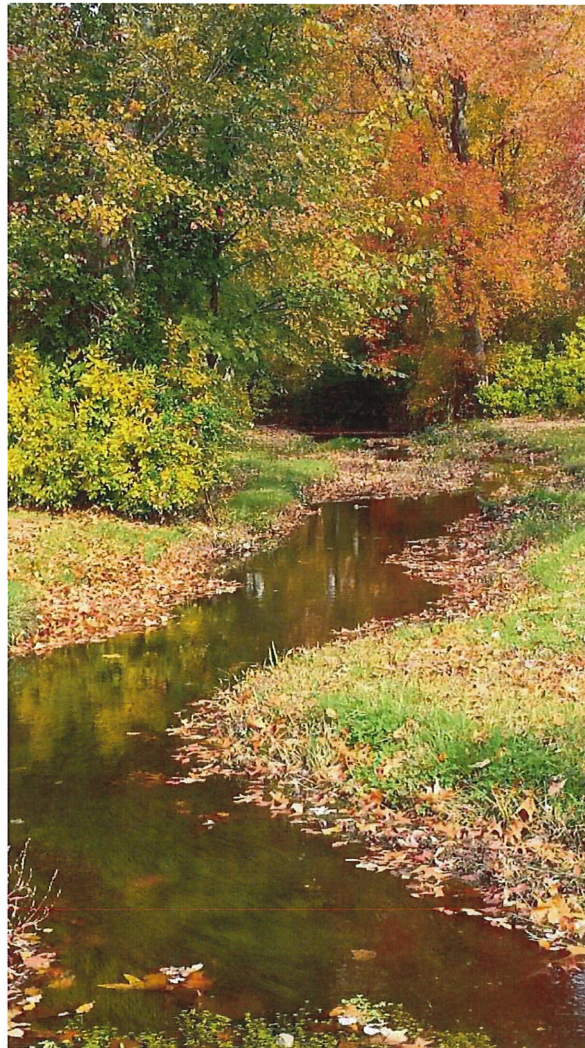


City of Vineland
Environmental Commission
2023 Annual Report



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 This ordinance repealed and replaced the Board of Natural Areas Preservation Commission, which previously undertook these endeavors, and so this was not the first time Vineland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 2023 to the Mayor and City Council.

Diane Amico

City of Vineland Environmental Commission Annual Report 2023

1) Members

Diane Amico, Chairperson

Susan Fenili

Charles Valentine

John Casadia, Planning Board member

Lisa Fleming

David Lowenstern

John Pedersen

Anthony Coffee

Ariana Headley

2) Meetings were held on the following dates in 2023

January 10

February 13

March 13

April 10

May 8

July 10

August 14

September 11

October 10

November 13

December 11

Guest Presentations at Meetings:

- July and September: Tiffany Falcone, NJDEP

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

2023 Volunteer Days	Location / event	Activity	participants	hrs.	total hrs.
1/14/2023	Campanella Park	cleanup, tree maintenance raingarden maintenance and grounds	9	4	36
2/11/2023	Vld. Public Library	cleanup	11	4	44
3/25/2023	West Side Park	CU cleanup			0
4/1/2023	Willow Oak	trail clearing & cleanup	1	4	4
4/10/2023	Pagliughi Park (Magnolia)	Cub Scout Tree Planting	1	3	3
4/15/2023	Pagliughi Park (Magnolia)	tree planting	16	3	48
4/22/2023	Pagliughi Park (Magnolia)	Tree planting Trees purchased and delivered to Arbor Day at Rossi School and D'Ippolito School	6	5	30
4/27/2023		Ceremonies	2	3	6
4/29/2023	Seedling Giveaway	Free seedlings for residents	6	4	24
	pick up tree seedlings	p/u seedlings for event	1	1	1
6/3/2023	Vineland Green Fair	Green Fair table	6	6	36
6/24/2023	Giampietro Park	Tree mulching & maint	6	3	18
7/15/2023	Willow Oak	painting trail blazes, clean-up	4	3	12
8/1/2023	National Night Out	Community Wildlife table	5	5	25
10/14/2023	Campanella Park	Tree Planting	10	3	30
11/11/2023	Campanella Park	tree planting	14	3	42
various dates	Vineland Public Library	Oakleaf hydrangea shrubs planted by Lisa	1	3	3
various dates	Giampietro Park	Oakleaf hydrangea shrubs planted by John P + PW Dept.	1	3	3
various dates	various locations /Campanella Park	50 Atlantic White Cedar seedlings and 50 Beach Plum seedlings planted by John P.	1	3	3
Various dates	Vld. Schools and parks	Bluebird nesting box cleanout, placement of new nesting boxes, clean & maintain 12 purple martin nesting gourds at VHS North.	1	60	60
					428

The total volunteer hours logged for events for 2023 is 428, plus time spent at meetings, committee meetings, and preparation for events is 168 hours. With the current 2023 value of a volunteer hour being \$31.30 (as per IndependentSector.org), these aggregated efforts have a contributory value of \$18,654 to the City.

4) **Education and Outreach**

- July 18, 2023: Chairperson Diane Amico was a panelist at the ANJEC Roundtable on Community Resources and spoke about projects done in Vineland involving partnerships with local groups.
- April 10, 2023: Arbor Day was celebrated at Pagliughi Park with member Sue Fenili speaking to the Cub Scouts about the importance of trees in our community.
- April 29, 2023 Tree Seedling Giveaway: Residents were assisted with tree seedling selection through discussion of putting “the right tree in the right place.”
- June 3, 2023: 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.

5) **Maintenance of nature areas:** In 2023, 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 Riparian Buffers** At Giampietro Park on June 24, EC members and volunteers removed invasive vines in the riparian buffer.

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. A volunteer event was held on February 11 at the Library raingarden, and the Annex raingarden was weeded and maintained by individual members on various dates.

8) **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 2023.

9) **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 following up on these areas with maintenance and roping-off to prevent unintentional mowing.

10) **Site plan reviews:** The Commission continued site plan reviews at each meeting in 2023. Written comments were provided to the Planning Board and the Zoning Board for several project applications. John Casadia continued to serve throughout 2023 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 2023, 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 2023:

- *Tree Seedling Giveaway on April 29* - 400 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 60 trees at Pagliughi Park and Campanella Park* – 14 trees were planted at Pagliughi Park on April 10, April 15, and April 22. Some of these were very large. 46 trees were planted at Campanella Park on October 14 and November 11.
- *Oakleaf Hydrangea shrubs* – These were purchased and planted at Giampietro Park and at the Vineland Public Library on various dates in 2023.
- *Additional seedlings obtained from the NJ State Nursery* - 50 Atlantic white-cedar seedlings and 50 Beach Plum seedlings were planted at Campanella Park and at additional locations by John Pedersen.
- *Arbor Day April 10, 2023* – This was done in conjunction with the Cub Scouts and was held at Pagliughi Park. A member of the Tree Committee, Sue Fenili, assisted with the planting and discussed the importance of trees in our community.

12) Training:

The NJ Shade Tree Federation Conference in Cherry Hill, NJ on October 26th and 27th was attended by Lisa Fleming for both days, and by Diane Amico for October 26th.

Rutgers: Best Management Practices for Tree Care online webinar on December 4 was attended by Diane Amico.

Through the New Jersey Urban and Community Forestry Program, several members have previously been trained with CORE training for trees and forestry, which along with the continuing education mentioned above, qualifies the City of Vineland to maintain an “active” status through the NJUCF Program.

13) Partnerships:

ANJEC:

The Commission continued its longstanding partnership with the Association of NJ Environmental Commissions by working on joint grant applications for green infrastructure and tree pits for center city Vineland.

Sustainable Jersey:

Diane Amico also serves as co-leader of the Vineland Green Team, and in 2023 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 has partnered with the American Littoral Society on a grant for stormwater mitigation at Giampietro Park, which will be researched and planned by engineers at Rutgers and the City of Vineland.

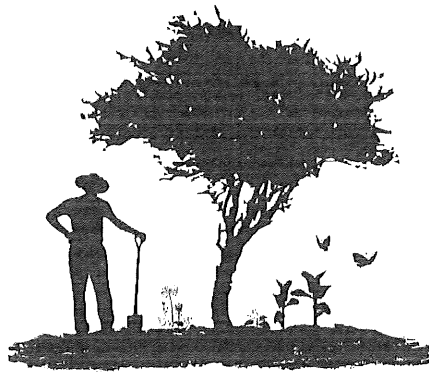
14) Membership:

There were no changes to the member list in 2023.

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