

Environmental Commission/Green Team Monthly Update, September 2026

Dear Neighbors:

We're still under a [drought warning](#) despite recent rain! Be sure to [continue conserving water](#) so this doesn't turn into a drought emergency. Let's get to the update.

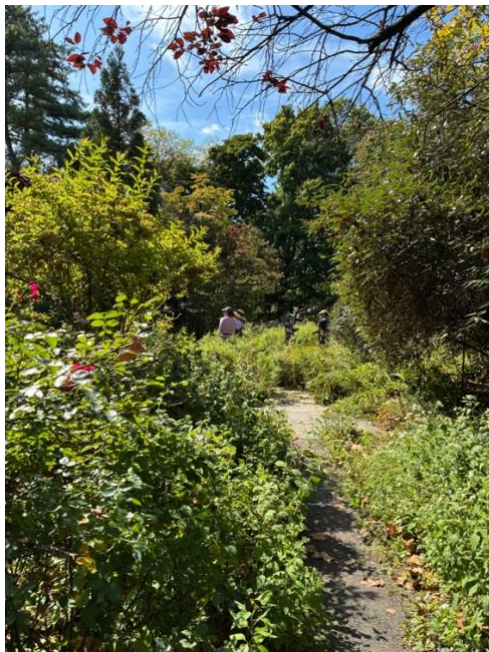
Join Us for Our Next Meeting

Attend our next Green Team and Environmental Commission meeting on Wednesday, September 23, 2026, 7:30PM. We will meet at the Porch Club, 213 Howard Street.

Everyone is welcome. Bring a neighbor. You can just observe or get involved with our programming!

Thank you for Joining us for the Native Plant Garden Tour!

We are proud to have welcomed over 80 guests at seven private native plant gardens and two public gardens this past weekend. Visitors also chatted with representatives from the [Native Plant Society of New Jersey](#) and the [Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation](#). Thank you to [Toadshade Wildflower Farm](#) for selling plants, and thank you to all our fabulous volunteers and gardeners who made the day happen! If you missed the tour and want to get started with native plants, [check out our starter handout on our website](#).



Visitors enjoying a native plant garden during our tour.

It's Time to Leave the Leaves!



[From Homegrown National Park](#)

This fall, leaving some (or all) of the leaves on your property provides your yard and garden with free mulch and a habitat for beneficial insects and other small animals that need a place to shelter over the winter. If you've never tried this before, this year, consider leaving at least some leaves in one of your garden beds or underneath a tree (**but do not mulch them**). Borough of Riverton Public Works will be happy to haul the rest as usual. **We do recommend you leave as many leaves as possible.**

Leaving the Leaves...

- Provides you with free mulch, which is great for your grass and garden. Did you know? Leaves help control weeds!
- Provides habitat for small mammals and beneficial insects (like fireflies, butterflies, native bees, and others). Insects love a soft landing underneath our big street trees! Those creatures are part of the food chain and help ensure our crops get pollinated and that we all eat!
- Keeps carbon in your yard so it doesn't turn into carbon dioxide and contribute to global warming. [Learn more about the science here](#).
- Gives you less fall work to do outside! Sit back, relax, and enjoy the fall color instead.
- Gives kiddos something to play with outdoors. Try making a leaf maze! [Learn more from the National Wildlife Federation](#).

If you do move or remove some of your leaves, **avoid using gas-powered leaf blowers**. They pollute the air and contribute to global warming. [According to the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions \(ANJEC\)](#), “Gas Leaf Blower emissions for 30 minutes are equivalent to the CO 2 produced by driving a truck from Anchorage to Houston.” [Gas leaf blowers endanger your health and the environment](#).

You can learn more about leaving the leaves from the [Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation](#). And if you want to think about planting some native plants to have an even greater positive impact on the environment, check out the [resources on our website](#).

State-Wide Drought Warning

As noted above, we are still under a [state-wide drought warning](#). Some NJ DEP recommendations for conserving water include but are not limited to: limit watering grass; plant native plants; use rain barrels; and more! [Read more about it here](#).

Upcoming Events, Things to Do, and Places to Visit

Do you like exploring nature at night? Join Burlington County Park Naturalist Gina DiMaio for a Moonlit Trail Walk on Monday, September 28, 2026, 7:30PM-8:30PM. This event will take place at Pennington Park, Delanco, NJ, 08057. Free. [Learn more here](#).

Are you a bookworm? Visit Cedar Run Wildlife Preserve on Saturday, October 3, 2026, from 10:00AM-1:00PM, for its first ever fall book sale. 4 Sawmill Road, Medford, NJ 08055. Proceeds will benefit Cedar Run. [Learn more here](#).

Want to check on the fall bird migration? Join some neighbors at Burlington County's 2nd Annual Autumn BioBlitz Series: October Birding. This event will take place on Monday, October 5, 2026, 10AM-11AM, at Historic Smithville Park & Woods, 803 Smithville Road Mt Holly, NJ 08060. Free. [Learn more here](#).

Want to go leaf peeping but don't want to drive too far? Join a Burlington County Park naturalist for Friday Forum: Fall Foliage Walk. This event will take place on Friday, October 30, 2026, 2PM-3PM, Historic Smithville Park & Smith's Woods, 803 Smithville Road, Mt Holly, NJ 08060. Free. [Learn more here](#).

Want to take a walk? Visit the Rancocas Nature Center on the first or third Fridays for a stroll with other 55+ folks, 10:30AM-11:30AM. These events take place at 794 Rancocas Mt. Holly Rd., Westampton Township, NJ, 08060. Free/donation suggested. Learn more here about [first Fridays](#) (Oct. 2 and Nov. 6) and here about [third Fridays](#) (Oct. 16 and Nov. 20).

The regular season of the Burlington County Farmer's Market continues. Check it out at the Burlington County Agricultural Center, 500 Centerdon Road, Moorestown, NJ, 08057, each Saturday, 8:30AM-1PM. [Learn more here](#).

[Native Plant Nursery, Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve](#), open through the fall, 1635 River Road, New Hope, PA, 18938.

What Have We Been Up To?

Our native plant garden tour was phase I of a three-phase plan to raise awareness of the important roles native plants play in our lives and ecosystem. We hope phase II will involve seeking grant funding to plant a native plant demonstration garden in town. We hope this garden, and other native habitats we have been cultivating, will get more residents interested in incorporating native plants into their landscapes. We hope phase III will involve securing grant funding to provide some residents with native plants they can use to replace lawn. More on these initiatives soon! If you want to be involved in the native plant subcommittee, please contact Councilmember Nicole Belolan (nbelolan@riverton-nj.com).

The state-mandated tree ordinance the Borough passed in 2024 was not approved by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. We are working with the Shade Tree Board and others in the Borough to craft an enhanced model ordinance that addresses tree removal and replacement and promotes the value of trees to our community. If you have ideas or suggestions for this ordinance, please contact Councilmember Nicole Belolan (nbelolan@riverton-nj.com).

We recently assessed the archives of the Pompeston Creek Association, which are in our hands. They provide important insights into the history of that organization and its local environmental education efforts. We are deciding on next steps and the feasibility of a resident conducting an inventory of the archives and/or proposing alternative, preservation-friendly housing for those archives as part of a Rutgers Environmental Steward volunteer project.

Residents have recently raised concerns about litter, idling, and protecting dark skies. Passionate about any of those topics? Attend the next Environmental Commission and Green Team meeting to get involved!

The Environmental Commission and Green Team, along with Council liaisons, have been listening to and researching resident concerns related to environmental issues such as pollution drift from Philadelphia and possible code violations at sites within the Borough. Councilwoman Katie Lucas continues to communicate with our counterparts in Philadelphia, residents, the owners of the scrapyard to work toward resolving concerns.

We're also collaborating on developing a compost education and pilot program for Riverton residents—stay tuned for more information about this soon!

Things to Read and Listen To

[Bug Banter](#), Xerces Society Podcast.

Concerned about Climate Change? Check out New Jersey's annual [State of the Climate: New Jersey report](#). This report is meant to help local decision-makers plan for climate change.

Want to learn more about stormwater management? Check out ANJEC's resource paper, "[Stormwater Management for Municipalities](#): Green Infrastructure Designs and Options."

Curious about how you and our community can manage climate change? Review Rutgers-New Brunswick New Jersey Climate Change Resource Center and the Nature Conservancy, "[New Jersey Nature-Based Solutions: Planning, Implementation, and Monitoring Reference Guide](#)," June 2025.

[Are you in the Know?](#)

If you know a neighbor who may want to sign-up for the Environmental Commission and Green Team monthly email (which is what you're reading now!), they can do so by texting the word NEWSLETTER to 888777. They will be prompted to share their email address. Or, you can [access this notice on the Borough website](#).

[Social Media](#)

You can follow us on social media for more regular updates.

Green Team Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/riverton_green_team/

Green Team Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/people/Riverton-NJ-Green-Team/100082748494990/>

Environmental Commission Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/RivertonEnvironmentalCommission/>

Borough Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/RivertonNJ>

Borough Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/boroughofrivertonnj/>

We hope to see you **Wednesday, September 23, 2026, 7:30PM, 213 Howard Street, Riverton, NJ 08077.**

Sincerely,

Michael Gawbill

Borough of Riverton Environmental Commission Chair and

Nicole Belolan

Green Team Chair and Borough of Riverton Councilmember

