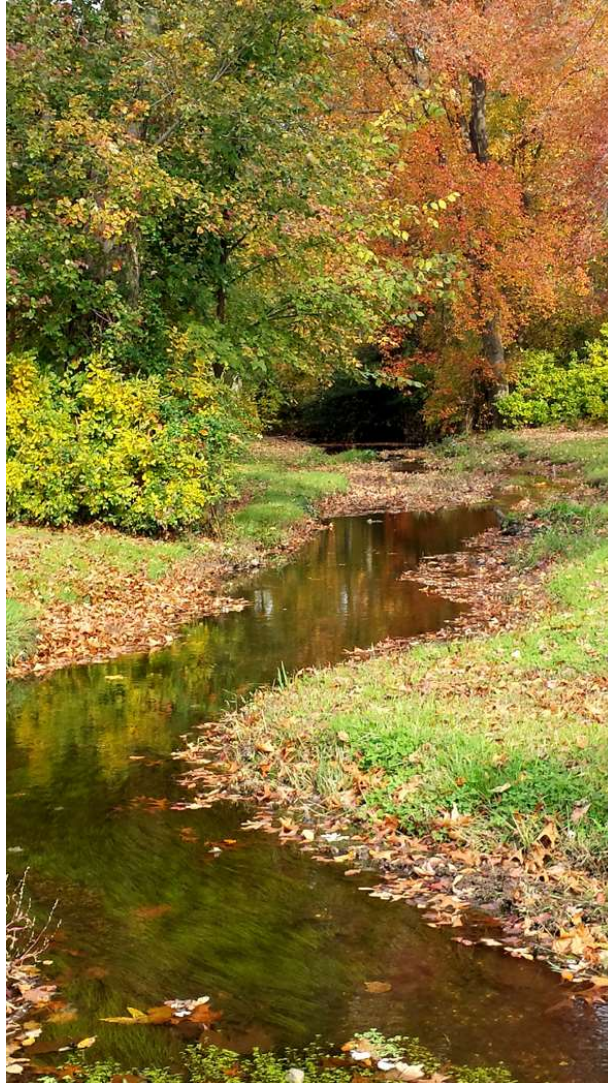


City of Vineland
Environmental Commission
2024 Annual Report



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 This ordinance repealed and replaced the Board of Natural Areas Preservation Commission, which previously undertook these endeavors, and so this was not the first time Vineland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. Some members have been serving for more than 40 years, and one has served for over 50 years. Other members volunteer many hours of additional time serving on committees, such as the Site Plan Review Committee, Tree Committee, and the Community Wildlife Habitat Program Committee. Members spend Saturdays and many hours of their personal time cleaning litter, planting trees, and putting their efforts toward making our community more environmentally friendly. Every member brings some area of interest and expertise to the group, and we are grateful for their contributions toward making Vineland a better place to live. At this time, the Environmental Commission is pleased to submit this annual report for calendar year 2024 to the Mayor and City Council.

Diane Amico

City of Vineland Environmental Commission Annual Report 2024

1) Members (as of 12/31/24)

Diane Amico, Chairperson

Susan Fenili

Charles Valentine

John Casadia, Planning Board member

Lisa Fleming

John Pedersen

Anthony Coffee

Ariana Headley

Josh Aderholdt

2) Meetings were held on the following dates in 2024

February 12

March 11

April 8

May 13

July 8

August 12

September 9

October 21

November 18

December 9

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

3) Stewardship and Volunteer Activities

2024					
Volunteer Activities	Location / event	Activity	participants	hrs.	total hrs.
1/13/2024	Campanella Park	tree maint, litter cleanup	4	3	12
2/10/2024	Giampietro Park	tree maint, raingarden	6	3	18
3/16/2024	Willow Oak	maint	19	3	57
4/6/2024	Free Seedling Giveaway	sign installed, trail blazes	7	4	28
		seedling giveaway	1	2	2
		pick up trees	3	2	6
	Blackwater Branch	prep			
4/10/2024	riparian	remove tree tubes	17	4	68
4/13/2024	Giampietro Park	Invasive plant removal	4	3	12
	Arbor Day at Pagliughi				
4/26/2024	Park	plant a tree	8	2	16
5/18/2024	Vineland Green Fair	manning table/education	4	6	24
		tree maintenance &			
9/14/2024	Campanella Park	cleanup	5	3	15
	Vineland Public Library	Presentation to Library			
9/26/2024	Presentation	Board on Raingarden	4	2	8
	Landis Park Plant One	plant trees & give away			
10/12/2024	Get One	trees	15	3	45
	Landis Park Plant One	plant trees & give away			
11/9/2024	Get One	trees	87	2	174
			11	5	55
12/7/2024	Tree giveaway	tree giveaway	4	4	16
Various days throughout the year	Schools, Nature areas, parks	Construct & erect bluebird nesting boxes, seasonal cleanout & maintenance, monitoring	1	80	80
Total Hours					636

The total volunteer hours logged for 2024 is 636, plus time spent at meetings, committee meetings, and preparation for events of 168 hours. With the current 2024 value of a volunteer hour at \$33.49 (as per IndependentSector.org), these aggregated efforts have a contributory value of \$26,926 to the

City. 498 of those hours were for planting a total of 69 trees in city parks. Most volunteer events are held on the Second Saturday of each month and are lead by member John Pedersen.

4) Education and Outreach

- April 6, 2024 Tree Seedling Giveaway: Residents were assisted with tree seedling selection through discussion of putting “the right tree in the right place.”
- April 26, 2024: Arbor Day was celebrated at Pagliughi Park with member Sue Fenili speaking to the Cub Scouts about the importance of trees in our community.
- May 18, 2024: Members manned a table at the Vineland Green Fair and met with visitors and discussed a variety of education topics, including the Community Wildlife Habitat Program efforts.
- September 26, 2024: Several members presented to the Vineland Library Board an educational discussion on the raingarden that was constructed there.
- October 12, 2024 and November 9, 2024: At the “Plant One – Get One” event, residents were given tutorials on the proper way to plant a tree.

5) Maintenance of nature areas: In 2024, 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. A new outdoor message board was erected at the Landis Avenue entrance of Willow Oak Nature Area. 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 Riparian Buffers Along the Blackwater Branch at the former Vineland Chemical Superfund site, a riparian buffer was planted in 2019 in a partnership with NJDEP and USEPA. On April 10, 2024, members, along with the NJDEP Community Collaborative Initiative, returned to remove the tree tubes. Giordano’s Recycling placed 2 containers for collection, and the Vineland Dept. of Public Works assisted. Afterwards, the used plastic tree tubes were donated to the Raritan Headwaters Association for re-use.

7) 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. All three of these gardens were weeded and maintained by individual members on various dates.

- 8) **Giampietro Park Stormwater Mitigation bioswale project:** Through partnerships with the American Littoral Society and Rutgers, a flooded area of Giampietro Park was regraded and planted with vegetation that hopefully will take up some of the water, while the swale redirects ponding back toward the stream. The engineering of the project was provided by Rutgers, and the City Engineering Office participated in overseeing the design.

- 9) **Bluebird Nesting Box Project:** Several bluebird nesting boxes 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 2024, and 22 new nesting boxes were added.

- 10) **Site plan reviews:** The Commission continued site plan reviews at each meeting in 2024. Written comments were provided to the Planning Board and the Zoning Board for several project applications. John Casadia continued to serve throughout 2024 as the Planning Board Member of the Environmental Commission.

- 11) **Trees / Tree Committee:** The Vineland Tree Committee is a sub-committee of the Environmental Commission. Meetings were held on the 2nd Monday of each month, concurrent with the regular Commission meeting.

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 2024, 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.

Tree committee Activities in 2024:

- *Urban Tree Pits in Center City:* Urban tree pits specifically designed for drainage in urban areas were constructed at the City parking lot on Elmer Street through a grant by the NJ Association of Environmental Commissions, with engineering design by Rutgers. The City Engineering office oversaw the final design. Four street trees were planted in the new tree pits.
- *Tree Seedling Giveaway on April 6:* 450 seedlings were given to Vineland residents. Tree seedlings were provided by the NJ Division of Forestry through the State's "NJ Tree Recovery Campaign". This was held as a "drive-through" event. EC members and volunteers were available to discuss with residents the species information and planting directions, as well as how to put the right tree in the right place.
- *Planting of 68 trees at Landis Park* – On October 12 and November 9, a "Plant One – Get One Free" event was held at Landis Park. Each resident who assisted with planting a tree was given one to take home. The trees were approximately between 5' and 8' tall, and included numerous species to choose from. The event was well received and resulted in 68 trees planted and 103 trees distributed. The trees were purchased through a grant from the National Arbor Day Foundation which was funded by FedEx.
- *Arbor Day Celebration with Cub Scouts* – On April 26, 2024, member Sue Fenili held an Arbor Day tree planting at Pagliughi Park with the Cub Scouts.
- *Free Tree Giveaway* - On December 7, 2024, 79 potted trees approximately 5'-8' tall were given out to residents on a first come, first serve basis. The event was well received.

12) Training:

The NJ Shade Tree Federation Conference in Atlantic City, NJ on October 17th and 18th was attended by Lisa Fleming for both days, and by Diane Amico for October 26th.

The NJDEP Model Ordinance & Municipal Tree Ordinances in NJ webinar sessions in May 2024 were attended by Diane Amico.

13) Partnerships:

ANJEC:

The Commission continued its longstanding partnership with the Association of NJ Environmental Commissions by working on green infrastructure projects and Urban Tree Pits for center city.

Sustainable Jersey:

Diane Amico also serves as co-leader of the Vineland Green Team, and in 2024 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.

NJ Audubon Society/National Wildlife Federation

The Environmental Commission participates in the National Wildlife Federation's Community Wildlife Habitat Program by educating residents on backyard habitat requirements for wildlife, and assisting them to receive certification through the program. The city receives credit by meeting goals for number of registered backyard habitats, as well as for education and assistance it provides to residents.

American Littoral Society

The Commission partnered with the American Littoral Society on a grant for stormwater mitigation at Giampietro Park that included regrading and planting a vegetative swale in a flooded area of the park. This project was constructed following an engineering design provided by Rutgers.

14) Membership:

In 2024, new member Josh Aderholdt was appointed. John Pedersen replaced David Lowenstern as a full member.

The Vineland Environmental Commission is a member of the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC) and the NJ Shade Tree Federation.

John Casadia serves also on the Vineland Planning Board and is the EC's Liaison member.

Diane Amico serves also on the Vineland Green Team for the Sustainable Jersey Program.



VINELAND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION