



Newsletter Mission:

The purpose of our Newsletter is to keep our residents aware of Secaucus' recycling and sustainability goals, green tips, and environmental achievements.

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Mayor Michael J Gonnelli and Town Council:

John Gerbasio
Robert Constantino
James Clancy
Mark Dehnert
Bill McKeever
Orietta Tringali

Meet The New Environmental Department Team

In 2011, the Environmental Department was established thanks to Mayor Gonnelli and the Town Council. Since then, the Department's responsibilities and services significantly expanded with the incredible leadership of Amanda Nesheiwat. In May 2020, Amanda joined the Hudson County Improvement Authority as their new Deputy Director of Sustainability and Community Outreach. So, she will still be serving Secaucus residents but from the county level. Visit HCIA.org to learn more and stay up-to-date on everything that HCIA offers, such as discounted rain barrels & compost bins, and household hazardous waste collection.

In August, Jennifer Schneider became the

new Environmental Coordinator. In her previous role, Jennifer served with the NJ Department of Environmental Protection as an AmeriCorps NJ Watershed Ambassador. She focused on local stormwater pollution



Screen-capture of Jenny from the Library's YouTube. [Learn more on Page 8.](#)



Ava Mroz, Environmental Assistant & Clean Communities Coordinator

reduction projects and educational programming with Hackensack Riverkeeper.

This spring, Lynn Kramer retired from her position

in the Environmental Department. We thank her for her five invaluable years of service. In September, Ava Mroz filled Lynn's role as Environmental Assistant. Although Ava is new to this position, she is not new

to the Department; she interned for several years with Amanda and Lynn.

Jenny and Ava are grateful to be able to serve Secaucus and to continue the important sustainability initiatives and goals that Amanda, Lynn, Mayor Gonnelli & the Town Council established.

Secaucus Environmental Department

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Be on the Lookout for the Spotted Lanternfly

The Spotted Lanternfly is an invasive species from Asia that is known to destroy crops and hardwood trees. It primarily uses the Staghorn Sumac, Black Walnut, and the Tree of Heaven as hosts. However, they will lay eggs on any flat surface such as a tree branch, rock, or car tire.

It evolves through several life stages as it matures (see pictures).

There have been several reports of sightings in Secaucus. We need help to *“Stomp out the Bad Bug!”*

If you are to see the Spotted Lanternfly in its adult or nymph stage, please kill it immediately! They are not harmful to humans or animals, but can do serious damage to our environment.

If you spot an egg mass, please contact the Environmental Department to have it properly removed. Together, we can help reduce their population and prevent their spread.

Please visit njaes.rutgers.edu/spotted-lanternfly to learn more.



Egg Mass



Adult Spotted Lanternfly



Nymph (instars 1-3)



Nymph (instar 4)

Join the 2021 Secaucus CSA Program

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a growing national trend for families looking for healthy eating alternatives while supporting local farmers and earth-friendly farming practices. CSA members sign up and pay for produce shares in advance, enabling the farmer to buy the necessary seeds and equipment and to carefully plan for the upcoming season. Buying a share is a convenient way to ensure a steady supply of fresh, healthy, organically grown produce at a great value for your family.

Our 2021 CSA program enrollment is beginning soon! Keep an eye out for updates in the February Town Newsletter, or contact the Environmental Department to be notified when CSA signups are live.



Introducing the "Recycle Right" Program

Recycling contamination occurs when the wrong items (such as styrofoam), or the right items prepared in the wrong way (such as incorrectly put in a plastic bag), are placed inside curbside recycling bins. Contamination is really anything that finds its way into a recycling bin that does not belong there, like food residue, plastic bags, cords, or metal cookware. Contamination is costly to our town and our environment because it can damage sorting machinery, lower the resale value of materials, and even cause recyclables to go to the landfill.

Although recycling has been required by State law since 1987, it can still be confusing. The Environmental Department urges all residents to take the time to familiarize themselves with current rules on what can and cannot be recycled curbside, and how materials should

be placed curbside. This information can be found in several places:

- 1) Online via the Town website, Secaucus.nj.gov
- 2) Recycling flyer & Town Calendar (mailed out yearly)
- 3) A free app called "Recycle Coach" (see graphics below)

All of these resources, along with Environmental Department & Public Works staff, are here to help you "recycle right."

Along with countless communities across the country struggling with contamination, Secaucus will be re-vamping recycling inspections. Town officials will leave warning tags for recycling violations at residents' doors (pictured). These will be filled out with feedback on what the contamination was, in order to help residents fix the issue. The goal of the

warning tags are to cut down on recycling contamination and ensure that everyone is following Municipal Code Chapter 91.



Beyond Curbside

Just because an item cannot be recycled in your curbside bin with regular collection, it does not mean that it cannot be recycled in another way such as with a drop-off program. In fact, the Environmental Department has well-established recycling programs in numerous locations around town for plastic film, batteries, and electronics.

To learn about how you can donate, recycle, or safely discard hundreds of different materials, use the

"What Goes Where" search tool on the Recycle Coach app (scan the QR code below) or Recycle Coach webpage online via secaucusnj.gov/resident/trash.

Please contact the Environmental Department for additional guidance, such as how to donate items locally or what counts as "household hazardous waste."



Plastic Bag Ban Goes Statewide



In early November, Governor Phil Murphy signed the Plastic Pollution Reduction Bill (S864). The success of this bill was made possible by local ordinances like ours that paved the way. Secaucus's existing plastic bag and styrofoam bans will remain effective until the state law goes into effect in May 2022. The Environmental Department will be conducting outreach in the coming year on the slight differences between the new law and our ordinance.

The entire Secaucus community should be proud that we were among the first to take action on this important issue. Together, we've helped significantly reduce waste and litter, and ensured a cleaner and greener NJ. Please visit ChooseToReuseNJ.com to learn more.

Secaucus GO GREEN Mission...

Secaucus is committed to the protection and preservation of the environment and is dedicated to enhancing environmental sustainability within our town and the state of New Jersey. We understand the responsibility we have towards the planet and have adopted a policy that reflects this mission.

To learn more, visit the Environmental Department webpage:

SecaucusNJ.gov/Departments/Environmental

Secaucus Honey
Fresh, local

The Perfect Gift for Any Season

1/2 LB. JAR = \$10
1 LB. JAR = \$20
PROPOLIS = \$10

CONTACT THE ENVIRONMENTAL
DEPARTMENT AT
ENVIRONMENTAL@SECAUCUS.NET
OR 201-86-GREEN (47336)

Go Solar Without Putting Panels on Your Roof

On October 15th, the Environmental Department held a Facebook-live webinar through the Secaucus Public Library as an introduction to community solar (CS), which is a new clean-energy program that was established at the state-level. CS was designed so that everyone regardless of housing or financial situation could enjoy the great benefits of “going solar,” such as electricity savings and supporting renewable energy. Essentially, how CS works is that any PSE&G ratepayer can “subscribe” to a portion of a nearby solar array that sits atop an industrial rooftop (example pictured), instead of traditional solar where you would put your own panels on your own home.

This solar energy is allocated to your PSE&G account based on your electricity usage. So, instead of paying

PSE&G full price for electricity, you would receive a CS credit on your PSE&G account and pay the community solar project a discounted rate for electricity used. Thus, reducing your overall cost of electricity every month.

Because of this, CS has been nicknamed “too good to be true” by some - but alas, it is true! Subscribers are guaranteed at least 10% overall energy savings, and even more if you are considered low-to-moderate income. To learn more, visit the Environmental Department website. Navigate to the “Residents” section, and click on the “Go Solar” tab.

Or, find our educational video on the Library’s Facebook page! Contact the Environmental Department with questions.



Community solar project atop a warehouse in North Bergen; colored to demonstrate subscriptions.



Reminder - the best cost-savings method is always to use less energy! To learn about the various State rebates & incentives available for energy efficiency projects, visit NJcleanenergy.com.

Stormwater Research at Mill Creek Point Park

Stevens Institute of Technology has partnered with the Secaucus Environmental Department to implement an exciting new green infrastructure project at Mill Creek Point Park. Two PhD students at Stevens, Viravid Na Nagara and Sameer Neve, installed an experiment at our first Secaucus Rain Garden* as part of a research grant under Dr. Dibyendu 'Dibs' Sarkar, Professor of Environmental Engineering at Stevens. This project is funded by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration through the New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium.

The retrofit design of the Stevens experiment includes comparing traditional mulch with low-cost "green-engineered" mulch. Aluminum-based drinking water treatment residuals (WTR), byproducts of the drinking water treatment process, are being used as the metal and nutrient-removing absorbent. Millions of tons of non-hazardous WTRs are sent to landfills every year. Therefore, this research will not only improve rain gardens, but also help to divert waste from landfills. The PhD students will be sampling the rainwater through next summer to test the absorbency of

dissolved pollutants in the mulch. "With extreme vulnerability to coastal hazards and high-frequency flooding with associated environmental consequences that Secaucus has experienced, we are excited to see this green technology in action to make Secaucus cleaner and greener and potentially become a model for other towns in the future," Dr. Sarkar said. "We are very grateful to have a great partnership with the Town of Secaucus to make this green retrofit development possible." To learn more about green infrastructure, visit NJ.gov/dep/gi

Improving Water Quality One Rain Garden at a Time: *Green Technology in Action*



Project funded by:
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration via New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium

Project performed by:
Stevens Institute of Technology

Project supported by:
Town of Secaucus

- Stormwater runoff is a major source of pollution of New Jersey surface water bodies.
- Green Infrastructures like rain gardens have become one of the most frequently used stormwater control measures. Water pollution can be reduced by retrofitting green infrastructures with innovative green technologies with pollutant removal capabilities.
- The engineered mulch used here is a green technology that will remove stormwater runoff pollutants before they get into our surface water bodies, thus "nipping the problem in the bud."






For more information: <https://www.stevens.edu/about-stevens/sustainability>

Be on the lookout for this informational sign that will be posted soon at the project site!

*A rain garden, also known as bioretention system, is a type of green infrastructure that improves drainage while also capturing pollutants that would otherwise flow directly into the Hackensack River. To learn more about how you can do your part to reduce stormwater pollution, visit CleanWaterNJ.org.

Composting – We Want to Hear from YOU!

1,160 lbs of food, on average, are lost to the garbage pail each year by an American family of four. The environmental problem created by food waste is the excess amount of methane gas it emits while breaking down in our landfills. Greenhouse gases, such as methane, absorb radiation and heat up the earth's atmosphere, causing global warming and climate change.

To help alleviate the problem of excess food waste and reduce the amount of trash we send to a landfill, the Environmental Department aims to support residential composting.

Residential composting can be done through backyard composting, aka composting your own food scraps at home, or through a municipally-supported drop-off program.* If you are interested in either method and would like to learn more about what they entail, please email Environmental@Secaucus.net to be sent a

recording of the December 2nd "Composting for All" webinar which offers a great overview of both.



Flyer from December's Composting Webinar

**We will not be able to launch a pilot drop-off program if we do not have enough residential interest.*

Secaucus Library Environmental Video Series

In October, the Secaucus Public Library put together a fantastic three-part series entitled "Secaucus and Our Environment: Past, Present and Future." In the first part, Captain Bill Sheehan, the Hackensack Riverkeeper, discussed the interconnected history of Secaucus and the Meadowlands. Captain Bill also gave a brief overview of the pollution issues and remediation efforts that have affected the Hackensack River and its surrounding wetlands during the latter half of the 20th Century. In the second installment, Amanda Nesheiwat discussed recent initiatives led by the Environmental Department, including electric vehicles, community gardening, pollination programs and much

more. In the third and final installment, Jennifer Schneider discussed current and upcoming town initiatives designed to improve the lives of residents while protecting our environment.



Visit secaucuslibrary.org/blog to view the entire Environmental Video Series