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Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association
31 Titus Mill Road
Pennington, NJ 08534
(609) 737-3735

NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Gwen McNamara, Communications Director
P: (609) 737-3735 x16, C: (908) 797-4171, E: gmcnamara@thewatershed.org

Cranbury Township Protects Clean Water *Watershed Association Applauds Critical Action*

September 28, 2011 (Hopewell, NJ) – Members of the Cranbury Township Committee took strong action to protect streams and clean water in Cranbury when they adopted a stream corridor protection ordinance on Monday night. “The best way to keep streams healthy and water clean is to protect the land surrounding those streams from clear-cutting and paving, and that’s exactly what Cranbury’s new ordinance does,” said Jennifer M. Coffey, Policy Director at the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association.

Environmental Commission member Anna Drago said that she is “very happy that the township has finally approved this ordinance after many years of careful consideration.” She added that she hopes that Cranbury will continue to increase its protection of the environment.

“With the adoption of this ordinance, Cranbury Township has made a smart decision that will protect our supply of clean water and healthy habitats,” added Jim Waltman, Watershed Association Executive Director. “The actions of the Township Committee will benefit current, as well as many, generations of Cranbury residents to come.”

Cranbury’s new stream corridor ordinance protects 50-foot-wide buffers on both sides of streams throughout the township. It requires that existing plants and trees along streams be kept in their natural condition, which will help reduce the amount of pollution that drains into the water. Typical stream pollutants include fertilizers and pesticides, litter, pet waste and soil runoff. Healthy stream buffers also lessen the impacts and damage from flooding, and provide a network of healthy habitats and open space. The ordinance also supports the township’s current restriction on development within 200 feet of a stream.

“The recent flooding highlights the importance of stream corridor protection,” said Susan Goetz, Cranbury Township Environmental Commission member. “This ordinance goes a long way to clarify, for property owners, the set back rules that were already in place. The Environmental Commission supports this ordinance as an important tool to protect water quality and flood plain management in our Community.”

The new stream corridor protection ordinance largely makes clearing vegetation within 50 feet of a stream a violation and is subject to penalties and fines. “Stream corridors serve the greater public good and should remain undisturbed,” Ms. Coffey added. There are some exclusions in the ordinance that allow for activities occurring within the 50 foot stream buffer to continue so long as they pre-date the ordinance adoption.

Interviews with Policy Director Jennifer Coffey are available upon request. Contact Gwen McNamara, Communications Director, at (609) 737-3735 x16 or gmcnamara@thewatershed.org.

About the Watershed Association

The Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association is central New Jersey's first environmental group protecting clean water and the environment through conservation, advocacy, science and education. To learn more visit www.thewatershed.org.