

# City of Vineland Environmental Commission

*2021 Annual Report*



***Prepared by:***

**Vineland Environmental Commission**

## **From the Chairperson**

On September 25, 1973, the City of Vineland passed Ordinance #902, which is codified in Chapter 41-1 and reads: "Pursuant to the provisions of N.J.S.A. 40:56A, there is hereby created an Environmental Commission of the City of Vineland for the protection, care and development of the natural resources within the territorial limits of the City of Vineland." This ordinance repealed and replaced the Board of Natural Areas Preservation Commission, which previously undertook these endeavors, and so this was not the first time Vineland pursued conservation of its natural resources. Going back even further, Charles Landis himself was a huge proponent of tree-lined streets and had intended Vineland's parks to be filled with shade trees.

The Vineland Environmental Commission is the only Board/Commission of the City for which its members serve without compensation. The seven members and two alternates are dedicated to the duties of their appointments and put in hundreds of volunteer hours annually. This past year was my 20<sup>th</sup> year serving the Environmental Commission. Two other members have served for more than 40 years each. Another was appointed pre-1972 by Bub Garton, reappointed by every Mayor since, and so has been volunteering her time for 50 years. Every member brings some area of interest and expertise to the group, and we are grateful for their contributions toward making Vineland a better community. At this time, the Environmental Commission is pleased to submit this annual report for calendar year 2021 to the Mayor and City Council.

*Diane Amico*

**City of Vineland Environmental Commission**  
**Annual Report**  
**2021**

**1) Members**

**2021 Environmental Commission**

Diane Amico, Chairperson  
Susan Fenili  
Charles Valentine  
John Casadia, Planning Board member  
Lisa Fleming  
David Lowenstern  
John Pedersen  
Anthony Coffee  
Ariana McTamney- newly appointed

**2) Meetings were held on the following dates in 2021**

January 11	July 12
February 8	August 9
March 8	September 13
April 12	October 12
May 10	November 8
June 14	December 13

Guest Presentations at Meetings:

- March: Molly Riley, League of Conservation Voters
- October: Lucia Ruggerio, The American Littoral Society
- November: Jodi Dziedzic, CCIA Watershed Ambassador Program

Agendas and minutes of meetings are posted at [www.vinelandcity.org](http://www.vinelandcity.org) under Boards and Commissions, Environmental Commission ( <https://www.vinelandcity.org/environmental-commission/> )

### 3) Stewardship and Volunteer Activities

2021 Volunteer Days	Location / event	Activity	participants	hrs.	total hrs.	Notes
2/27/2021	Willow Oak	trail clearing	5	4	20	Done in the rain
3/6/2021	Willow Oak	moving stone to east path, tree pulling, litter cleanup	22	4	88	
3/20/2021	Willow Oak	path maintenance, spreading stone	14	4	56	
early spring	Pilla School	construct & erect bluebird houses	1	20		John Casadia
4/17/2021	Giampietro Park	invasive plant removal, tree tube maintenance	12	4	48	Partnered with American Littoral Society
4/24/2021	NJ Tree Recovery Campaign	Seedling Giveaway	7	7	49	Attended by 112 residents, 560 trees distributed
		seedling pickup in Jackson NJ	1	3	3	John Pedersen
		event preparation / tree labeling	2	3	6	
		plant leftover seedlings in natural areas and parks	1	8	8	John Pedersen
7/31/2021	Center City parking lot East Av & Wood St, and surrounding area	litter cleanup	1	4	4	John Pedersen
8/3/2021	National Night Out - VHS	tabling, education, engaging public	5	4	20	
9/18/2021	Vineland Public Library	tree mulching, weed butterfly gardens, install watering pads around shrub border	4	4	16	Partnered with American Littoral Society
10/2/2021	Pilla School	tree planting	4	4	16	Ten 2" caliper trees planted
10/3/2021	Giampietro Park	tree planting	1	3	3	Three 2" caliper trees planted
11/13/2021	Pilla School	tree mulching, weeding, cut hedges, removed invasive plants from raingarden, remove vines from trees	14	4	56	Partnered with Vineland Public Works Dept.
12/11/2021	Vineland Sr. High School	tree mulching, weeding, trim shrubs, raking	21	4	84	
					<b>477</b>	

The total volunteer hours logged for events for 2021 is 477, plus time spent at meetings, committee meetings, and preparation for events is 168 hours. With the current 2021 value of a

volunteer hour being \$28.54 (as per IndependentSector.org), these aggregated efforts have a contributory value of \$18,408 to the City.

#### 4) **Education and Outreach**

August 3, 2021 - National Night Out at Vineland High School: Commission members and other volunteers manned a table and engaged the public on a variety of local environmental topics, distributed handouts, and discussed educational boards on display.

5) **Maintenance of nature areas:** In 2021, the Commission continued to conduct ongoing maintenance at several natural areas for passive recreation, including Willow Oak Nature Area on E. Landis Avenue, Bennett's Mill Natural Area on Mays Landing Rd, and Maurice River Conservation Area on S. Union Road. Volunteers kept trails clear, picked up litter, and installed signage as needed. The Commission also partnered and interfaced with Public Works and other City departments to keep up with the maintenance needs of these relatively remote areas.

6) **Maintenance of green infrastructure:** In March of 2021, additional NJ State Stormwater Regulations went into effect increasing the requirements for use of green infrastructure to mitigate stormwater pollution and groundwater recharge issues. The Commission worked throughout the year to maintain three raingardens installed previously in 2020 at the City Hall Annex on Plum Street, the Vineland Public Library, and Giampietro Park. Initially, maintenance at the City buildings was attempted with volunteers. However, this was found to be challenging, and so later in the year, the Environmental Commission located and hired a qualified green infrastructure landscaper for a major fall cleanout and re-mulching.

7) **Bluebird House Project:** Several bluebird houses are located at city parks, Board of Education sites, and in natural areas around Vineland. These are constructed, monitored, maintained, and cleaned out every winter by Commission member John Casadia. This was continued throughout 2021.

8) **Wildflower/milkweed areas:** Pursuant to the NJ State D.O.T. Guidance for roadside maintenance, the Commission has identified several areas where wildflowers and/or milkweed, necessary for feeding pollinators and Monarch butterflies, is growing roadside or near wooded areas. These areas have been marked off to encourage growth and discourage mowing. The Commission has been in discussions with the Cumberland County Engineering office regarding a designation of "no-mow" areas. In 2021, the Commission continued data collection of these locations for future consideration of incorporation into a list of "no-mow" areas.

9) **Site plan reviews**: After a period of holding mostly virtual meetings in 2020, the Commission resumed site plan reviews at each meeting in 2021. Written comments were provided to the Planning Board and the Zoning Board for several project applications. John Casadia continued to serve throughout 2021 as the Planning Board Member of the Environmental Commission.

10) **Trees / Tree Committee**: The Vineland Tree Committee is a sub-committee of the Environmental Commission. Meetings were held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of each month, concurrent with the regular Commission meeting. Tree Committee activities in 2021 included the Tree Seedling Giveaway on April 24, and numerous trees planted at schools and on City property as listed on the volunteer chart.

In addition, the Commission continued to maintain the City's Community Forestry Management Plan (CFMP), on file with the New Jersey State Division of Forestry, Community Forestry Program. The Commission uses this plan to work toward goals of replacing and maintaining our urban tree canopy, working toward an inventory of center city trees, and working in conjunction with the Public Works department to identify trees which need to be pruned or removed.

Continuing education credits are needed annually for the City to maintain the CFMP's "active" status. The City's CFMP must remain active in order for the City to be eligible for grants and assistance from NJ State for tree-related projects. In 2021, two Environmental Commission members earned enough credits to meet the City's annual requirements. The credits were earned by volunteers on their own time, and the City gets the credit, not the individuals.

**11) Training:**

*NJ Shade Tree Federation Conference* in Cherry Hill, NJ on October 21 and October 22, 2021 was attended by members Lisa Fleming and Charles Valentine.

*Cross Country Connection's Electric Vehicle Charging Station Workshop*, June 24, 2021, attended by Diane Amico.

**12) Partnerships:**

*American Littoral Society:*

The Commission continued its longstanding partnership with the American Littoral Society both by maintaining previous project sites, such as Giampietro Park, as well as planning for new projects in 2022. The American Littoral Society attended several of our volunteer events in 2021, and has just made application for, and received, a grant for Vineland to work on a long term plan for stormwater issues at Giampietro Park.

*Sustainable Jersey:*

Diane Amico also serves as a leader of the Vineland Green Team, and in 2021 continued to act as liaison between the two groups on environmental projects. Several of the Environmental Commission's activities qualify for points under the Sustainable Jersey Program, helping the City to achieve and maintain its certification in that Program.

*U.S. Dept. of Agriculture:*

In March, 2021, the City signed an agreement to allow an assessment of various city-owned properties for infestations of Spotted Lanternfly, and for treatment of these areas if found to be warranted. Most of the areas were in the vicinity of the Industrial Park, where extensive transportation activities could contribute to dispersing insects hitch-hiking on cargo vehicles.

**13) Expenditures:**

*City Budget:*

Departmental supplies (e.g. wood stakes, hardware)	\$680
Mulch	\$601.70
Printing services	\$250
First aid supplies	\$36.89
Trees	\$955
Other nursery stock	\$223.50
Training	\$500
Signage	\$152
Green Infrastructure maintenance	\$750
ANJEC membership	\$400
NJ Shade Tree Federation membership	\$170
Salaries: City Liaison and secretary	<u>\$6000</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$11,719.09</b>

*Grant Fund:*

Tree planting supplies	\$220.08
Green Infrastructure Maintenance	\$5701.14
Nursery stock	\$201.65
Street tree planted – professional landscaper	\$447
Seed packets – promo item for handout	\$300
Fencing material for Willow Oak parking lot	<u>\$199</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$7068.87</b>

**14) Membership:**

There was one addition to the membership in 2021. Adriana McTamney filled an empty position.

The Vineland Environmental Commission is a member of the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC).



**VINELAND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**



April 24, 2021 Tree Seedling Giveaway



City Hall Annex Raingarden



Bluebird House at Board of Ed