Environmental Commission/Green Team Monthly Update, October 2026

Dear Neighbors:

We are no longer under a drought warning, but everyone should continue to conserve water! Let's get to the update.

Join Us for Our Next Meeting

Attend our next Green Team and Environmental Commission meeting on Wednesday, October 28, 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!

We Need Your Input!

The Borough of Riverton is participating in a multi-municipality environmental resource inventory, known as an ERI. Burlington County is leading the project. The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) is funding this at no cost to the Borough. ERIs include information on natural resources and environmentally significant features of an area (including natural features as well as the built environment). The data published in the ERI will be used to help inform regional and local planning. At our meeting this week, we will discuss top concerns and priorities we want to include in a survey response for this project. If you cannot make the meeting, please send your thoughts to Councilperson Belolan, nbelolan@riverton-nj.com, so they can be included. View the 2008 Borough of Riverton ERI here. The consultants working on this project will also hold public meetings for additional input and review. Projected completion date: May 2027.

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—that kills beneficial insects such as butterflies and lightning bugs***). Borough of Riverton Public Works will be happy to haul the rest as usual. **We 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. 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.

You Can Help with Climate Change

We recently shared a resource sheet on simple steps everyone can take to help with climate change. Here are a few quick tips:

- Leave the leaves! Leaves trap carbon and prevent it from turning into carbon dioxide, which warms the planet. Compost excess leaves. They provide habitat for invertebrates such as butterflies and other pollinators, which are key parts of the ecosystem. DO not shred leaves. Keep as many as you can! If you have excess, public works will collect them as usual.
- Plant native plants! They help sequester carbon, maintain biodiversity, and manage rainwater. Rainwater management is especially important since warmer temperatures (caused by global warming) result in more frequent, powerful storms.

- Consider using renewable energy (from sources such as the sun or wind)! For example, you can sign-up for community solar for a credit toward your electric bill: https://joinsolar.solarlandscape.com/nj/delran/ This helps limit our fossil fuels use.
- Care for or plant a tree or two! Trees sequester carbon, cool our environment, help manage rainwater, and more!
- Compost food waste and excess leaves! Diverting food waste from the landfill lessens the production of methane, which warms the planet. A compost pile can also include leaves you don't have room for elsewhere on your property. It also gives you free soil!
- Read about climate change! There are many great books out there. We suggest starting with Ayana Elizabeth Johnson's *What if We Get it Right*.
- Go outside! Enjoy the many environmental resources we have right here in Riverton. The more we know about our environment, the more prepared we are to help it--and ourselves!

Upcoming Events, Things to Do, and Places to Visit

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.

Do you want to learn more about cranberries in New Jersey? Check out the "Cranberry Agriculture in the Pinelands" seminar. It will take place on Thursday, November 5, 2026, 6PM, Pinelands Alliance, 17 Pemberton Rd, Southampton NJ 08088. Free. Register here.

Who doesn't like a squirrel? Join Burlington County naturalist Gina DiMaio for "Wildlife Watch: Squirrels! (and other mammals)," on Monday, November 9, 2026, 10AM-11Am, Boundary Creek Natural Resource Area, 515 Creek Road, Moorestown, NJ 08057. Free. Register here.

Want to catch a glimpse of migrating waterfowl? Join Burlington County naturalist Jen Bulava for "Tuesday Talk: Waterfowl Wander," at Willingboro Lakes Park, 60 Beverly-Rancocas Rd Willingboro, NJ 08046. This even will take place on Tuesday, November 10, 2026, 10AM-11AM. Free. Register 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 (Nov. 6) and here about third Fridays (Nov. 20).

Looking for green holiday gifts? Check out the Green Trading Post, Saturday and Sunday, December 5 and 6, 12PM-4PM, Pinelands Alliance, 17 Pemberton Rd, Southampton NJ 08088. Learn more here.

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. A Green Team member working on their Rutgers Environmental Steward volunteer project will work on conducting an inventory of the archives and/or proposing alternative, preservation-friendly housing for those archives in collaboration with the Historical Society of Riverton.

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 Councilwomen 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 turned for more information about this soon!

Councilmember Belolan earned her Rutgers Environmental Steward continuing education certificate on Saturday, October 24, 2026. This certification is designed to educate non-scientists on environmental issues and equip them to use this knowledge to help their communities learn about and address environmental issues. Her capstone volunteer project, which was run as a Riverton Green Team program, featured an eight-month climate change reading group that included diverse, interdisciplinary readings. Thank you to the Riverton Free Library, Calvary Presbyterian Church, and the Porch Club for sharing their space for these gatherings. Even though the reading group is over, you can read one or more of the books (all available through our local library) on the reading list! Click here.



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.

Looking for a website to share with folks who need an overview of what climate change is? Check out this website developed by the Royal Society.

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, October 28, 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