects.