



NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2015

Working Since 1972 to Save the Environment of Moorestown

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."
— Margaret Mead

Jan. 2015, Volume 44, Issue 1

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STEM's ANNUAL JOINT MEETING

A Peek Into the Hive—The Lives of Bees

FREE
ADMISSION

Featuring: **JEAN MANCINI, Beekeeper & Bee Enthusiast**

Tuesday, January 27, 2015 at 7:30 p.m

Moorestown Community House, 16 East Main Street, Moorestown

Hosted by STEM, Moorestown Improvement Association,
Pompeston Creek Watershed Association, and the Moorestown Garden Club

There's no guarantee that the weather will be warm on January 27, but Jean Mancini's enthusiasm for beekeeping will surely heat up the room when she presents the topic at the Community House on Tuesday.

As a seven year veteran of beekeeping, Jean will share her experiences and insight into the goings on in a hive. Honeybees are a colonial insect and the inner workings of the hive is a fascinating study which demonstrates their highly organized society.

Information on bee-friendly planting, how to distinguish bees from wasps and other stinging insects, and honey will be available. Join us for this interesting and educational presentation. Light refreshments will be offered. For more details contact Kathy Huffman at 856-778-2201 or kajer3@comcast.net.



Images above courtesy of Google Images

Calendar of Upcoming STEM Events

Wednesday, January 21
STEM Steering Committee Mtg.
7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, January 27
Annual Joint Meeting
Community House
Main Street, Moorestown
7:30 p.m.

Sunday, February 1
STEM Strategic Meeting
10:00 a.m.

Wednesday, February 18
STEM Steering Committee Mtg.
7:00 p.m.

Saturday, March 14
NAC Conservation Project
Strawbridge Lake Buffer
Rt. 38/Pleasant Valley Ave.
9:30-11:30 a.m.

Wednesday, March 18
STEM Steering Committee Mtg.
7:00 p.m.

Saturday, April 11
NAC Conservation Project
Pompeston Park Upstream
of New Albany Road
9:30-11:30 a.m.

A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Reading various articles about land preservation in NJ has made me more aware of its challenges and the need to be ever vigilant and protective of these preserved areas if we want to have a legacy to give to our children and grandchildren. Industry is vital but so is open space. We need to look critically at proposed projects that seek to utilize protected land in unintended ways.

An example of such a project is the fracking industry's proposal to build the Penn East Pipeline which would run a 36" diameter underground pipeline 108 miles from a distribution center near Wilkes Barre, PA to a point north of Trenton. Along its route, the proposed pipeline would cut through preserved land and would fragment forests, segment preserved farms, compact soils, put wildlife habitat at risk, and cross drinking water supply waterways. Other projects in the works include the proposed Pilgrim Pipeline from Albany, NY to Linden, NJ, passing through numerous watersheds and preserved lands, and closer to home, the proposed 22 mile pipeline in the Pine Barrens. This last proposal was voted down in 2014 by the Pinelands Commission; however a possible new voting majority could reverse that decision.

This past holiday season when our family was together, I was reminded of the importance of preserved open space as we enjoyed hikes through Moorestown's South Valley Woods, Little Woods, and Susan Stevens Halbe Preserve. Wishing you and yours a healthy and Happy New Year!
—Kathy Huffman

Introducing Moorestown Beekeeper Jean Mancini

There is a real buzz about bees locally and nationally. The bee populations have declined dramatically, are the subject of much discussion, and are receiving well deserved attention.

The insect species caught STEM's Annual Joint Meeting presenter Jean Mancini's attention, and after taking beginner and advanced courses at Rutgers, she started hives of her own. Jean says she "fell in love with bees" and "finds them endlessly magical and fascinating." Seven years later, she is still beekeeping and tends to four hives on Westfield Road. Jean reports that the nearby neighbors "have beautiful gardens and don't use pesticides, so it's a great spot."

One of the rewards of beekeeping is the wonderfully sweet and nutritious honey that the hives produce. Jean says that she harvested a record 70 pounds of honey this past summer, but that there have been years when the harvest was nil.

It's sure to be an interesting evening discussion. Join STEM and its Joint Meeting partners for a peek into the hive! Additional information on Jean's presentation at the Moorestown Community House on Tuesday, January 27, 2015 at 7:30 p.m. can be found on the cover page of this newsletter.

Percheron Park Update

People passing by the site of Percheron Park at Main and High Streets have become accustomed to seeing its 75' x 60' grassy expanse dotted with about 15 circular soil remediation well caps and a sign promising its development in the future. But until the environmental OK is given to proceed with construction, grass remains as the surface for the park (a gas station for about 100 years in its former life). To help envision its future look, visit the website, www.percheronpark.org. The Friends of Percheron Park committee continues with planning the developmental details. Sculptor Joshua Koffman is fashioning the Diligence horse statue at his Philadelphia studio, and fundraising continues. Limited

STEM Does Need Your Dues!

We here in Moorestown tend to take STEM for granted after its 43 years of existence. But think about it—how many other communities in the area support an organization such as ours?



Comparing the Honeybee to Several of its Relatives:

All photos courtesy of Google Images

Top right: a Wasp

Top left: a Bumble Bee

Second from top: a Hornet

Third from top: a Honeybee

Bottom photo: A pollen-encrusted honeybee



STEM was founded in 1972 by a small group of Moorestown citizens who saw the need for a community-based organization to address local environmental issues such as water and air pollution, solid waste disposal, recycling, and land preservation. Forty-three years later, STEM continues to fulfill its stated objectives of preserving, protecting, and enhancing the natural environment for today's and future generations.

One way of doing this is by encouraging the use of native plants in public and private areas. Native plants are those species that evolved along with the fauna of an area. STEM members and other volunteers help to maintain Moorestown's Open Spaces with periodic, hands-on conservation sessions to keep trails open and invasive plants and litter down.

STEM, a non-profit organization, includes among its needs the purchase of supplies, printing, postage, land acquisition, speaker fees, and a number of other miscellaneous items that add up over the year. The organization is funded primarily by members' yearly dues, fund raisers, and donations. Please help by sending in your membership dues. For your convenience, a membership form is on page 7.

Your financial support indicates your commitment to STEM and its mission. STEM thanks those of you who support the organization financially as well as in its many activities! —Margo Foster

edition, ten-inch, heirloom-quality brass models of the statue are offered at \$5,000. (See under "News" heading on website.)

The park, commemorating the 1839 introduction of the Percheron horse to the USA by Moorestown native Edward Harris II, will be owned by Moorestown Township. Its development cost is being raised by the citizens of the town. About half the cost for park construction and the statue has been donated to date, so the opportunity to participate in this fabulous new look for the Town Center still beckons. The website provides details of donation levels. Become a part of Moorestown's history with your

name at the park! Checks can be sent to Friends of Percheron Park, PO Box 153, Moorestown, NJ 08057. Donations are tax-deductible.

—Margo Foster

Photo below from SSO 2014 by Bob Laramie, of Laura DeJong and the quartet who performed at the event. See page 6 for more photos.



Save The Environment of Moorestown, P.O. Box 704, Moorestown, NJ 08057
Visit us online at www.stemonline.org. Our newsletter looks great in color!

115th Christmas Bird Count—Moorestown Area

The weather forecast for this year's 115th Christmas Bird Count improved as we approached the big day. The original forecast of cool with showers ended up as a seasonably appropriate day with temperatures reaching the low forties in the afternoon, with no rain. For this year's count, I was again joined by fellow STEM board member Sue Buffalino, and her husband John Lestino. Joining the group for the second year was Jody Hey, a professor of biology at Philadelphia's Temple University.

This year we started our day with a quick drive through Strawbridge Lake and a walk in Waterworks Woods. Along the lake, we tallied multiple Great Blue Herons, Double Crested Cormorants, along with multiple fly-bys of Belted Kingfishers. As usual we counted good numbers of the ever-present Mallards and Canada Geese.

Our next stop was Lew's Farm along the Pennsauken Creek. It was pretty quiet along the creek, but we did spot our first Winter Wren of the day along with Red-tailed Hawks and Black Ducks. All in all, it was a pretty poor day for waterfowl. The mild weather at the beginning of the winter was probably responsible for the low numbers. If waterways are not frozen up in the north, there is not a need for the birds to push south.

"All in all, it was a pretty poor day for waterfowl. The mild weather at the beginning of the winter was probably responsible for the low numbers."

Our next stop was Pompeston Creek Park, accessed from Fernwood Drive, where we had large numbers of White-throated Sparrows and Dark-eyed Juncos. Circling above the park we had our first Black Vulture of the day. As it turned out, we counted more Black Vultures than the more common Turkey Vulture—that was definitely a first for my region. Speaking of turkeys, we were shut out this year—the first time in many years that we didn't see a single Wild Turkey on count day.

After lunch we headed over to Swede Run Fields. Probably the most interesting thing we saw was the impact of a beaver dam that is expanding the wetlands along Swede Run near where it passes under Westfield Road. These

expanded wetlands were sheltering approximately 75 Mallards—the largest flock of Mallards that we saw all day. Swede Run Fields is usually a very good spot for sparrows, and this year we were treated to great views of a Fox Sparrow. This species is one of our largest North American sparrows and its striking coloring (hence the name) makes it one of the most distinctive. These birds breed far to our north and west, but winter primarily in the mid-Atlantic and mid-western states.

"In my book, the Swamp Sparrow is one of the best looking sparrows around."

From Swede Run Fields, we headed over to Boundary Creek Natural Resource Area. We had some great looks at multiple Swamp Sparrows in the reeds along the creek. In my book, the Swamp Sparrow is one of the best looking sparrows around. We also had our best birds of the day in a pair of Rusty Blackbirds. We first saw them fly into a sycamore tree by the large viewing platform, thinking them to perhaps be Brown-headed Cowbirds. From there, they flew into the tidal area, where they were actively walking on the ground looking for bugs by flipping over wet leaves and debris. These formerly abundant northern visitors have seen their numbers drop by an estimated 85% to 98% over the last 40 years—one of the most precipitous declines of any North American bird species.

Overall it was a pretty quiet day, with our species count reaching only 40. This is significantly lower than last year's 48 species. We missed spotting a Bald Eagle this year, a bird we typically get about 50% of the time. As I write this I haven't yet seen the

final numbers for the full count circle, but I would expect we will be near our "normal" 100+ total species.

—Mark Pensiero



Swamp Sparrow



Fox Sparrow



White-throated Sparrow



Belted Kingfisher

Photos: clockwise from top: Swamp Sparrow, by Lucky Bwon; Fox Sparrow, by Gary Tyson; White-throated Sparrow & Belted Kingfisher, courtesy of National Audubon Society Field Guide to N. American Birds, Bull & Farrand, Jr.

NOTE: Sparrows all have a small, compact, conical beak. Compare that beak shape with the kingfisher's.

NATURAL AREA CARE —Caring for the Environment



Looking forward to
seeing you at one of the
NAC Projects

About the NAC Committee

With nine Moorestown preserved open spaces to maintain, STEM's NAC Committee and its site leaders and co-leaders are a busy group. It takes a lot of coordinating to juggle everyone's schedules and a dozen project dates and get it to fit into the NAC calendar. Credit for this task goes to NAC Chairperson Jean Fox and we thank her for her efforts. The NAC calendar on the right is subject to change. Please check the website for up to date information.

Volunteers Needed for all NAC Sessions

Natural Area Care volunteers don't need a thorough knowledge of plants and habitat management to participate in open space stewardship projects—a love of the outdoors is the only prerequisite. Site leaders and regular NAC volunteers are well-versed in what needs to be done and are ready to guide the newcomer and give direction. Typical projects include trail maintenance, invasive plant removal, and litter pick-up, but can extend to fallen tree removal, stream bank restoration, trail blazing, and bridge/boardwalk construction. The morning's efforts yield a sense of accomplishment and camaraderie, a familiarity with the trails, and an appreciation for the beauty of these local, preserved areas.

Check the NAC schedule on the right (and online) and plan to help on some or all of the dates. Contact Jean Fox, NAC Chairperson, at foxjean62@gmail.com or 856-642-7864 for additional information. For images and interesting facts about each open space, visit the STEM website at www.stemonline.org.

Seventh Annual Esther Yanai Memorial Hike at South Valley Woods

About a dozen hardy souls assembled in the parking lot of South Valley School early in the afternoon of December 9, 2014. The occasion was the annual Esther Yanai Memorial Hike. Esther was an ardent environmentalist and one of the founders of STEM in 1972.

It was a bright, sunny but chilly day that had been preceded by a couple of days of rain, so we came prepared for a somewhat muddy slog. But time in the woods is always good time. For those of us who had never been in these woods, it was quite a revelation to see the interior of this wooded area, bounded by Route 38 that we so often drive along.

The area is mostly wetlands and officially part of the National Lands Trust. There are several streams and frequent small seeps. Evidence suggests that this land was farmed at one time (Thanks, Jack Cresson), but it has now returned to a natural state. The trails are well marked there.

The walk, with frequent stops, took about an hour. An interesting aspect of the woods in late fall is that, with nearly all vegetation gone, you CAN (mostly) see the forest in spite of the trees! At about mid-point we paused and Kay Smith enlightened us to the history of South Valley Woods and its preservation. STEM President Kathy Huffman officiated for the traditional reading of an environmental poem, "How to Build a Community" — a favorite of Esther's.

At the east end of the site we were able to see in the distance the backs of newly constructed homes bordering the woods and facing Marter Avenue. It is good to know that this substantial woodland will be preserved forever. Photos from the day appear on page 5.

—Joe Ponessa

2015 NAC Draft Calendar

Subject to change, please check website

Saturday, March 14
9:30-11:30 am
Strawbridge Lake Buffer
Route 38

Saturday, April 11
9:30-11:30 am
Pompeston Park Upstream
of New Albany Road

Wednesday, April 22
9:30-11:30 am
Waterworks Woods
Kings Highway@Waterworks

Saturday, May 9
9:30-11:30 am
Esther Yanai Preserve
Garwood Road@Swede Run

Tuesday, May 19
9:30-11:30 am
Little Woods on the Rancocas
Creek Road@Laurel Creek Blvd.

Saturday, June 13
9:30-11:30 am
Wigmore Acres
Westfield Road

Saturday, July 11
8:30-10:30 am
Pompeston Park Downstream
of New Albany Road

Saturday, August 8
8:30-10:30 am
Little Woods & Susan
Stevens Halbe Preserve
Creek Road@Laurel Creek Blvd.

Saturday, September 12
9:30-11:30 am
Waterworks Woods
Kings Highway@Waterworks

Tuesday, September 22
9:30-11:30 am
South Valley Woods
Behind South Valley School

Saturday, October 10
9:30-11:30 am
Pompeston Park Downstream
of Fernwood Drive

Saturday, November 14
9:30-11:30 am
Pompeston Park Upstream
of New Albany Road

**Photos Below:
The Esther Yanai Memorial Walk
at South Valley Woods on December 7, 2014**

Participants included:
STEM President Kathy Huffman, Kay Smith, STEM Vice-president Joe Ponessa, Walt, Jean, and Kevin Fox, Jack Cresson, Nancy Fife, and Michele Robinson
See article on page 4.



Community Clean-up Day Called for Susan Stevens Halbe Preserve (see photos on right showing habitat succession)

As you drive down Creek Road in Moorestown, heading west toward Mount Laurel, you will notice open space signs on either side of the road designating Little Woods on the Rancocas on the left and Susan Stevens Halbe Preserve on the right.

Prior to the preservation of the Susan Stevens Halbe Preserve in 2009, the site was maintained as a park by its then owner. The vegetation surrounding the interior pond was mowed frequently during the growing season and transitioned to the forested areas that made up the remainder of the site.

After its preservation, the decision was made to allow the site's vegetation to return to a more natural state. A trail was mowed around the pond to offer

hikers a view of the water. Unfortunately STEM did not have the equipment to keep the trail open and it has become impassible over time.

STEM President Kathy Huffman has proposed that a Community Clean-up Day be planned for March or April 2015. "We need to improve the trail and the parking." Kathy said, and refers to the site as "a diamond in the rough."

If anyone would like to help with this project, please contact Kathy at 856-778-2201 or kajer3@comcast.net. Thank you for supporting STEM.

Note: When the date for the Community Clean-up is scheduled, it will be announced via an email and posted on the STEM website.



NAC at Pompeston Park, Upstream of New Albany

On Saturday November 8, 2014 a group of STEM volunteers including Colleen Molloy LoPresti, Trish Callahan and son Liam, David Bicking, and Matt Boulis conducted the final Natural Area Care conservation project of the year. The day's focus was Pompeston Park, upstream of New Albany Road.

Pompeston Park is a well-used site

that borders the Pompeston Creek and sits in a residential area. Because of the intensity of its use, the maintenance of this open space focuses on invasive plant removal and litter pick-up.

The image on the left captures David Bicking and Colleen Molloy LoPresti tackling the ever-resistant invasives.

October 5, 2014 STEM SSO Festival— "I ♥ Strawbridge Lake"
 Thank you to Bob Laramie for the engaging photos and thank you to all who attended.



It was a picture-perfect day!

Top row of photos from left: Collins Flynn Band; Fishing Contest winners; Hess Banner artist Toni Gilbert & family. Additional photos from the day appear on other pages of this newsletter.



Center photos clockwise from above left: canoeing Strawbridge Lake; a catch from the lake; four photos of Coloring Contest winners from Baker and Roberts Elementary Schools; face painting fun; Ranger Derkas fly fishing demo; the Hess family posing with the banner created to commemorate the Hess Farm's preservation. Bottom row of photos from left: Dessert Contest coordinator, contest judge, and contest winners; volunteers staffing the Food Booth; more Coloring Contest winners.





Annual STEM Membership Form

Return to:

P.O. Box 704, Moorestown, NJ 08057

Is your membership up-to-date?

(An expiration date appears on the mailing label.)

(Please print)

Name _____ Check HERE for electronic Newsletter

Address _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Memberships: New Renewal

Individual (\$15) \$ _____

Family (\$25) \$ _____

Student (\$10) \$ _____

Donations:

Open Space Fund \$ _____

Ongoing activities \$ _____

Amount enclosed: \$ _____

Dues and donations are tax-deductible

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES (please circle your areas of interest)

Communications

- Flyers, brochures, & postcards
- Newsletter
- Public relations

Advocacy

- Attend town meetings
- Letter writing
- Phone calls

Education

- Community education
- Educational materials
- School-based programs

Events

- Children's activities
- Donating plants for Plant Sale
- Plant Sale staffing
- Open Space Festival
- Refreshments

Outdoor Activities

- Conservation projects
- Lead nature walks
- Litter Patrol
- Natural Area Care
- Open space monitoring

Administrative

- Clerical
- Computer related
- Fundraising
- Legal issues

Visual and Creative Arts

- Arts and crafts
- Fine Arts
- Graphic design
- Photography

Other

STEM is a 501c3 non-profit organization. Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law. Information filed with the Attorney General concerning this charitable solicitation may be obtained from the Attorney General of New Jersey by calling (201) 504-6215. Registration with the Attorney General does not imply endorsement.



STEM Steps Out 2014 Fall Festival Thank You

STEM thanks Shop-Rite and Chet and Pat Dawson for their generous donations.

We also thank Moorestown organizations:

The High School Interact Club, the High School Environmental Club, the Police Department, the Recreation Committee, the Emergency Squad Fire District #1, the Fire Department, Public Works, the Historical Society, Sustainable Moorestown, and the Garden Club.

STEM would also like to thank the following organizations and volunteers for their generous contributions of time & energy.

- Flagg's Garden Center
- Flying Feather Farm
- Stellwag's Garden Center
- Browning Hess Farm
- Lew's Farm Market
- Haines Farm & Garden Center
- Freedom Center for Wildlife
- Woodford Cedar Run
- Rancocas Nature Center
- Center for Aquatic Sciences
- NJ Outdoor Club
- PCWA
- Girl Scout Troop #22169
- Crazy Critters 4-H Club
- Fancy Feathers 4-H Club
- Master Gardeners
- Cherry Hill HS Students
- NJ Watershed Ambassadors
- Miskowski Monarchs

- Collins Flynn
- Ranger Chris Derkas
- Jerry Huffman
- Laura DeJong
- Bob Laramie
- Matt Boulis & Kim Kersie
- Walt Sr. & Kevin Fox
- Mark Hines & Kristin Babcock
- Paolo Trinchieri & Family
- Harry Mayer & Margo Fowles
- Brian Fowler
- Barb Rich & Linda Burns
- Stacy Schaffer & Rose Rini
- Bruce & Bob Cavalier
- John Lestino & Jim Burns
- Live Civilly
- David Bicking & Adam Robinson
- Ruth Larkin & Joan Ponessa
- Sally & Hannah Wilson

MHS ENVIRONMENTAL CLUB

STEM extends a belated welcome to Allison Eichorn. Allison is the Moorestown High School Environmental Club President for the 2014-15 school year. The STEM Steering Committee created a representative seat for the club president and hopes Allison will accept the offer, attend monthly STEM meetings, and engage club members in environmental projects.

Any questions, comments, or suggestions, please send an email to environmentalclub.mhs.08057@gmail.com.

Photo below from SSO 2014 by Bob Laramie, of a Cedar Run Wildlife staff person holding a rehabilitating raptor.





**WINTER
2015**

Save the Environment of Moorestown
P.O. Box 704, Moorestown, NJ 08057
www.stemonline.org

**Membership Renewal
Benefits STEM Projects**

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Tuesday, January 27, 2015 at 7:30 p.m.
ANNUAL JOINT MEETING
A Peek Into the Hive—The Lives of Bees
Featuring: **JEAN MANCINI, BEEKEEPER & BEE ENTHUSIAST**
Moorestown Community House
Admission: FREE

**THANK YOU TO ALL WHO PARTICIPATED
IN SSO 2014**

*Photos below from SSO 2014 by Bob Laramie, of a Freedom
Center for Wildlife staff person holding a Great Horned Owl and
Margo Foster and family enjoying canoeing on Strawbridge Lake..*



STEM Steering Committee Members for 2014-2015

Kathy Huffman, President; 856-778-2201 & kajer3@comcast.net
Joe Ponessa, Vice-president; 856-235-6376 & jponessa@comcast.net
Mark Pensiero, Treasurer; 856-235-0171 & mark.w.pensiero@lmco.com
Susan Buffalino, Sec. & Newsletter Ed.; 856-866-9506 & sbuff4@aol.com
Claire Rollin Adair, Director; 856-727-3830 & cerollin@gmail.com
Chet Dawson, Director; 856-273-0126 & [cwg9@cornell.edu](mailto:cwd9@cornell.edu)
Elizabeth Endres Hines, Director; 856-222-1163 & eendres03@gmail.com
Margo Foster, Director; 856-235-5862 & mcmfoster@yahoo.com
Jean Fox, Director; 856-642-7864 & foxjean62@gmail.com
Paula Horton, Director; phorton100@comcast.net
Betsy Schnorr, Director; 856-235-6348 & betsybjs@aol.com
MHSEC Representative

STEM's Steering Committee meets the third Wednesday of each month (with a break in December), and it's there that decisions are made about STEM's activities for the year, STEM involvement at public events, directions on environmental advocacy, financial commitments, legal obligations—in short, most aspects of the organization.

Steering Committee members are nominated in late winter and early spring, and their acceptance is voted on at our Annual Meeting in the spring. STEM members are welcome to attend a Steering meeting (though, per our by-laws, not permitted to vote on motions), and any STEM member who is interested in serving on the Steering Committee is encouraged to speak with someone on our Nominating Committee. New views keep the organization dynamic! For information about STEM and its programs, contact Kathy Huffman at 856-778-2201 & kajer3@comcast.net.

Join us on the third Wednesday of the month—you'll be surprised how much you'll learn not just about STEM, but about Moorestown in general.

See the calendar on the front page or
contact one of our Nominating Committee members:
Elizabeth Endres Hines at 856-222-1163 & eendres03@gmail.com
Claire Rollin Adair at 856-727-3830 & cerollin@gmail.com
Barb Rich at 856-234-2787 & barbrich37ec@gmail.com