

# Lebanon Township

*Environmental and Open Space  
Commission*



2023 Annual Report

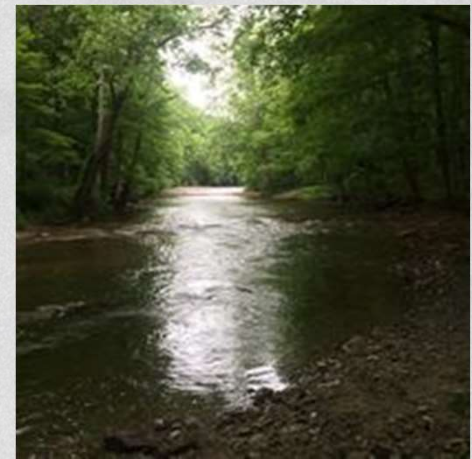




# Purpose of EOSC

The protection, development or use of natural resources (incl. water) within its territorial limits (NJSA 40:56A-1).

- 1) Acquire, maintain, improve, protect, limit the future use of, or otherwise conserve and properly utilize open spaces & other land & water areas
- 2) Study and make recommendations concerning open space preservation, water resources management, air pollution control, solid waste management, noise control, soil & landscape protection, environmental appearance, & protection of flora & fauna
- 3) Advertise, prepare, print & distribute books, maps, charts, plans & pamphlets
- 4) Recommend plans & programs for inclusion in a municipal master plan & the development & use of such areas





# Meet Our Members



**Sharon  
Petzinger**  
*Chair*



**Linda Ryan**  
*Member, Planning Board*



**Nancy Roberts-  
Lawler**  
*Member, MRMC*



**Warren  
Newman**  
*Member*



**Sharon Hardy**  
*Member*



**Kathy Koch**  
*Member*



**Erik Jan  
Henriksen**  
*Member (resigned 10/23)*



**Marty Collett**  
*Alternate 1 (Jan-Oct 2023);  
Member (Oct 2023)*



**Constance Grill**  
*Alternate 1 (Oct 2023)*



**Nina Weiland**  
*Alternate 2 (Oct 2023)*



**Mike Schmidt**  
*Township Committee Liaison, Open Space  
Coordinator (resigned 12/23)*



# 2023 Meeting Dates

*January 9, 2023*

*February 6, 2023*

*March 6, 2023*

*April 3, 2023*

*May 1, 2023*

*July 11, 2023*

*August 7, 2023*

*September 12, 2023*

*October 2, 2023*

*November 11, 2023*

*December 4, 2023*





# 2023 Goals

- 1) Acquisition of township open space
- 2) Municipal Forest Stewardship Master Plan
- 3) Invasive plant education & outreach
- 4) Facilitate deer hunting on township open space
- 5) Continue to host well testing







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01

# OPEN SPACE





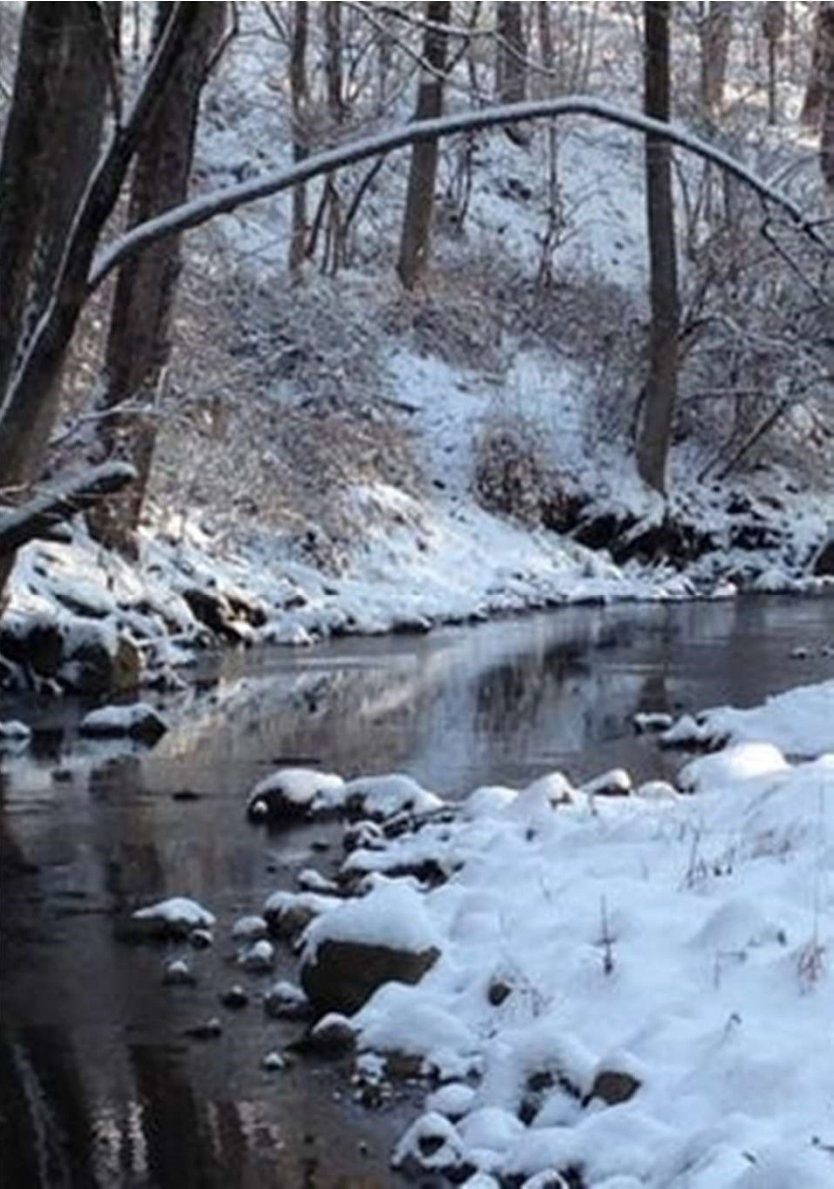
**Goal:** Continue acquisition of Block 49 Lots 72, 75, 76, & 89



**Purpose:**

- Contiguous open space & trail connectivity (all properties adjacent to Anthony Preserve)
- Maintain prevailing rural character & scenic landscapes in the township
- Maintain local water quality & groundwater supply
- Increase public access for fishing, hiking, and deer hunting





## Results



### All four properties appraised for potential open space acquisition

- Two of the properties went on to the next step of receiving a certified market value from Green Acres



### \$585,000 in grants awarded for open space acquisition

- \$350,000 from Green Acres
- \$235,000 from Hunterdon County through Hunterdon Lands Trust towards the acquisition of Block 49 Lot 72 (49 acres)





02

# **Forest Planning**





**Goal:** Continue creation of forest plans on township land



## **Background:**

- Lebanon Township received \$36,250 from Highlands Council to pay for:
  1. Forest master plan for 253 acres of township-owned forests
  2. Forest stewardship plan for Anthony Preserve





Beech Leaf Disease

# Purpose



## Municipal Forest Stewardship Master Plan

- Complement & expand upon the Lebanon Township Master Plan, 2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan, and goals of the NJ Water Supply Authority
- Provide guidance to address forest threats (invasive plants, emerald ash borer, beech leaf disease, etc.)



## Forest Stewardship Plan

- Allow Lebanon Township to actively steward Anthony Preserve under existing Highlands Council exemptions & NJDEP permits-by-rule



# Results



## Forester

1. In April, the contract was finalized to hire a forester to conduct the forest inventory & draft the two plans
2. In September, the forester completed the inventory & recommended goals



## Process

1. Defined & identified stakeholders
  - a. Decision-makers
  - b. Residents
  - c. Partner groups
  - d. Technical groups
2. Established process for public participation & feedback on goals & plan
  - a. Streamline public participation
  - b. Document for future reference



## Goals

1. The EOSC identified draft forest goals based on forester recommendations, Township Master Plan, & other sources
2. Draft goals were sent to the “decision-makers” for feedback





Garlic Mustard

03

# Invasive Plants





Barberry



**Goal:** Educate residents on invasive plants



**Why?**

- Invasive plants (barberry, mile-a-minute, bamboo, etc.) are prolific & pervasive in Lebanon Township
- They quickly overtake backyards, fields, and forest
- They prevent more beneficial plants from growing





Mile-a-minute

# Partnership



## Environmental Sustainability & Engineering Academy (ESEA)

- Helps develop information about invasive plants
- Helps ESEA students learn more about local environmental issues while serving Lebanon Township with the creation of informational material for township residents



# Running Bamboo

## Phyllostachys, Bambusa

### Native Alternative

Equisetum hyemale (horsetail, only in shallow water)

### Description & Habitat

- Vertical canes
- Dense
- Full of moisture
- Wetlands

### How to remove

Dig out the root & rhizome mass. To make it easier, water the area a few days before digging. Start on the outside of the clump or grove and work inward.

### Fast Fact

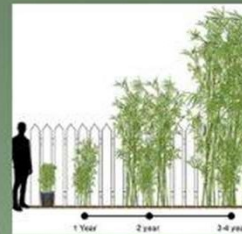
Bamboo is the fastest-growing plant in the world--some species grow 3 feet in a single day.

### Issue

Uncontrolled growth takes over ecosystems

### Public health issue

Breeding ground for pests. Roots can undermine roads & structures



HUNTERDON COUNTY ESEA FFA

# Results



Developed informational material for residents



Posted on Lebanon Township Facebook groups





04

# Deer Hunting





Deer Browse Line



**Goal:** Encourage the harvesting of more deer on township lands



**Why?** Lebanon Township has too many deer

- Vehicle accidents (>25K/year in NJ)
- Crop damage (\$15M/year in NJ)
- Forest damage (deer eat 5 lbs/day)





# Results



Recommended changes to deer hunting resolution

- Allow youth hunters to hunt with adult permit-holders

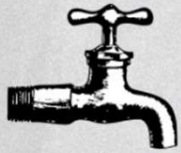


Created maps showing access points on open space properties



Advertised deer hunting & permit lottery





Lebanon Township  
**WELL WATER TESTING**

**May 6th**  
**9:00am-12:00pm**

**HOW IT WORKS!**

1. Visit [www.raritanheadwaters.org/event/lebanon/](http://www.raritanheadwaters.org/event/lebanon/) if you'd like to preorder your test kit online (optional).
2. Pick up your test kit at the Municipal Building, 530 West Hill Rd, Glen Gardner on May 6th from 9am to 12pm.
3. Collect your samples at home on May 8th and bring them to the Municipal Building from 7-9:30 am. You will receive your results about 2-3 weeks later.

Visit [www.TestMyWell.org](http://www.TestMyWell.org) for a full menu of testing options or call the RHA Well Testing Office at 908-234-1852 ext 401 for more info!

**E. Coli  
Bacteria  
Nitrates  
Arsenic  
Radon  
Lead**

Home built before 1987? Test your water for Lead during this event!

Be sure your water is contaminant-free by testing it through our Community Well Testing Program!  
Sponsored by the Lebanon Township Environmental and Open Space Commission



05

# Well Testing





**Goal:** Work with Raritan Headwaters to facilitate well water testing for township residents



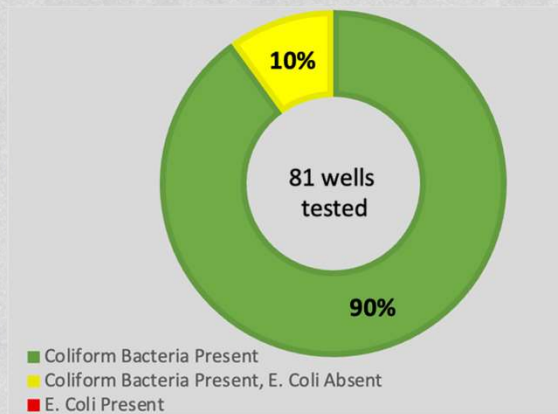
## **Why?**

Most township residents drink water from their own wells, which can be contaminated from local sources of harmful bacteria, nitrates, & other contaminants

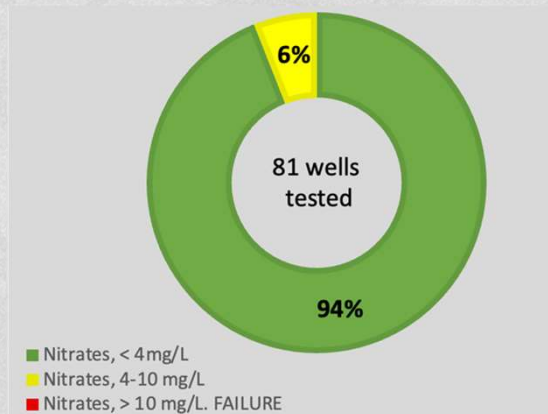


# RESULTS: 81 wells tested in Lebanon Township showed good results overall

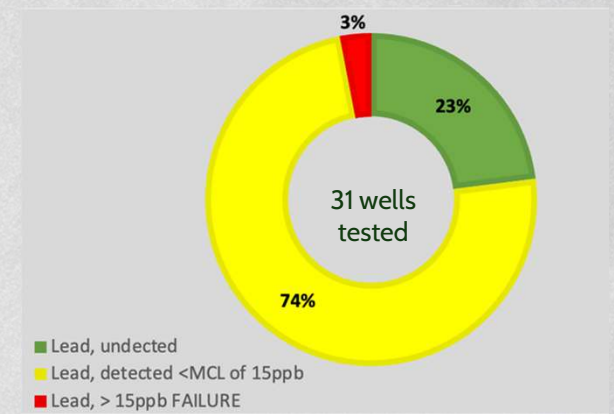
## Bacteria



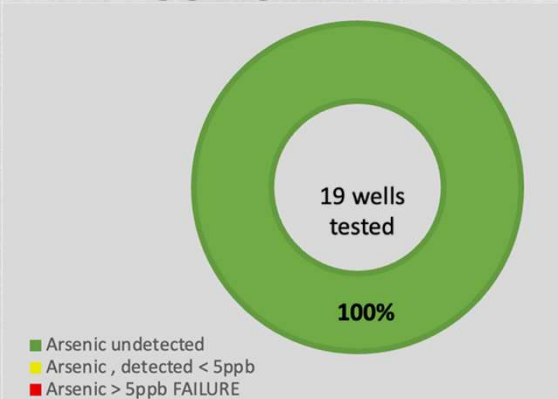
## Nitrates



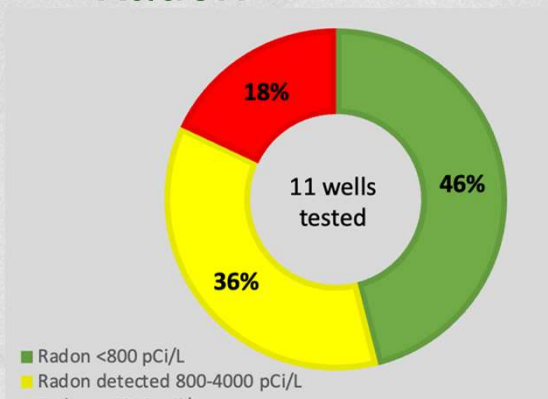
## Lead



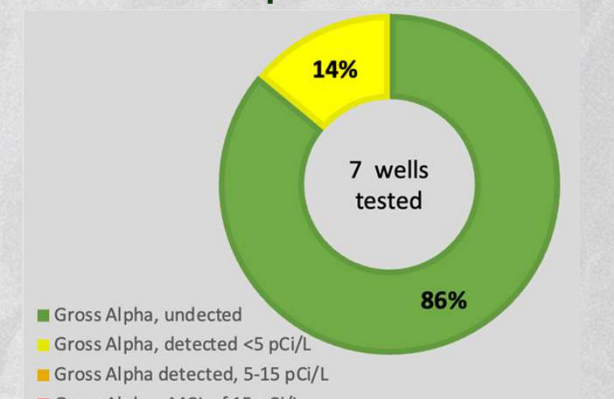
## Arsenic



## Radon



## Gross Alpha







# 06 Additional Accomplishments





# Musconetcong River Management Council

- Purpose: to promote the long-term protection of the National Wild and Scenic Musconetcong River
- The Council is comprised of representatives from:
  - Townships & counties along the river
  - National Park Service
  - State (NJDEP, Highlands Council)
  - Non-profit organizations
- Two members of the EOSC represented Lebanon Township on the Council in 2023





# Policy Review

*The EOOSC supported the interests & needs of Lebanon Township on environmental & open space concerns. Comments focused on:*

1. Considering possible impacts & needs of municipalities that have a lot of open space but not a lot of resources in terms of funding & staff
2. Streamlining the process for acquisition & stewardship of open space lands
3. Incentivizing acquisition & stewardship instead of adding requirements or mandates, which can be costly, time-consuming, & have unintended consequences



# Policy Review

*A focus on the potential impact of policies versus the very real needs of municipalities possessing abundant open space but not abundant resources.*

- Office of Transactions and Public Land Administration (OTPLA): EOSC members provided integral feedback & comments during stakeholder meetings on the Green Acres Rules (N.J.A.C. 7:36). OTPLA requested copies of Lebanon Township's deer hunting ordinance & resolution which were included in the submitted comments.
- NJ Forest Task Force: In 2022 this Task Force was charged with finding consensus regarding forest stewardship on public lands to inform future legislation. The final report of this task force was released in early 2023 & EOSC provided commentary focused on possible impacts to & needs of municipalities.
- NJDEP Natural Working Lands Strategy (NWLS): As part of Governor Murphy's climate goals, the purpose of the NWLS is to maximize carbon sequestration on public & private natural & working lands. The EOSC suggested streamlining the permitting & planning process to meet the acreage goals in the NWLS as well as providing funding, education, & outreach to incentivize landowners to steward their lands for these goals.
- NJ Highlands Council Draft Best Management Practices for Forestry: The EOSC identified actionable concerns for the Township Committee and Planning Board. As a result, the Township Committee passed a resolution outlining these concerns & an EOSC member represented Lebanon Township & voiced these concerns at a Highlands Council meeting.



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MUNICIPAL BUILDING  
530 West Hill Road  
(908)638-8523

FRIENDS OF MEMORIAL PARK PRESENTS

# FALL FEST

Sept 23, 2023 | 1:00 PM - 6:00 PM  
Memorial Park, Lebanon Township  
\$10 suggested donation for parking  
Rain or Shine

Please email: [lebtwmpm@gmail.com](mailto:lebtwmpm@gmail.com)  
for information on Sponsor, Vendor, or Community Table opportunities.

FOOD AND DRINKS  
LIVE MUSIC  
CAR GALLERY  
ACTIVITIES FOR ALL!

# Lebanon Township Newsletter

- Spring Newsletter: Spotted Lanternflies, Well Testing
- Summer Newsletter: Forest Management, Mile-a-minute, Bats, Beech Leaf Disease
- Fall Newsletter: Cover Crops, Open Space
- Winter Newsletter: State of our Forests, Road Salt, Septic Care, Well Testing Results

**Be Aware of Mile-a-Minute**

There is an invasive vine in Lebanon Township that grows about 6 inches a day - called "Mile-a-Minute". It can grow 20-30 feet in a summer and smother the...

Lebanon Township  
**WELL WATER TESTING**  
May 6th  
9:00am-12:00pm

**HOW IT WORKS!**

1. Visit [www.lebanon-nj.org/lebanon-open-space-commission](http://www.lebanon-nj.org/lebanon-open-space-commission) if you'd like to preorder your test kit online (optional).
2. Pick up your test kit at the Municipal Building, 530 West Hill Rd., Glen Gardner on May 4th from 9am to 12pm.
3. Collect your samples at home on May 6th and bring them to the Municipal Building from 7-9:30 am. You will receive your results about 2-3 weeks later.

Visit [www.ToxityWell.org](http://www.ToxityWell.org) for a full menu of testing options or call the Well Testing Office at 908.234.1832 ext 401 for more info!

Test for: Bacteria, Nitrate, Arsenic, Lead

Home built before 1987? Test your water for Lead during this event!

Be sure your water is contaminated free by testing it through our Community Well Testing Program! Sponsored by the Lebanon Township Environmental and Open Space Commission

SPRING 2023 **ENVIRONMENTAL & OPEN SPACE COMMISSION** PAGE 2



**Stomp It, Squash It, Smash It... Just Get Rid of Those Bugs!**

While spotted lanternflies love to feed on the exotic and invasive Tree of Heaven, they also like grape vines, hops, fruit-bearing trees like apple and cherry, and valuable hardwood trees like black cherry, walnut, and maples.

So if you like trees, fruit, wine or beer, it's in your best interest to keep an eye out for...

SUMMER 2023 **ENVIRONMENTAL & OPEN SPACE COMMISSION** PAGE 4

**Our Forests: To Manage or Not to Manage**

The EOOSC has helped Lebanon Township secure a grant to have professionals

SUMMER 2023 **ENVIRONMENTAL & OPEN SPACE COMMISSION** PAGE 5

**Learn to Love Bats**



Summer evenings at dusk are perfect for watching bats.

**What can you do to help bats?**

- Try to avoid cutting trees with cavities or loose bark in the spring and summer (May, June, & July) when females are raising their pups.

SUMMER 2023 **ENVIRONMENTAL & OPEN SPACE COMMISSION** PAGE 7

**Another Lebanon Township Litter Clean Up is "In the bag"**



The annual litter clean up is about taking care of our community. We have been so fortunate in the people who've joined us to help keep Lebanon Township a beautiful place to live.

**First the Ash Trees Die, Now the Beech**


Beech leaf disease Photo: NJ Forest Service

FALL 2023 **ENVIRONMENTAL & OPEN SPACE COMMISSION** PAGE 4

**KEEPING IT GREEN & GROWING: USING AIRPLANES TO IMPROVE SOIL HEALTH IN NEW JERSEY**

During late August or early September, a low-flying plane will blanket 1,000 acres of northern and central NJ cropland in cover crops; an all-natural mixture of rye and clover seeds. However, farmers won't be harvesting this crop in the spring; its purpose is to build resilience and prevent soil erosion.

Cover crops are being embraced by farmers. They help farmers by improving soil - increasing organic matter of the soil while also improving water infiltration rates, water holding capacity and



FALL 2023 **ENVIRONMENTAL & OPEN SPACE COMMISSION** PAGE 5

**NEW FUNDING AVAILABLE TO PURCHASE OPEN SPACE!**




Priorities for acquisition are based on expansion of existing preserves, passive recreation opportunities for hiking and fishing, and the environmental sensitivity

WINTER 23/24 **ENVIRONMENTAL & OPEN SPACE COMMISSION** PAGE 10

**The State of Our Forests**

Did you know Lebanon Township owns over 200 acres of forested land? Did you



WINTER 23/24 **ENVIRONMENTAL & OPEN SPACE COMMISSION** PAGE 11

**Our Road Department helps keep salt out of our drinking water**

Christa Reeves, MWA Water Quality Program Manager was pleased to report that "water samples taken in Lebanon

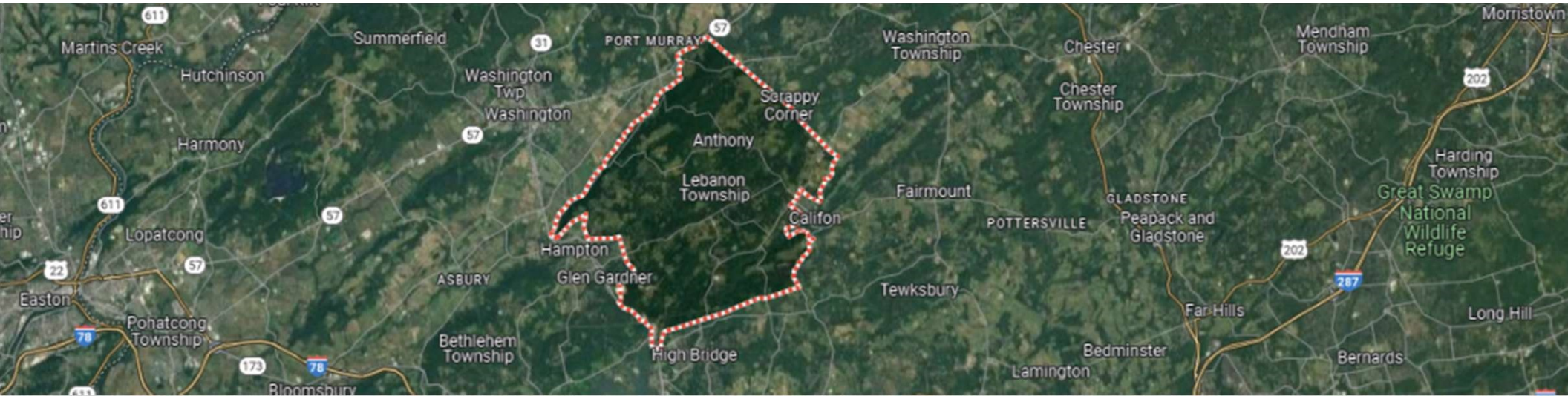
WINTER 23/24 **ENVIRONMENTAL & OPEN SPACE COMMISSION** PAGE 12

**Protect your Water through Septic Care**

By Sharon Petzinger, LTEOSC

- Do not pour oils/grease down the drain
- Stagger your high water usage to not





07

# Next Steps



# Goals for 2024

## 1. Open space acquisition

- Work with Committee, NJ Water Supply Authority, & Hunterdon Land Trust to pursue purchase of open space
- Post signage on newly acquired properties
- Update open space maps

## 2. Municipal Forest Stewardship Master Plan

- Obtain endorsements of draft goals
- Solicit stakeholder & public feedback
- Create & send mailers as needed
- Finalize goals
- Work with forester to draft plan





# Goals for 2024

## 3. Invasive plant education & outreach

- Work with the Environmental Sustainability & Engineering Academy (ESEA) to publicize information
- Hold a township-wide native plant swap
- Create & send mailers as needed

## 4. Deer hunting on township open space

- Continue to evaluate the program
- Work with Committee to adopt resolution in 2024
- Facilitate hunter access & outreach



Spotted Lanternfly on Ailanthus Tree





# Goals for 2024

5. Continue to work with partners
  - Help Raritan Headwaters with well-testing
  - Participate in the Musconetcong River Management Council
  
6. Monitor proposed rule changes, etc.
  - Provide comments pertaining to the environment & open space as needed
  
7. Newsletter submissions
  - Continue to submit articles
  - Create & send educational mailers in absence of newsletter

