



**Sustainable Ringwood/Green Team
End of Year Report
2025
By
Jennifer Ryan Hsu, Ph.D.
Chairperson**

In Memory of Linda Marks - Dedicated Member of the Green Team

Due to two vacancies, Sustainable Ringwood's Green Team ended the year with 6 voting members and 2 alternate members. The team's membership had appointments on the Borough Council, the Health Department, the Environmental Commission and the Non-Profit New Weis Center. Other members of the team have local home office businesses. Despite the vacancies, the Green Team is able to represent a variety of local interests and coordinate activities with a variety of businesses, local organizations, municipal commissions and departments.

The Green Team held ten meetings during 2025 and minutes are posted for each meeting on the Borough Website. The team was extremely active throughout the year and members volunteered to participate in a variety of events. There are several testaments to our hard work from Sustainable Jersey and ANJEC. For example, In May 2025, we were awarded a \$2,000 grant from Sustainable Jersey which was funded by the PSEG foundation. The project is entitled "The Borough of Ringwood Green Business Recognition Program", In 2025, ANJEC awarded their 2025 Environmental Achievement Award to the Green Team for our 2023-2024 project entitled "Building Environmental Health and Resilience through Sustainable Landscaping". This project was also celebrated in the 2025 Summer Newsletter published by Sustainable Jersey. The article is available on the Sustainable Jersey website. It is worth noting that the work of the Green Team has been acknowledged in the past by ANJEC's 2023 Environmental Achievement Award and by Sustainable Jersey's Spring 2022 and Spring 2024 newsletters. Thus, there are external groups who have applauded the work of Sustainable Ringwood's Green Team. We have framed documentation of the ANJEC awards.



It is also important to note that, in 2024, Sustainable Ringwood's Green Team obtained Bronze certification for the Borough of Ringwood. Our original certification and re-certifications are commemorated on a plaque that is on display in the Municipal building. There are 468 communities that are registered with Sustainable Jersey. Of those, 117 have been awarded Bronze Certification; 63 have received Silver certification and 6 achieved Gold stars.

Educational Outreach and Civic Participation

Earth Day, Caring for Ringwood Day. Wonders of Winter at the New Weis Center

Green Team members celebrated Earth Day on April 27, 2025 at the New Weis Center and participated in the Wonders of Winter at the New Weis Center on December 6, 2025. At Earth Day, we offered educational activities for adults providing information on composting, time for various materials to biodegrade, recycling options and the importance of pollinators. At the Wonders of Winter event, we engaged children in art activities that emphasized the beauty of our natural surroundings. The children were creative and eager to participate. At all events, children enjoyed decorating reusable cloth bags which they could keep or give to their parents. Educational posters, flyers and the bags for these events were supported by funding from the 2023-2024 \$10,000 grant from Sustainable Jersey.

The Green Team continues to be committed to maintaining the beauty of Ringwood, and our members participated in Caring for Ringwood Day on May 10, 2025.

Pollinator Garden and Native Plant Garden Projects **Maintenance and Educational Posts**

The Green Team continued to maintain the Pollinator and the Native Plant gardens which we designed and planted at the Ringwood Public Library on September 2022 and November 2023 respectively. Throughout July, August, September and October of 2025, we published a series of posts on the Sustainable Ringwood Facebook page highlighting the plants that were blooming and the wildlife that had been seen in the gardens. The



posts also provided information on how to care for pollinator and native plant gardens in the fall, winter and spring. Posters were also placed in the pollinator garden reminding residents to leave deadheads, stems and, where possible, leaves so insects would have food and shelter through the winter.

Educational Outreach: Culmination of the Project “Environmental Health and Resilience through Sustainable Landscaping”.
Photo Exhibits, Composting Presentation and Educational Posts

Our 2023-2024 project entitled “Environmental Health and Resilience through Sustainable Landscaping” educated residents on the importance of native plants in supporting the ecosystem and methods of reducing waste and pollution with the goal of maintaining a healthy environment. The project culminated with a photo contest in September 2024. Contest photos and other submissions by Ringwood residents and members of the Green Team were on display in the Ringwood Public Library during the month of February 2025. This beautiful exhibit, organized by Linda Marks, celebrated “Native Plants and Their Wildlife Friends”. The Photo Exhibit is now on permanent display at the New Weis Center. The photo exhibit at the Library was enjoyed by the residents and staff. The permanent exhibit at the New Weis center will have a lasting positive impact on visitors to the center. Be sure to visit the exhibit located in the main building.

Our project offered a final presentation on composting as a means of recycling kitchen scraps to produce healthy soil that will benefit gardens and lawns. Twenty four participants attended the April 26, 2025 presentation entitled “Family Composting 101”. Three lucky families took home outdoor compost bins from a giveaway supported by the 2023-2024 \$10,000 grant from Sustainable Jersey.

Throughout 2025, we published posts on the Sustainable Ringwood Facebook page. The posts provided information on native plants that are flourishing in the gardens adjacent to the library. We also published a series of posts on beneficial insects that can control pests and reduce the need for pesticides. Another series of posts presented environmentally friendly methods of controlling mosquitos, and an additional series offered ideas for reducing plastic and textile waste. Visit the Sustainable



Ringwood Facebook page for information on how individual actions can promote a healthy environment and a resilient community.

Reducing Plastic Waste **Plastic Collections and TREX Benches**

The Green Team initiated the collection of plastic to earn a TREX bench in 2020. Drives by various groups have continued since that time. During 2025, plastic drives were conducted by BASS (Bloomingdale Animal Shelter Society). The Daughters of the American Revolution, Scout Troops and the Stonetown Fire Department. We are grateful that so many groups have participated in these drives. We also thank our Ringwood residents for their participation in the collection of plastic and their efforts to keep this harmful substance out of landfills.

The Green Team conducted a second drive in 2024. In July 2025, the bench that the Green Team earned at the end of 2024 was installed on the exercise path in the Hewitt field. We thank the DPW for installing our bench. We wish everyone a pleasant walk on the exercise path and an inspiring moment of reflection while sitting on our bench.

Educational Program - Harm Caused by Pesticides and Fertilizers **Presentation at a Meeting of the County Commissioners**

Over the past two years, the Green Team has conducted an educational program on the harm caused by pesticides and nitrogen or phosphorus-based fertilizers. On September 5, 2025, Jennifer Hsu, Chairperson of the Green Team, Linda Marks, member of the Green Team, and Stephanie Clark, resident of Ringwood attended the regular meeting of the Board of County Commissioners. Jennifer gave a presentation on potential harmful effects of the herbicide spraying program that is conducted annually on Greenwood Lake Turnpike Route 511 and Sloatsburg Road, Route 697. She noted that both roads are adjacent to the Wanaque reservoir and that Route 697 passes Hewitt school. She noted that spraying is likely to pollute the reservoir and the area surrounding the school. A week later, the administrator, Matthew P. Jordan Esq. called Jennifer and stated that the spraying program would be terminated and replaced by mowing. The Green Team and a concerned Ringwood resident had a significant impact



in persuading the County Commissioners to adopt a sustainable method of weed control.

Collaboration with the Ringwood Public Schools

In 2024, the Ringwood Public Schools received a grant supporting education about climate change. They asked the Green Team to consult on a community based project funded by their grant. We met with teachers several times during the fall of 2024 and spring of 2025 and provided information to the project coordinators. Many of our recommendations were implemented, and the project was successfully completed by the end of the 2025 school year. The Ringwood Public Schools received a second grant related to maintaining healthy waterways. The Green Team agreed to consult on a project for third graders that involves assessing water and soil samples. We have met with the teachers during the fall of 2025 and will continue to meet during the spring 2026. The teachers continue to state that the meetings give them useful ideas for their project.

Green Business Recognition Program **Program Development Implementation and Certification**

In February 2025, The Green Team submitted to Sustainable Jersey a \$2,000 grant proposal entitled “The Borough of Ringwood Green Business Recognition Program”. We were notified of funding in May 2025. During the summer we developed questionnaires designed to assess whether a business was engaging in environmentally friendly practices. Application and review procedures were established in collaboration with Kristen Holton, the Director of Economic Development for Ringwood. The program was presented to the Chamber of Commerce on Tuesday, November 18, 2025. A webinar outlining the program was also presented as part of the Ringwood Public Library’s Lunch and Learn program on Wednesday, December 3, 2025. Four Home Office businesses, **Skylands Guardian**, **Renew Restoration**, **Parties by Porcelli** and **Mr Dumpster**, received certification as a Green Business at the Gold Star level. We congratulate these businesses for engaging in practices that conserve energy and water as well as reduce waste and pollution. Sustainable



Ringwood's Green Team and the Borough of Ringwood are proud to recognize these businesses and their efforts to protect the environment.

Conclusion

The Green Team has an active group of volunteers who are working hard to build resilience and increase the sustainability of our community. We have on-going education programs and an effective outreach program. Our photo exhibit captured the beauty of native plants and their wildlife friends and had a positive impact on children and adults. As noted in our report, we publish educational posts on a variety of topics and we collaborate with a variety of organizations. Our Green Business Recognition Program involved collaboration with Kristen Holton, The Director of Economic Development. We look forward to continuing this partnership to encourage Ringwood businesses to engage in eco-friendly practices. The Green Team hopes that the Mayor and Council members will see our committee as a resource that is willing to collaborate in building a future where the community and its residents thrive. We look forward to working together.