



New rules eyed for waterways

By: Jessica Beym, Staff Writer

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Group hopes to limit development and protect stream corridors

The township Environmental Commission plans to recommend an ordinance to the Township Committee in September that it says would help protect and preserve the township's stream corridors by preventing development.

William Mikula, acting commission chairman, said it has been working with the Stony Brook Millstone Watershed Association since late 2005 to develop the ordinance. It is still working on the final details.

Mr. Mikula said the goal of the ordinance is to restrict development within 150 feet of each side of any township stream.

"Its purpose is to help maintain the integrity of the stream corridors and minimize the risk of erosion and flooding," Mr. Mikula said. "There's been a statewide push to control these areas and prevent development, particularly along larger streams, like the Delaware, that are prone to flooding."

Jennifer Coffey, of the Stony Brook Millstone Watershed Association, is working with the township to tailor the regulations to Cranbury's needs. Four of the major streams in Cranbury include the Millstone River, Cedar Brook, Cranbury Brook and Indian Run.

Ms. Coffey said that nine other municipalities in the watershed have adopted similar ordinances to establish buffer areas around streams.

"The primary purpose is to protect native vegetation on the bank," Ms. Coffey said. "The vegetation serves a number of purposes. It filters pollutants out of storm water, it also helps stabilize banks to prevent soil erosion, it provides wildlife habitats and shade for streams."

Because of the Stony Brook Millstone Watershed Association's experience, the Environmental Commission decided to reach out to it for assistance.

"They have worked with many other communities in the area, so they're pretty familiar with the language that should go into it," Mr. Mikula said.

The Environmental Commission has two drafts of the document and plan to come up with a final draft in the next few weeks. The final draft would then be brought to the Township Committee and Planning Board for review.

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