

Pennington Environmental Commission (PEC)  
Report to the Borough Council  
September 5, 2023

**ARBORETUM:** The PEC participates in the joint committee that provides feedback on the development of the Pennington Arboretum. Last spring we were successful in recruiting volunteers who removed invasive species from the first enclosure area as well as other parts of the property.

**CARBON NEUTRAL BY 2035:** The PEC has a committee working on the mandates in the 2021 Borough Council resolution. We are currently preparing a comparison of the Borough's 2022 carbon footprint to the baseline year of 2018. We are also gathering options for reducing the Borough's carbon footprint and will be exploring some of them in more detail.

**COMPOSTING ORGANIC WASTE:** In January the PEC heard from Dolph Geurds (One Compost Can) about his curbside organic waste subscription service. We are looking for ways to promote residential organic waste composting either by individuals or via a subscriptions service. (See attached flyer from Pennington Day)

**ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE INVENTORY (ERI):** The finishing touches are being made to the ERI. The next step will be to send it to the Planning Board for public review and final adoption. It will be incorporated into the new Conservation Plan Element of the Master Plan. (See attached flyer from Pennington Day with an ERI Table of Contents)

**MASTER PLAN ELEMENTS:** The PEC is participating in the development of three Master Plan Elements. They are:

- Conservation Plan Element
- Green Buildings & Sustainability
- Recycling

**PENNINGTON DAY:** The PEC had a very successful booth at Pennington Day (May 20), in spite of the rainy weather. We borrowed two games from ANJEC which attracted many children and their families. We gathered volunteers for the Arboretum cleanup, and provided information about Organic Waste Composting and our ERI. (Handouts attached)

**VISION/MISSION:** As we were preparing for Pennington Day, some Commission members asked about our Mission, and the Master Plan committee has inquired about our Vision, so we have begun to draft Vision and Mission statements. These will be shared with the Borough Council via our Council Liaison, John Valenza, for feedback.

## PENNINGTON ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP

Acting Chair	Joann Held
Member	Nancy Fishman
Member	Brian Friedlich
Member	Jim Fuger
Member	Andy Jackson
Member	Kieran John
Member	Dan Rubenstein
Alternate #1	Jasmine Zein
Alternate #2	Nell Haughton
Council Liasion	John Valenza



## Become a Composter

### WHY?

1/3 of our food ends up as waste with most going to landfills where it produces methane, a potent greenhouse gas.

By composting you would keep your food waste out of landfills.

Your rotting food can be transformed into a soil enhancer!

It will also lower Pennington's trash bill which will also reduce your taxes.



## How to become a composter

There are 2 ways to become a composter:

- 1) Do it yourself
- 2) Partner with your community

Currently, Pennington does not provide a community means of capturing food waste. If you think the borough should, let us know at: [PennEnvComm@gmail.com](mailto:PennEnvComm@gmail.com)

But you can do it yourself by following the following guide.

### Equipment

- Metal or plastic trash can with lid  
(Your old garbage can before Pennington gave you the new one on wheels, ideally 32 gallons or larger)
- Aluminum screen fabric
- Epoxy adhesive or silicone caulk
- Plant-based organic waste
- Nitrogen fertilizer or compost starter (optional)



## Process

**Drill the Holes.** Drill holes around the trash can (lid, bottom, and sides) roughly 6 to 12 inches apart. These holes will provide the airflow and oxygen necessary to enhance the composting process.

**Attach the Screening.** Cut pieces of metal window screening large enough to cover each hole from inside the can with a patch of window screening. Secure it with epoxy or silicone caulk.

**Position Your Trash Can Composter.** Put your trash can composter in a convenient place. If possible, raise it up on a couple of bricks to allow air circulation under the can.

**Add Compostable Material.** Your 'green' vegetable waste should be mixed with 'brown' organics such as grass clippings, leaves, twigs or coffee grinds so that the organic mix is not too wet, nor too dry. A ratio of 4:1 of browns to greens will generate warmth and drive the conversion process..

**Monitor and Turn the Pile.** Dig into the pile with a pitchfork or turn the can on its side and roll it around. This will help mix and aerate the microbes, bacteria and fungi to help them decompose and break down your waste into simpler nutrients that your garden plants can use. Adding some fertilizer will provide 'food' for the decomposers which will speed up the process.

**Use the Compost.** When your compost is dark brown and crumbly, it is ready to be used. Apply it as mulch around shrubs, trees, and other plants or add it as a soil amendment before planting.

**ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES  
INVENTORY (ERI)  
OF PENNINGTON BOROUGH 2023**

**Contents:**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

**2. HISTORY**

**3. GEOLOGY**

- Bedrock Geology
- Surficial Geology

**4. SOILS AND SLOPES**

- Acreage of Soils by Type

**5. LAND USE**

**6. OPEN SPACE**

**7. WATER RESOURCES**

- Streams
- Waterbodies
- Sub-Watersheds
- FEMA Floodplain Areas

**8. WASTEWATER AND SOLID WASTE  
MANAGEMENT**

**9. CLIMATE AND AIR QUALITY**

- Facilities in and Near Pennington with Air Pollution Control Permits

**10. LIGHT AND NOISE POLLUTION**

**11. VEGETATION AND WILDLIFE**

- Invasive Species Found in Mercer County
- Rare Wildlife Species or Wildlife Habitat in Pennington
- Rare Wildlife Species or Wildlife Habitat near Pennington
- Stream-Based Rare Wildlife Species or Wildlife Habitat in Pennington
- Stream-Based Rare Wildlife Species or Wildlife Habitat near Pennington

**12. CONTAMINATED SITES**

**13. CONCLUSION**

[www.penningtonboro.org/environmental-commission](http://www.penningtonboro.org/environmental-commission)



**OVERVIEW**

This Environmental Resource Inventory (ERI) catalogues the Borough's natural resources and characteristics and should be utilized by residents and officials in decision-making.

It will be useful to residents who wish to identify potential resource issues on their property and in their neighborhood as well as to officials reviewing development applications submitted for approval.

While the Borough's natural resources are not as extensive as surrounding communities, they are nonetheless worthy of consideration in ongoing and future planning.

The ERI is not a static document, and will be reviewed and updated periodically, particularly as new data are developed and published.

Environmental regulations change frequently at the state level, and these changes will also be highlighted in future iterations of the ERI, as they can affect resource protection measures.

The Environmental Resources Inventory (ERI) will be incorporated as the data source in the Conservation Plan Element of Pennington Borough's new Master Plan 2025.

