



Year of the Brood X Cicadas

Kingwood Township Environmental Commission Annual Newsletter and Report 2021

Kingwood Celebrates Victory over PennEast Pipeline!

On December 16, 2021, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Commissioners revoked PennEast's "Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity," and dismissed the pipeline application. Since 2014, the

Kingwood EC has worked on behalf of our community to protect the environment, health, safety, homes, and property rights from the harm that the PennEast natural gas pipeline would have caused. We strongly endorse the decision by FERC.



In June, we were disappointed by the Supreme Court's 5-4 decision in favor of PennEast, which allowed the private company to use eminent domain to take State owned properties for their own profits, superseding State's Rights. But in the end, the lack of need for the project, combined with looming lawsuits and the unlikelihood of obtaining the necessary environmental permits were hurdles PennEast failed to clear.

The first good news came in the summer, when the various PennEast partners admitted to shareholders a combined loss of about \$600 million on the project, money spent without even starting construction. Then, in September, PennEast announced they would stop pursuing eminent domain against 42 properties owned by the State of NJ (including Kingwood's Horseshoe Bend Park and Muddy Run Preserve and numerous preserved farms). This was followed a week later by a press announcement that they were no longer building the project. At that point, the company had not officially cancelled their active FERC application for the project, and they still had a certificate that didn't expire until February 2022. FERC demanded an update from the company, and PennEast submitted a letter to FERC officially admitting they were backing away from the project, and this was followed by the revocation of the pipeline certificate, which signaled the final death knell for the project.

The EC thanks the Kingwood Township Committee (especially committee members Richard Dodds and Maureen Syrnick and former committee member Phil Lubitz), property owners who remained steadfast against eminent domain, many non-profit groups, and

community members who wrote letters, attended events, and everything else to ultimately defeat this unneeded, unwanted fossil fuel fiasco!

Stewardship

Between 2018 and 2020, the EC and volunteers planted about 2,050 native trees and shrubs with Roots for Rivers grants from The Nature Conservancy (1,200 trees & shrubs in 2018, 350 in 2019, and 500 in 2020). These were planted in Kingwood Park and on adjacent township owned preserved farmland to restore a section of Locketong Creek's riparian zone. Forested riparian buffers reduce sediment, fertilizers, and other pollutants from running off surfaces into the creek. The trees will also provide habitat for wildlife and shade for trout that need cool water. Tree tubes, protecting the young trees from browsing deer, will remain in place for several years. The EC held 5 stewardship workdays (May 19, June 16, July 21, September 4, and October 21) to straighten tree tubes, remove netting when trees were growing above the tube height, remove tubes where trees had died, and to weed the rain garden that had originally been planted in 2011.



1,000 Free Trees Reforesting Kingwood

The NJ Forest Service, in partnership with the Arbor Day Foundation, provided 1,000 tree seedlings that were distributed *gratis* to Kingwood residents April 24, 2021 at Horseshoe Bend Park. The project was part of the New Jersey Tree Recovery Program, a continuing effort to replace trees that were lost in Superstorm Sandy.

Contact the EC: os-ecsecretary@kingwoodtownship.com

Environmental Commission Information:

<https://kingwoodtownship.com/environmental-commission>

Environmental Topics:

<https://kingwoodtownship.com/environmental>

Note on covid-19: Due to the pandemic, the EC meetings were held virtually and will continue virtually in 2022.

Kingwood Twp Well Water Testing 2021

Private well owners are responsible for the safety of their water and regular testing is the only way to know for certain that the water is safe to drink. In 2021, Kingwood Township partnered with Raritan Headwaters (RHA) to hold a Community Well Testing event to give residents an opportunity to test their drinking water conveniently and affordably for a variety of contaminants. This year, 51 residents attended the event to pick up a test kit, discuss their water quality concerns, or get additional information on the program. Of these, 44 households submitted water samples for testing.

Protect Your Drinking Water

WELL TEST KITS AVAILABLE
 @ Kingwood Twp. Municipal Building, 599 Oak Grove Rd.
Saturday, October 2 9am-noon and
Tuesday, October 5 5:00-7:00pm



- The only way to know your water is safe to drink is to test it. Everyone in Kingwood relies on water from private wells. Residents are advised to test their water annually for bacteria and nitrates. This basic kit will be offered for \$60. Testing will be available for additional contaminants like arsenic (\$35), boron (\$35), gross alpha-uranium and radium screen (\$80), lead (\$25), and volatile organic compounds (\$95).
- Testing done by a state-certified lab at below market cost.
- For more information please visit www.testmywell.org or call 908-234-1852 ext.401

*residents will then return filled bottles to Kingwood Municipal building
 Wednesday, October 6, 7:00am-9:30am



SPONSORED BY THE
 KINGWOOD TOWNSHIP
 ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

TEST.

The following chart is a summary of data collected from these 44 wells on Primary Contaminants of Concern:

Contaminant	# wells tested in 2021	Limit or MCL*	Range of results (ND=NonDetect)	# wells exceeding MCL
Coliform bacteria	40	Absent	Absent-Present	9 (22.55%)
E.coli	40	Absent	Absent-Present	1 (2.5%)
Nitrate	40	10 mg/L	ND-7.95mg/L	0
Lead	8	15 ppb	ND- 7.5 ppb	0
Radon	4	2000 pCi/L**	680-3350.8 pCi/L	1
Gross Alpha	5	15 pCi/L	0.8-9.7 pCi/L	0 (3 wells over 5 pCi/L)
Arsenic	30	5 ppb	ND-7.65 ppb	4 (13.3%)

* Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL). The maximum level of a contaminant which is permitted in public water supplies. Maximum contaminant levels are specified in the Primary Drinking Water Standards set by EPA for contaminants that affect the safety of public drinking water.

** There is no standard set in NJ for radon in water. Standards set in other states in our region are used as guidelines. The most protective of these standards is 2000 pCi/L in New Hampshire.

Based on available data and current public health guidelines, residents of Kingwood are encouraged to test their wells annually for coliform bacteria and nitrates. Arsenic contamination of private wells is common in the Township, and it is best to test every 3-5 years or more frequently if a homeowner is monitoring an arsenic removal treatment system. Those residents living in older homes, built before 1987 are at greater risk of lead exposure from older pipes and solder and should test for lead in their water every 5 years. At least one test for radon and gross alpha are also highly recommended to ensure that members of your household are not exposed to these naturally occurring carcinogens.

Furthermore, residents can protect their water supply by carefully managing activities on their property and near the well. This includes keeping hazardous chemicals out of septic systems, pumping their septic system every 3 years, and limiting the application of fertilizers to lawns and gardens.

Check the Kingwood website in the late summer for information on 2022 well testing and septic cleaning!

Discount Septic System Pumping

26 residences took advantage of the discount septic pumping arranged by the EC in October. Septic systems must be used properly every day and inspected and pumped every 2-3 years. See the EC's [septic system fact sheet](#) for more information.

ERI Update

Kingwood's Environmental Resource Inventory (ERI) was last updated in 2009, so the EC begin working on updating this important reference. Instead of hiring a consultant, this is being done by EC volunteers, which will save the township many thousands of dollars. Five chapters were drafted in 2021, which are available on the [township website](#). Comments can be sent via [email](#) or by attending an EC meeting.

Sustainable Kingwood

As part of its efforts to maintain Bronze Certification with Sustainable Jersey, the Committee completed a Fleet Inventory of Township vehicles. This process establishes a baseline for fossil fuel use by Township vehicles, as a starting point for consideration of alternative-fuel vehicles, which produce fewer or no greenhouse gas emissions.



Thanks, in part, to a Sustainable Jersey PSEG Foundation grant, trails in Kingwood Township's 800-acre Horseshoe Bend Park have been mapped with an application called Outerspatial. The new app provides hikers, mountain bikers, bird watchers, horseback riders, and other visitors a way to navigate the park with confidence right from their phone. With over 3 miles of trail to explore, the app enhances the visitor experience and reduces the risk of getting lost. These actions will earn points towards maintaining Kingwood's Bronze Certification with Sustainable Jersey.

Co-op Electric

In 2021, the EC supported the Township Committee's decision to participate in both a community energy aggregation cooperative as well as the Hunterdon County energy cooperative for the municipal buildings. The cooperative energy groups were formed for the purpose of purchasing electricity from alternate energy providers to provide the residents and municipality lower electric generating rates than offered by JCP&L, with an option for higher renewable energy component. In 2020 and 2021 the residents of Kingwood who participated in the cooperative saved a total of \$63,022.63 in energy savings.

The program for the residents expired at the end of 2021. During the first quarter of 2022, the resident coop program will be going out for bid once again to secure a lower rate than JCP&L, with a higher renewable energy source, for our residents.

In 2022, Kingwood Township Government has decided once again to join the Hunterdon County Area Energy Cooperative for 2021. This government co-op offers a lower rate than current suppliers (\$0.0863/kWh) through December 2024.

MS4 Stormwater Permit Update



Rain washes pollutants into storm drains and directly into our lakes, rivers and the ocean.

What can you do to stop pollution?

NJDEP requires all municipalities to educate residents about keeping our water clean. Through the annual [stormwater brochure](#) mailing, planting trees, and other actions, the EC once again fulfilled Kingwood regulatory requirement for education points.

Visit <https://cleanwater.nj.org/>

Conservation Easements brochure

In 2021, the EC created a brochure for landowners with conservation easements on their property. The brochure contains useful information concerning landowner rights and about caring for preserved lands. Kingwood Township's ethic of protecting natural resources makes Kingwood a great place to live – for people and wildlife, too!



Recycling and the Clean Communities Roadside Litter Clean Up Program 2021



All trash haulers serving the Township of Kingwood are required by New Jersey law to offer recycling to each household where they collect trash. Recyclables are placed curbside and collected through the service. Residents follow their guidelines on what can and cannot be recycled as the Township is served by a number of different haulers who are able to recycle only certain materials depending on the end market. In addition to curbside recycling, the Hunterdon County Transfer Station/Recycling Depot, 10 Petticoat Lane, Annandale, NJ, Phone: (908 236-9088) is open Monday through Friday for Hunterdon County residents for recyclables that cannot be managed curbside. Check the Hunterdon County website under "[Recycling](#)" for more details.

A metal recycling dumpster located at the Township of Kingwood DPW, 255 Union Road continues to be available to residents to drop off used metal items. Access is Monday through Friday from 7:00 am to 3:00 pm.

Two clothing recycling sheds are available to residents in the Township. One is located on County Route 519 at the Our Lady of Victories Church in Baptistown for drop off and another was added to the Kingwood Township Volunteer Fire Company site. Please bag only clean, usable clothing and shoes.

A number of non-profit organizations participated in roadside litter clean ups this year even with pandemic restrictions. Their efforts help to keep Township roads sparkling. In September, a multi-township litter clean-up program along the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park roved many bags of trash. County Route 519 litter patrols are handled by Hunterdon County while the State of NJ cleans Routes 12 and 29.

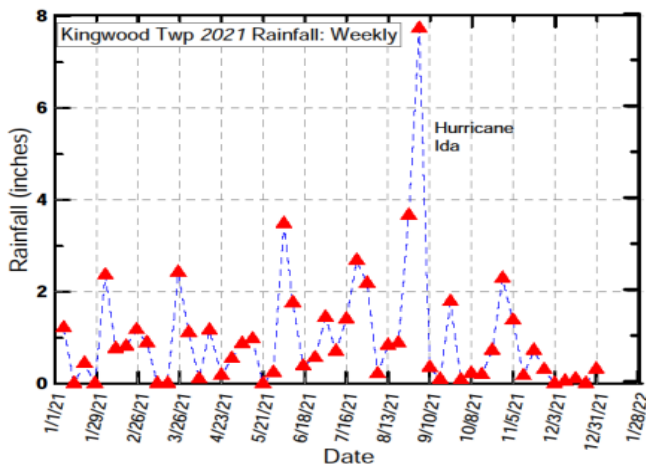
For information about the upcoming bag ban, see bagupnj.com.



CoCoRaHS - Community Collaborative Rain, Hail & Snow Network

EC member Gail Ashley has been recording rainfall data (Station Number NJ-HN-22) for the last 12 years as part of the CoCoRaHS project. This is a national network of volunteers who collect daily data on rain, hail and snow using standardized measuring tools. The data are posted to www.cocorahs.org website.

The graph below is a record of the rainfall in Kingwood Township in 2021 plotted by week. The magnitude and frequency of large rainfall events appears to be increasing over time. Hurricane Ida (September 1-2, 2021) was a Category 4 Atlantic hurricane contributing 7.6" measured in Kingwood. The total rainfall for the year was 51.2".



Tropical Storm Ida

Tropical Storm Ida dumped 6.76 inches of rain on Kingwood on September 1, 2021, causing dangerous flash flooding that damaged both homes and roads. The EC contacted the township's Emergency Management Coordinator, Jack MacConnell, with concerns about any possible scouring around pipelines where they cross streams. He explained that there are 3 pipelines crossing Kingwood: Elizabethtown Gas natural gas pipeline and two Buckeye Partners petrochemical pipelines. Buckeye is very proactive, performing both weekly aerial inspections of the pipelines and annual field inspections by walking them. They immediately inform Mr. MacConnell if there are issues. When there is a high-water event, he personally inspects the pipelines and roads, closing roads if necessary. He noted no damage to the pipelines from Ida.



Route 29 was just one of the roads in Kingwood that were severely damaged by Ida's floodwaters. Photo Credit: Rose Frey

NJDOT Rockfall Mitigation

In 2019, NJ Department of Transportation informed the township of their plans to mitigate the Delaware River cliffs for safety reasons. Although one large rockfall occurred in 2014, and small to medium rocks regularly fall onto Route 29, almost always on the shoulder, NJDOT has no records of accidents caused by rockfalls in Kingwood.

NJDOT's project is a massive undertaking projected to cost at least \$33 million and includes:

- Removal of all trees and vegetation,
- Blasting on much of the rockface, rock removal, scaling and reinforcement,
- Installing metal mesh or "draping" materials to the rockface, the creation of a new barrier or a "catchment ditch," and,
- Applying concrete (shotcrete) to the smoothed rockface around and including the Devil's Tea Table geologic structure,

When complete, the mitigation as planned would radically change the visual nature of the Delaware River valley, forever. It would damage historic and natural resources (e.g. geologic, surface and ground water, and rare species), foundations and wells, and send Route 29 traffic onto township and county roads, such as Route 519, for at least a year. The EC maintains that NJDOT's plans for the rockfall mitigation on Delaware River Scenic Byway on Route 29 are unjustified, excessively damaging, and fiscally irresponsible, and argues for a much reduced project. The EC provided information and a draft resolution to the Township Committee, which was [adopted in April](#). Similar resolutions have been adopted by Hunterdon County, Frenchtown Borough, Tinicum Twp (PA), and letters of concern from Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic Partnership and the Tribal Council of the Lenape Nation of Pennsylvania all demand that NJDOT work with Kingwood and other stakeholders to craft a less impactful alternative.

In August, the EC sent similar comments to the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority's FY 2022-2025 Transportation Improvement Program public comment period. To date, NJDOT has ignored the township's requests for input on the project, but surveying crews were frequently observed in the proposed rockfall mitigation areas.

The EC is coordinating with a community group called DevilsTeaTableAlliance.org, which has roughly 600 members from Kingwood and surrounding areas, including people in Tinicum and Plumstead, PA who enjoy the view of the cliffs and Tea Table from across the Delaware River.

Working with the Planning Board

In July, the EC sent a letter to the TC and PB responding to township planner David Banisch's recommendations concerning reevaluation of the Master Plan. The EC informed the township of a new NJ requirement for Master Plan Land Use Elements to include a Climate Vulnerability Assessment. The EC also advised the PB on several site plans, with most comments focused on protection of wetlands, the use of native plants for landscaping, and whether the well tests showed adequate water for the proposed use.

Working with the Board of Health

Kingwood's ordinance establishing the EC charges the EC with advising the other committees and boards of the township on resource use and protection. Current members of the EC had worked from 1995 to 2010 to get a well ordinance adopted by the BOH. The EC found out in March 2021 that the well ordinance had been revised, and discovered that the substantial revisions diminished the stringency, were inconsistent, and not protective of our ground water resource.

The EC prepared a memorandum and executive summary of the memorandum and gave a presentation about ground water at the September BOH meeting. In short, Kingwood Township is not typical of other New Jersey areas as it is underlain with dense bedrock that in general has few fractures to store ground water, has slow infiltration and recharge rates, and a substantial amount of runoff. One of the main concerns the EC has with the revised well ordinance is the elimination of the 3-part pump test except for larger subdivisions. Township hydrogeologist Vincent Uhl also analyzed the changed ordinance and made recommendations. In October, the

BOH agreed to introduce an ordinance matching the one in place prior to the February changes, with the exception of allowing a professional engineer to prepare the site maps. However, the ordinance wasn't prepared in time for the November meeting, and therefore was delayed until the new year.

The EC anticipates appointing a member to a well ordinance subcommittee, which would enable any well ordinance issues to be addressed collaboratively and with EC and public input.

Working with Parks and Recreation

One EC member is also on the Parks and Recreation Committee. Most of the invasive Callery pears at Kingwood Park were replaced with native trees.

A new water bottle filling station was installed at Kingwood Park, which encourages the use of reusable water bottles to produce less plastic waste.

Membership in ANJEC

The EC renewed annual membership in ANJEC, which provides resources such as a quarterly newsletter. Several EC members attended the virtual ANJEC annual Environmental Congress.

In Memorium

Former longtime EC member Joseph Zgurzynski passed away in December 2020. The members fondly remembered him and recalled his contributions to the EC.

2021 Kingwood EC Members

Debbie Kratzer (Chair)
Gail M. Ashley
Timothy Cahalin
Ralph Celebre

Mara Tippet (Vice-Chair)
Sandra McNicol
Lois Voronin

Secretary: Debbi Hutton
Governing Body Member: Maureen Syrnick
Alt. #1: Cynthia Niciecki
Alt. #2: Elizabeth Combs